

VIRES ARTES MORES

Intersections of Domestic Violence and Child Maltreatment: An Introduction



Introduction

- Child maltreatment and domestic violence frequently co-occur. Both forms of abuse share common characteristics.
- If one form of abuse is suspected or known, the family should be assessed for the other.
- Please click on the link and listen to the powerful 911 call:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ryLBCu097ns>

Objectives



1. Realize the prevalence of co-occurrence of domestic violence and child maltreatment.
2. Know the shared characteristics of domestic violence and child maltreatment.
3. Learn how children experience domestic violence.
4. Understand how exposure to domestic violence can impact a child.
5. Discover strategies for assessing and preventing child maltreatment in an abusive relationship.

Prevalence

- Studies measuring co-occurrence of child maltreatment and domestic violence typically find that 30 to 60 percent of families experiencing one of the forms of abuse also experience the other.



Prevalence

- Co-occurrence findings vary due to:
 - Differences in populations sampled and study methods
 - Differences in the type of harm observed
 - Differences in definitions used



Prevalence



- One nationally representative study in 2006 estimated that 15.5 million American children live in families in which domestic violence had occurred at least once in the previous year.
- That same study estimated that 7 million children live in families in which severe partner violence had occurred.

McDonald R., Jouriles E. N., Ramisetty-Mikler S., Caetano R, Green C. E. (2006). Estimating the number of American children living in partner-violent families. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 20(1): 137-142.



Shared Characteristics of Domestic Violence and Child Maltreatment

Shared Characteristics

Power and Control

- Perpetrators may:
 - threaten to report the victim to Child Protective Services for injuries the perpetrator actually inflicted
 - threaten to take custody of the children
 - threaten to harm themselves to control their victims
 - stalk their victims



The power and control dynamic of domestic violence frequently overlaps with child maltreatment. One overlap is how p

Shared Characteristics

Power and Control

- Perpetrators may :
 - harm the child to hurt the other parent, particularly when separation has occurred or is imminent
 - use the child's behavior as an excuse to be abusive



Perpetrators use the children to control their victims.

Shared Characteristics

Power and Control

- Perpetrators may:
 - become angry and abuse the children when the perpetrator feels the victim is paying more attention to the children
 - require the kids to pay more attention to his/her needs than theirs for fear of the consequences



Perpetrators often have poor interpersonal boundaries and feelings of entitlement.

Shared Characteristics

Power and Control

- Perpetrators may restrict access to finances or transportation which can:
 - prevent the victim from getting medical attention for sick and/or injured children
 - prevent the victim from otherwise meeting the children's basic needs



The perpetrator may use economic abuse to control the victim.

Shared Characteristics

- Victims may be unlikely to disclose abuse for the following, overlapping reasons:
 - Victims may have had a previous negative experience with service providers after disclosing abuse
 - Victims may fear being blamed
 - Victims may be concerned about overreaction or minimization of the problem
 - Victims may feel responsible, guilty, or embarrassed for the abuse



Child maltreatment and domestic violence are both heavily stigmatized. Thus, both forms of abuse are likely to remain private matters.

Shared Characteristics

- With child maltreatment and domestic violence, it is difficult to prove that the perpetrator will not abuse again in the future.
- In both cases, harm can be either physical or emotional for victims.





How Children Experience Domestic Violence

How Children Experience DV

- Children may:
 - be the direct targets of physical or verbal abuse
 - be subject to frequent moves if the adult victim tries to flee for safety
- Children may be forced into participating in the adult victim's abuse and degradation.
- Children may try to intervene and suffer injury, may blame themselves for the abuse, may join forces with the abuser or victim, and may become "parentified."



Children may physically experience domestic violence.

How Children Experience DV

- Children may overhear:
 - verbal abuse
 - screams and pleas for help.
- Children may witness:
 - the perpetrator being arrested
 - the victim's physical injuries, such as bruises
 - the victim taken to the hospital by ambulance



Children may witness domestic violence both audibly and visually.

How Children Experience DV

- Children are more likely to be exposed to substance abuse.
 - Perpetrators who abuse alcohol are more likely to severely abuse their partners.
 - Victims may use substances to self-medicate due to physical or emotional pain.



