Examining risk factors and escalation in non-criminal domestic dispute cases

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Presented by:
Angela Hovey, PhD, RSW
Lori Chambers, PhD
Susan Scott, PhD, RSW
Carly Roberts, MSW Candidate

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Agenda

• Project background
• Risk factor research literature
• Overview of our data sets
• Exploration of four multiple incident cases
• Audience discussion
Background to the Project

- Geographic area: mid-sized city in Ontario with rural areas; population of 35-40k
- High volume of DV calls to police: approximately 1000 calls annually; 1/3 result with criminal charges being laid.
- Demanding on resources; potential for improvement.
- Data is collected for every domestic violence call via two forms:
  1. Domestic Violence Supplementary Report – Criminal Code Investigation (DVSR-CC);

Risk Factors in the Literature

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Physical</th>
<th>Emotional/psychological</th>
<th>Sexual</th>
<th>Social</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Previous exposure to family violence (1, 2)</td>
<td>Controlling behaviours (4, 5, 6, 7)</td>
<td>Sexual jealousy (4, 7, 8)</td>
<td>Age (1, 3, 6, 7, 8, 9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threats to kill with a weapon or other dangerous object (4, 5, 6, 7)</td>
<td>Physical abuse (3, 6, 7, 8, 9)</td>
<td>Forced sexual acts with acquaintance (4, 7, 8, 9)</td>
<td>Lower SES (3, 4, 5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to firearms (4, 5, 6, 7)</td>
<td>Verbal abuse (3, 4, 6, 7)</td>
<td>Forced sexual acts with others (6, 10)</td>
<td>Ex-partner or current separation (3, 4, 7, 8, 9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violence resulting in serious injury and/or life-threatening disability (4, 5, 6, 7)</td>
<td>Violent abuse (3, 4, 6, 7, 8)</td>
<td>Violent deaths (7, 10)</td>
<td>Intimidation (4, 5, 6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General threats of severe harm or death (4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9)</td>
<td>Stalking behaviours (3, 4, 5, 6)</td>
<td>Sexual infidelity (3, 11)</td>
<td>Substance abuse (3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History of past physical violence (1, 3, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10)</td>
<td>Trespass to commit suicide (11)</td>
<td>General ongoing and continual sexual abuse (4, 7, 8, 9)</td>
<td>Mental health diagnosis or concern (4, 6, 8, 9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General ongoing and continual physical abuse (1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10)</td>
<td>General ongoing and continual emotional abuse and attempts to control (3, 4, 5, 6)</td>
<td>Relationship to children in the home and pregnancy (3, 4, 7, 8)</td>
<td>Unemployment and low educational attainment (4, 5, 6)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

References

Domestic Violence Supplementary Reports (DVSRs)

Non-Criminal Code Investigation (Non-CC) risk question examples:

- Does either involved person fear that the other will assault, seriously injure or kill her/him or the children? Explain.
- Has the relationship become more conflictual (e.g. arguing)? Explain.
- Has either of the involved persons ever threatened to harm/kill the other or any other family members/acquaintances? If so when?
- Does either involved person own/have access to firearms or weapons?
- Do the involved persons have any known mental health problems (e.g. depression, bi-polar disorder etc.)? If so, what.

Overview of the Data Sets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>DVSR – CC</th>
<th>DVSR – Non-CC</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cases</td>
<td>985</td>
<td>2429</td>
<td>3414</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td>292 (29.6%)</td>
<td>797 (32.8%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>271</td>
<td>710</td>
<td>981</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>713</td>
<td>275</td>
<td>988</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Criminal cases: January 1, 2011 – March 31, 2014
- Non-criminal cases: January 1, 2011 – December 30, 2014