National Coalition Against Domestic Violence. *Domestic Violence and Substance Abuse*. Available at <http://www.ncadv.org/files/SubstanceAbuse.pdf>



Impact of Domestic Violence on Children

Many studies have shown that domestic violence is associated with various child development problems and later adult problems; however, child resilience plays a part in whether any one child will develop the issues discussed.

Direct Impact

- Children may:
 - suffer physical injuries as the targets of violence
 - inadvertently be injured during an episode of violence
- Adult DV victims may over-discipline their children.
- Perpetrators may be severely controlling of the children and are likely to use harsh forms of discipline.



- If a child tries to intervene during an episode of violence, the child may be physically injured.
- Adult victims may over-discipline in order to keep the perpetrator from getting angry.

Impact on Parenting

- The adult victim's physical injuries can prevent the child from receiving adequate care.
- Adult victims may suffer from depression and anxiety which may hinder caring for the child.
- The adult victim may be prevented from getting medical attention for sick and/or injured children.



Domestic violence may interfere with the parenting a child receives.

Impact on Parenting

- The perpetrator's entitlement issues can lead to neglect of the child's needs.
- The perpetrator may focus on controlling the adult victim and neglect the child's needs.
- The child's needs may be neglected due to adult substance abuse.



Impact on Development

- Children may express fear, shame, or guilt after disclosing and are likely to feel isolated.
- Children may develop:
 - aggressive and antisocial behaviors
 - low self-esteem, depression, or anxiety
 - fewer social skills, such as relationship forming and coping skills



Children exposed to domestic violence are at a greater risk of developing various behavior and emotional problems.

Impact on Development

- Children exposed to domestic violence are more likely to:
 - attempt suicide
 - drop out of school
 - become pregnant at a young age
 - abuse substances as an adult
 - have reduced attention spans or trouble concentrating
 - Join gangs
 - enter abusive relationships
 - abuse their own children



Impact on Development

- Children exposed to domestic violence are more likely to recreate the abusive relationships they have seen.
- One study found that child abuse or neglect increases the likelihood of arrest:
 - as a juvenile by 59%
 - as an adult by 28%
 - for a violent crime by 30%



Widom, C. S., and Maxfield, M. G. (2001). *An Update on the Cycle of Violence*, National Institute of Justice, Washington, DC.

Child Resilience

- Recent research has shown that individual child resilience moderates child development problems.
- Some children, even though exposed to domestic violence, develop coping skills in other ways and do not develop behavioral or emotional problems.



Even though children exposed to domestic violence are at a greater risk of developing the previously mentioned issues, each child experiences domestic violence differently.

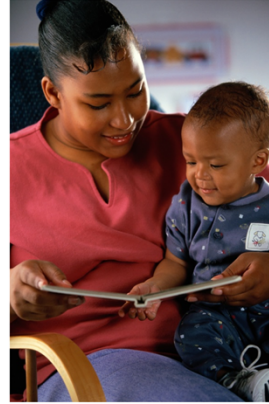
Gewirtz, A. H. & Edleson, J. L. (2007). Young children's exposure to intimate partner violence: Towards a developmental risk and resilience framework for research and intervention. *Journal of Family Violence*, **22**, 151–163.



Strategies for Prevention

Strategies for Prevention

- Removing the child from the home should be considered a last resort.
- Helping the abused parent receive appropriate services and protection is an effective way to secure the child's safety.
 - The perpetrator should be held accountable.
 - Researchers agree that when the perpetrator is not in the home, the child fares a lot better.



Strategies for Prevention

Assess

- The first step for assisting families experiencing either form of abuse is recognizing the abuse.
- Assessment is critical and should be done often.
- Abuse may be physical or emotional; so, there may be more than physical signs that abuse is occurring.



Here are some example questions to assess abuse. Please note that this is not a comprehensive list of abusive behaviors. Even if a client answers no to every question, he/she could still be in a violent relationship. This tool is not a standalone assessment for abuse. The intended purpose of this questionnaire is to begin a conversation about domestic violence.

- Does your partner hit, kick, bite, or slap you?
- Has your partner ever threatened to seriously injure or kill you?
- Does your partner ever threaten or harm your children?
- Does your partner control how much money you can spend, or what you can buy?
- Does your partner control who you can be friends with and where you can go?
- Is your partner very jealous and possessive over you?
- Does your partner demand to know where you are and who you are with most or all of the time?
- Does your partner own a gun?
- Has your partner ever used a weapon against you or threatened you with a weapon?
- Has your partner ever threatened to commit suicide if things didn't go their way (example: "I'll kill myself if you leave me" or "If I don't get the kids, I'll just shoot myself")
- Has your partner intentionally destroyed your property?
- Have you recently broken up with your partner?
- Does your partner follow you or stalk you?
- Has your partner ever forced you to participate in sexual activities against your will, or had sex with you without your consent?
- Does your partner call you names, yell at you, or say things like "you are worthless" or "no one will ever love you"?

Strategies for Prevention

Victims	Children	Perpetrators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety planning • Individual or group counseling • Specialized assessment services or crisis counseling • Legal advocacy, medical, economic, and daycare services • Shelter or transitional living services • Visitation or supervised exchange services • A review of domestic violence information • Mental health or substance abuse referrals, if applicable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety planning • Safety skills development • Specialized individual or group counseling • After-school program referrals • Safe visitation and exchange services • Community-based enrichment programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compliance with probation or parole, restraining orders, and custody orders • Parenting programs that include a focus on domestic violence issues • Abuser intervention program referrals • Safe visitation and supervised exchange services • Fatherhood programs when appropriate. • Substance abuse and mental health referrals, if applicable

Bragg, H. L. (2003). *Child protection in families experiencing domestic violence*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Children Youth and Families.

Strategies for Prevention

Coordinated Community Response

- A Coordinated Community Response requires diverse agencies to work together to help families experiencing multiple forms of abuse by:
 - Assessing and providing for the needs of the entire family
 - Developing a system to protect the child and the abused parent
 - Making domestic abuse an issue of community responsibility
 - Empowering victims



Working with other agencies is critical for successful treatment of families experiencing multiple forms of abuse.

Strategies for Prevention

Coordinated Community Response

- Know the agencies in your community.
- Have a list of agencies on hand that offer specific services such as:
 - Individual counseling
 - Substance abuse treatment
 - Family counseling
- Cross-training is essential for diverse agencies to be able work together effectively.



Other community agents:

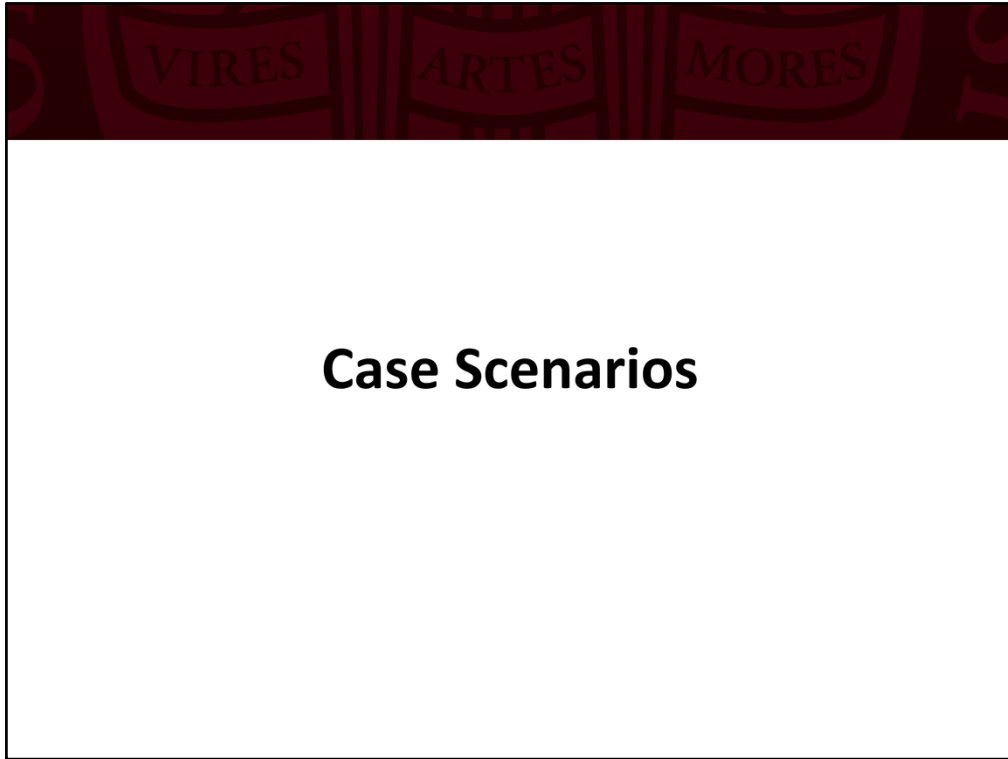
Law enforcement
Prosecutors
Victim assistance staff
Civil courts
Civil court judges
Criminal courts
DV centers
Health care providers
Perpetrator's intervention programs
Supervised visitation programs