Overview of the Data Sets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>DVSR – CC</th>
<th>DVSR – Non-CC</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td># Officers</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean # Cases</td>
<td>10.94</td>
<td>21.88</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range of Cases</td>
<td>1-36</td>
<td>1-81</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- 81 officers investigated both CC and non-CC cases
- These officers dealt with between 2-117 cases each
- 4 officers dealt with 100+ cases
- 40 officers dealt with 30-97 cases
**Level of Response** | DVSR | Risk Question | %
---|---|---|---
**Highest Yes** | Non-CC | b) Has the relationship become more conflictual (e.g. arguing)? Explain. | 28.9
 | CC | c) Does the accused's personality feature anger, impulsiveness or poor behaviour control? | 49.2

**Lowest Yes** | Non-CC | e) Has either involved person used or threatened the use of firearms or weapons against any other person? | 0.7
 | CC | f) Has the accused injured or killed a pet owned by the victim? | 3.2

**Highest Unknown** | Non-CC | j) Has there been a noticeable increase in the abuse of drugs and/or alcohol? | 40.7
 | CC | k) Has there been a noticeable increase in the abuse of drugs and/or alcohol? | 38.1

**Lowest Unknown** | Non-CC | l) Has there been a recent separation or change in the relationship between the involved persons or within the family? (e.g. Conflict between family members) Explain. | 31.8
 | CC | m) Has there been a recent separation or change in the relationship between the victim and the accused? | 26.0

**Number of cases**
- **Individuals involved:** 3463
- **21 people were involved in 11-22 cases**
- **4 of 21: Non-CC cases only**

**Case Scenario #1: Lisa & Larry Summary**
- **Number of incidents prior to timeline:** Unknown
- **Total incidents during the timeline:** 7 (2 Non-CC; 5 CC)
- **Type of call:** 4 - 911, 2 - non-emergency, 1 - unknown
- **Children present:** 27 incidents
- **Taken to shelter:** 3/7

**Key points of the narrative:**
- Children in the care of CAS (ages 7 months and 23 months at time of first call)
- Lisa identifies being afraid from the first incident
- History of sexual violence and DV, not flagged until third call
Case Scenario #1 Timeline: Lisa & Larry

**December 2011**
- Incidents: 2
  - 1 - Lisa (c)
  - 2 - Lisa (c)

**January - July 2012**
- Incidents: 4
  - 3 - Lisa (v)
  - 4 - Lisa (v)
  - 5 - Lisa (v)
  - 6 - Lisa (v)

**April 2013**
- Incidents: 1
  - 7 - Lisa (v)

**Risk Factors**
- Recent break up
- Financial and housing crisis
- Possible stalking and angry behaviour by Larry
- Children in CAS

**Case Scenario #2: Betty & Brian Summary**

- Number of incidents prior to timeline: Unclear - states from 3 to 28
- Total incidents during the timeline: 16 (13 Non-CC; 3 CC)
- Type of Calls: 8 - 911, 5 - non-emergency, 3 - unknown
- Children present: 12/16
- Support accepted: 6/16

**Key points of the narrative**
- MHA issues for Betty; learning disability for Brian
- Birth of son increased stress
- Threats made by both parties throughout time period
- Betty charged 3 times; Betty was most often complainant

**Case Scenario #2 Timeline: Betty & Brian**

**October 2011 - January 2012**
- Incidents: 4
  - 1 – Brian (c)
  - 2 – Betty (c)
  - 3 – Brian (c)
  - 4 – Betty (c)

**November - December 2012**
- Incidents: 6
  - 5 – Betty (c)
  - 6 – Brian (v)
  - 7 – Betty (c)
  - 8 – Betty (c)
  - 9 – Betty (c)
  - 10 – Brian (v)

**January - February 2013**
- Incidents: 4
  - 11 – Betty (c)
  - 12 – Betty (c)
  - 13 – Brian (v)
  - 14 – Betty (c)

**December 2013**
- Incidents: 2
  - 15 – Betty (c)
  - 16 – Brian (c)

**Risk Factors**
- Mental health issues
- Emotional instability
- New baby
- Brian controlling relationship
- Betty wants a gun
- No longer responding to risk questions
Case Scenario #3: Emily & Ed, Frank, Gus, Harry