Strategies for Prevention

Coordinated Community Response

- Benefits of a Coordinated Community Response include:
 - Increased likelihood of early detection.
 - Reduced risk of re-victimization.
 - Reduced chance that families will fall through the cracks.





Try the following case scenarios to test your knowledge.

Scenario 1

At intake, Mrs. Smith tells the visitation staff that she is relieved that the judge ordered supervised visitation between her ex-husband, Brad, and son Phillip in the Injunction for Protection Against Domestic Violence. She notes, however, that she is worried about Mr. Smith's other son, Darius, who he had with a former girlfriend. She says she saw six year old Darius in the grocery store and he had a black eye "again." She says Mr. Smith "uses Darius as a punching bag."

Scenario 1

- What statements has Mrs. Smith made to the staff that are alarming?
- How could the alleged abuse against Darius affect Phillip's visitation?
- What should the staff member do?



What statements has Mrs. Smith made to the staff that are alarming?

Mrs. Smith stated that she suspects her ex-husband of abusing his other child, Darius, and that he has abused Darius before.

How could the alleged abuse against Darius affect Phillip's visitation?

According to Mrs. Smith, Brad is violent, as evident by the domestic violence injunction. However, Brad is also apparently abusive towards Darius, his other child. Brad could become violent at and before or after visitation with both Phillip and Mrs. Smith, as well as staff members.

What should the staff member do?

All child abuse allegations should be taken seriously. A report to the abuse hotline should be made by a staff member (INSERT HOTLINE NUMBER). Additionally, safety provisions should be taken when Brad visits with Phillip. Staff members should be sure to document all statements made about child abuse and domestic violence.

Scenario 2

Mr. Jeff Jones is visiting with his daughter Julie in a dependency case. He was accused of hitting her so hard that she had welts on her legs and buttocks. Mrs. Jones left Mr. Jones after the incident, and lives with Julie in an apartment a few blocks from the marital home. One day, when dropping Julie off at the supervised visitation program, Mrs. Jones says to staff, "I think Jeff is still following me. I thought he would stop harassing me after a few weeks, but he still shows up at work, and texts me that it's all my fault. He says he's sure I will suffer for this. I'm so afraid of him."

Scenario 2

- What statements has Mrs. Jones made to the staff that are alarming?
- How could the stalking situation affect visitation?
- What should the staff member do?



What statements has Mrs. Jones made to the staff that are alarming?

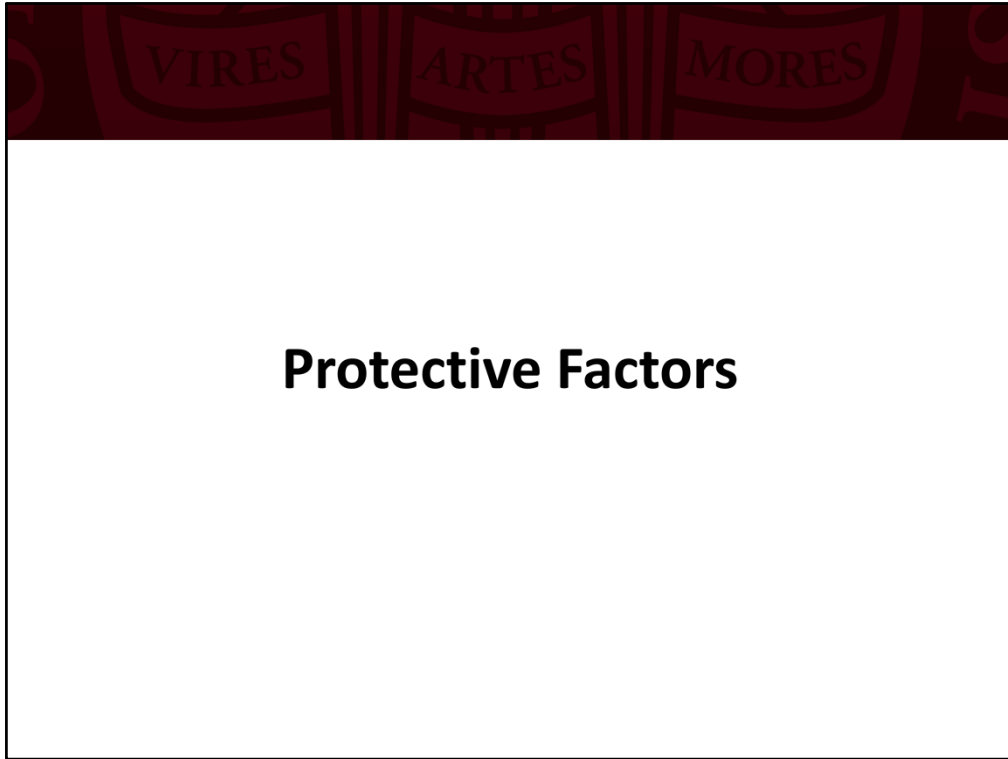
Mrs. Jones is concerned that her ex-husband is following her, and he is still stalking her, which is something he has done in the past. Mrs. Jones has also stated that she is afraid of Mr. Jones.

How could the stalking situation affect visitation?

Because both parents are in the same location for visits, Jeff could use this opportunity to follow Mrs. Jones home after she leaves the visit. Jeff can also ask Julie to provide her mother with messages that may be threatening or vicious, or even physically harm Mrs. Jones before or after a visit outside or inside the visitation center.

What should the staff member do?

Every stalking situation is different. Staff should ask Mrs. Jones questions about her safety concerns, discuss ways that she can protect herself (disabling GPS on her phone, recording all instances of harassment and being followed, etc.), and discuss the possibility of a stalking injunction. Staff should also provide resources for Mrs. Jones for legal assistance, a shelter, and other victims services. Staff members should be sure to document all statements made about child abuse and domestic violence.



Research has identified six protective factors that can influence child maltreatment.

Protective Factors

1. Nurturing attachments facilitate:
 - Child resilience
 - Child coping skills
 - Child interpersonal skills
2. Knowing about normal developmental stages:
 - Helps prevent over-disciplining
 - Helps control parental frustration



1. Nurturing attachments is when a parent bonds with the child and the child trust the parent to meet his/ her needs.

Helps build child resilience.
Gives children coping skills.
Teaches interpersonal skills.

2. Knowing about normal developmental stages is when a parent understands what a child is capable of at different ages, both mentally and physically.

Prevents over-discipline.
Helps control parental frustration.

Protective Factors

3. Having and using resilient coping skills:
 - Helps prevent projecting stress onto the child
 - Helps prevent parents from taking anger out on the child
4. Having supportive social connections:
 - Gives the child a more secure environment
 - Models good social relationships for the child



3. Having and using resilient coping skills is when parents develop healthy ways to deal with parental stress.

Parent is less likely to project stress onto the child.
Parent is less likely to act out in anger towards the child.

4. Having supportive social connections is when parent has support systems in their life.

Gives the parent someone to turn to when they need help.
Gives the child a more secure environment.
Models good social relationships for the child.

Protective Factors

5. Access to external support:
 - Enables the parent to access resources that can help the child
6. Social and emotional competence of children helps children:
 - Learn how to create healthy relationships
 - Do better in school



5. Access to external support is when the parent can identify resources in the community for support.

Gives the parent someone to turn in the community when they need help. The parent can access resources that can help the child, such as health care, mental health, and education.

6. Social and emotional competence of children is when children learn from their parents how to express emotions in a healthy manner and build healthy relationships.

Child is better adjusted.
Child learns how to create healthy relationships.
Child is likely to do better in school.



Important Phone Numbers

Hotlines

**If you suspect domestic violence or child abuse...
DON'T WAIT! CALL:**

- **National Domestic Violence Hotline**
1-800-799-SAFE(7233) or
TTY 1-800-787-3224
- **Florida Domestic Violence Hotline**
1-800-500-1119 or
TDD 1-800-621-4202
- **Child Abuse Hotline**
1-800-96-ABUSE (22873) or
TTY 1-800-453-5145



SUPERVISED VISITATION PERSONNEL:

Child safety is everyone's job!

DO

- Assess the child's safety.
- Tell the child you are glad he/she told you.
- Get down to the child's level to listen.
- Consult with a supervisor.

What Information is Helpful When Making a Call?

1. Child's name
2. Addresses and phone numbers for the family
3. Your name and contact information

If You Suspect Child Abuse or Neglect,

DON'T WAIT!

CALL

1-800-96-ABUSE (22873)

1-800-453-5145 for TDD

Call if you have reason to suspect, even if you are unsure... the Hotline Counselor will determine if there should be a report.

DON'T

- Tell anyone (other than the Hotline Counselor and your supervisor) what the child told you.
- React with shock or fear.
- Push for details that the child may not feel ready to share.
- Doubt your instincts or the child's word.

For More Information:

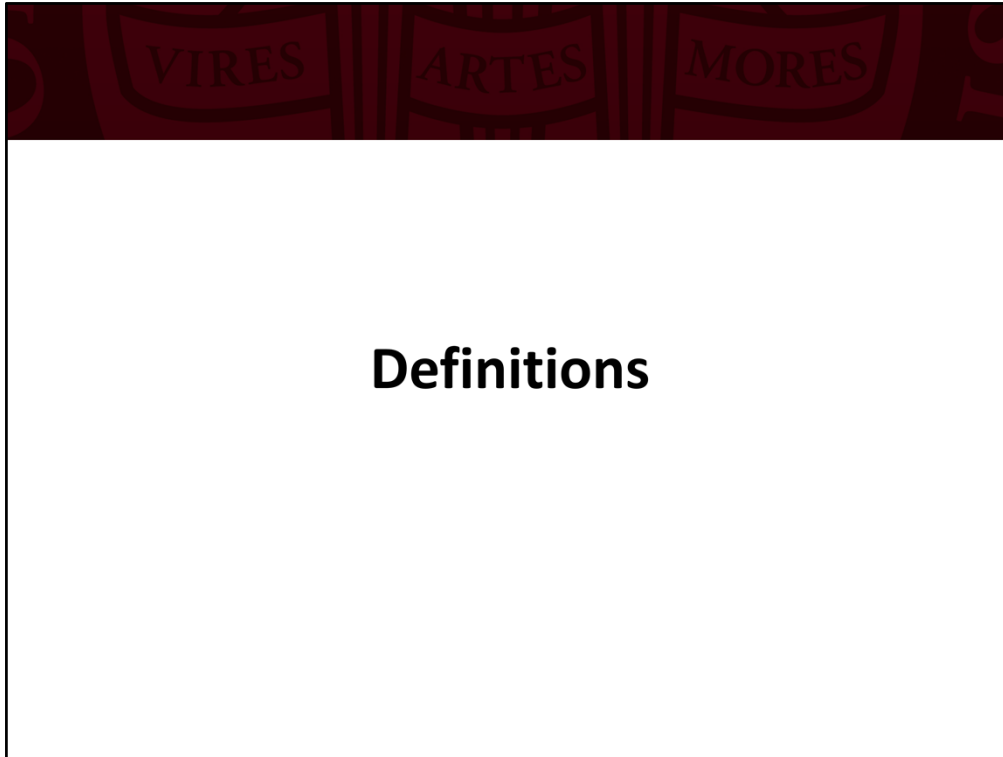
Contact
DCF Website
or
childwelfare.gov



Florida's Supervised Visitation Programs: Protecting Children, Connecting Families
The Clearinghouse on Supervised Visitation, Institute for Family Violence Studies,
College of Social Work, Florida State University

<http://familyvio.csw.fsu.edu>





Definitions

The following are non-legal definitions for the purposes of this training. Check you local statutes for legal definitions.

Child Abuse

Any recent act or failure to act, on the part of a parent or caretaker, which results in death, serious physical or emotional harm, sexual abuse or exploitation; or
An act or failure to act, which presents a serious risk of imminent harm.

Domestic Violence as defined by Florida Statutes § 741.28

Any assault, aggravated assault, battery, aggravated battery, sexual assault, sexual battery, stalking, aggravated stalking, kidnapping, false imprisonment, or any criminal offense resulting in physical injury or death of one family or household member by another family or household member.

Physical Abuse

The infliction of physical injury as a result of punching, beating, kicking, biting, burning, shaking or otherwise harming a child.

Child Neglect

Is characterized by failure to provide for the child's basic needs. Neglect can be physical, educational, or emotional.

Sexual Abuse

Fondling a child's genitals, intercourse, incest, rape, sodomy, exhibitionism, and commercial exploitation through prostitution or the production of pornographic materials.

Emotional Abuse

Acts or omissions by the parents or other caregivers that have caused, or could cause, serious behavioral, cognitive, emotional, or mental disorders.

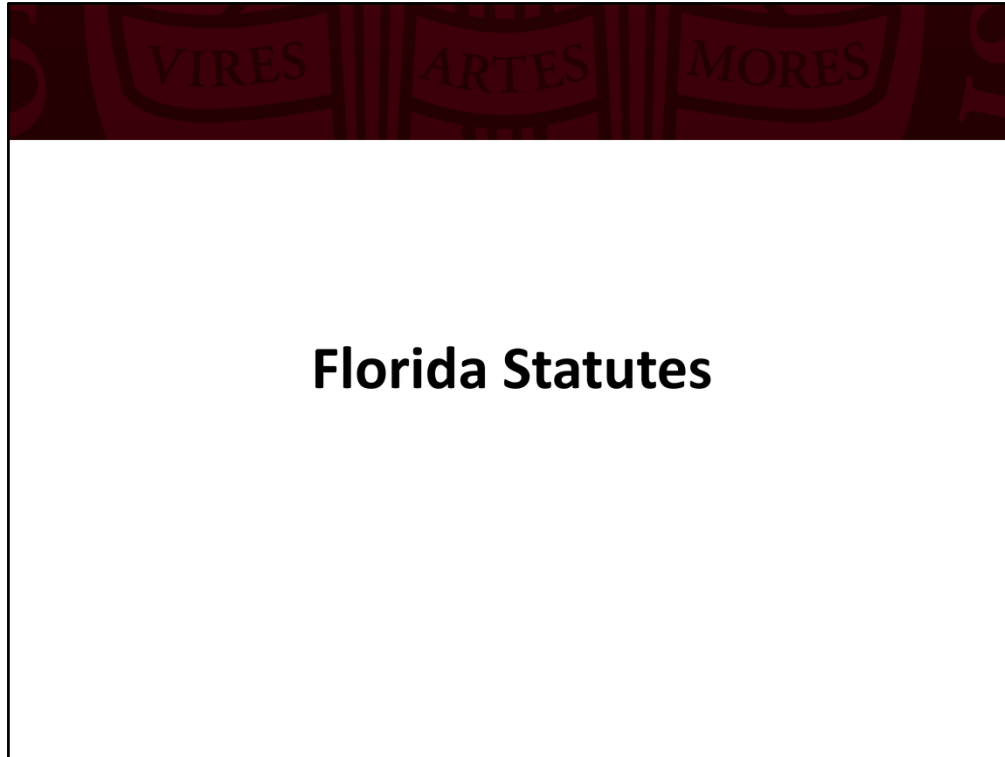
Harm

Harm can occur when any person inflicts or allows to be inflicted upon the child physical, mental, or emotional injury. In determining whether harm has occurred, the following factors must be considered:

- the age of the child;
- any prior history of injuries to the child;
- the location of the injury on the body of the child;
- the multiplicity of the injury;
- and the type of trauma inflicted.

Examples of Harm:

Leaving a child without adult supervision or arrangement appropriate for the child's age or mental or physical condition.
Failing to supply the child with adequate food, clothing, shelter, or health care, although financially able to do so or although offered financial or other means to do so.
Exposing the child to a controlled substance or alcohol.
Engaging in violent behavior that demonstrates a wanton disregard for the presence of a child and could reasonably result in serious injury to the child.
Negligently failing to protect a child in his or her care from inflicted physical, mental, or sexual injury caused by another.



The following are link to applicable Florida Statutes.

Aggravated assault — FLA. STAT. § 784.021

http://www.leg.state.fl.us/statutes/index.cfm?App_mode=Display_Statute&URL=0700-0799/0784/Sections/0784.021.html

Aggravated battery — FLA. STAT. § 784.045

http://www.leg.state.fl.us/statutes/index.cfm?App_mode=Display_Statute&Search_String=&URL=0700-0799/0784/Sections/0784.045.html

Assault— FLA. STAT. § 784.011

http://www.leg.state.fl.us/Statutes/index.cfm?App_mode=Display_Statute&Search_String=&URL=0700-0799/0784/Sections/0784.011.html

Battery — FLA. STAT. § 784.03

http://www.leg.state.fl.us/statutes/index.cfm?App_mode=Display_Statute&URL=0700-0799/0784/Sections/0784.03.html

Child Abuse — FLA. STAT. § 827.03

http://www.leg.state.fl.us/Statutes/index.cfm?App_mode=Display_Statute&Search_String=&URL=0800-0899/0827/Sections/0827.03.html

Domestic Violence — FLA. STAT. § 741.28

http://www.leg.state.fl.us/Statutes/index.cfm?App_mode=Display_Statute&Search_String=&URL=0700-0799/0741/Sections/0741.28.html

Indecent exposure — FLA. STAT. § 800.03

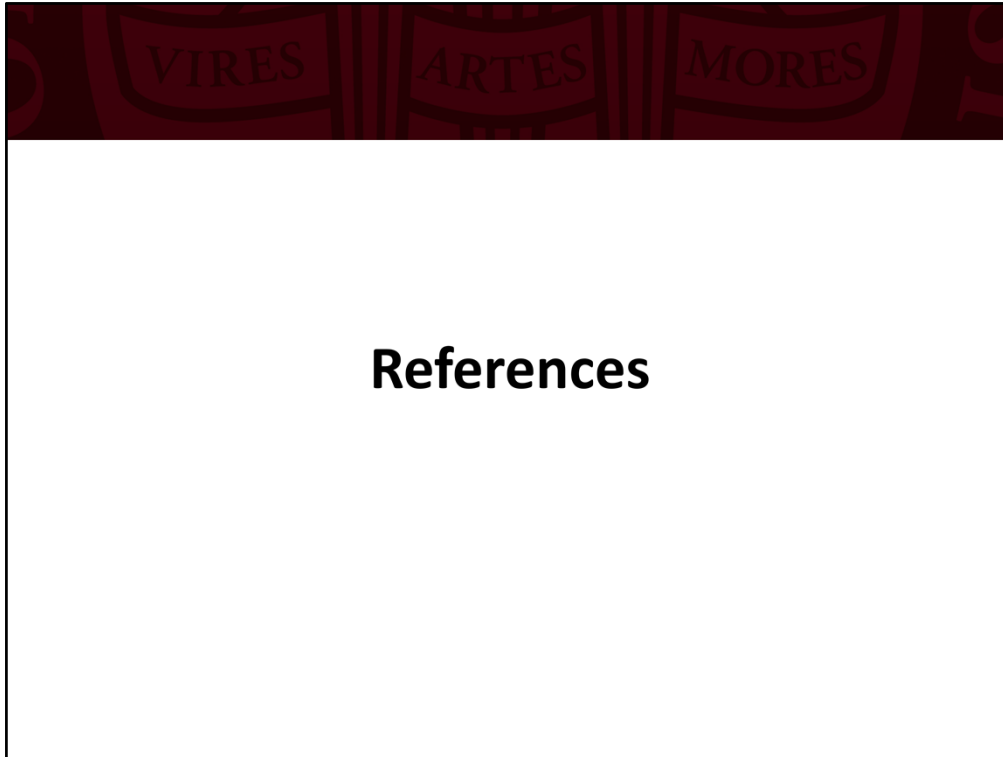
http://www.leg.state.fl.us/Statutes/index.cfm?App_mode=Display_Statute&Search_String=&URL=0800-0899/0800/Sections/0800.03.html

Sexual battery — FLA. STAT. § 794.011

http://www.leg.state.fl.us/statutes/index.cfm?App_mode=Display_Statute&Search_String=&URL=0700-0799/0794/Sections/0794.011.html

Stalking and aggravated stalking — FLA. STAT. § 784.048

http://www.leg.state.fl.us/statutes/index.cfm?App_mode=Display_Statute&Search_String=&URL=0700-0799/0784/Sections/0784.048.html



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