- Number of incidents prior to timeline: Unclear: Frank 2-33; Harry 7-13; Gus 2-3; Ed 3-27
- Total incidents during the timeline: 21: Frank = 5 (2 CC); Harry = 2; Gus = 1; Ed = 13 (4 CC)
- Type of call: 16 – 911; 2 non-emergency; 2 – unknown; 1 found by police;
- Children present: 12/21 Incidents
- Support accepted: 5/21

Key points of the narrative:
- Drug and alcohol use by all throughout incidents
- Multiple men involved
- All men with prior police involvement
- Two of four men involved charged with assault resulting from calls

Case Scenario #3 Timeline: Emily & Ed, Frank, Gus, Harry

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Incidents: 5</th>
<th>Incidents: 6</th>
<th>Incidents: 7</th>
<th>Incidents: 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 – Frank (c)</td>
<td>6 – Harry (c)</td>
<td>7 – Emcy (c) - Gus</td>
<td>19 – Emily (v)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 – Emily (v)</td>
<td>8 – Harry (c)</td>
<td>9 – Emcy (c) - Ed</td>
<td>20 – Emily (c)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 – Emily (v)</td>
<td>10 – Emily (c)</td>
<td>11 – Emily (c)</td>
<td>21 – Emily (v)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 – Frank (c)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 – Emily (v)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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Risk Factors:
- Increasing conflict
- Emily physically assaulted
- Both increase drug and alcohol use
- Many previous occurrences

<table>
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<th>Incidents: 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12 – Frank (c)</td>
<td>13 – Emcy (c)</td>
<td>14 – Emcy (c)</td>
<td>19 – Emily (v)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 – Emcy (c)</td>
<td>16 – Emcy (c)</td>
<td>17 – Emcy (v)</td>
<td>20 – Emcy (c)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 – Emcy (v)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>21 – Emcy (v)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Risk Factors:
- Drugs and alcohol involved with all
- Ed tries to control her property
- Refused to answer for several incidents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Incidents: 7</th>
<th>Incidents: 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12 – Ed (c)</td>
<td>13 – Emcy (c)</td>
<td>14 – Emcy (c)</td>
<td>19 – Emily (v)</td>
</tr>
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<td>15 – Emcy (c)</td>
<td>16 – Emcy (c)</td>
<td>17 – Emcy (v)</td>
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<tr>
<td>18 – Emcy (v)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>21 – Emcy (v)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Risk Factors:
- Ed charged with assault
- Risk questions refuse
- Incomplete forms

Case Scenario #4: Jim & Julie Summary

- Number of incidents prior to timeline: 26
- Total incidences during the timeline: 20 Non-CC
- Type of call: 19 - non-emergency, 1 - 911
- Children present: 10/20
- Support accepted: 1/20

Key points of the narrative:
- Children in common, CAS is involved throughout
- Custody/access and family court noted most consistently
- No criminal charges
- Drugs and alcohol used by both
Case Scenario #4 Timeline: Jim & Julie

August - December 2011
- Incidents: 4
  1. Julie (c)
  2. Jim (c)
  3. Jim (c)
  4. Jim (c)

Risk Factors:
- Financial stress
- Both use substances
- Emotional instability for Julie
- On and off relationship
- Violence towards each other

October 2012 – March 2013
- Incidents: 5
  5. Jim (c)
  6. Julie (c)
  7. Jim (c)
  8. Jim (c)
  9. Jim (c)

Risk Factors:
- Parenting issues
- Custody/access
- Issues
- Jealousy
- Anger – Julie
- Unemployment – Jim

Risk Factors:
- Financial stress
- Both use substances
- Emotional instability for Julie
- On and off relationship
- Violence towards each other

May - August 2013
- Incidents: 7
  1. Jim (c)
  2. Jim (c)
  3. Jim (c)
  4. Jim (c)
  5. Jim (c)
  6. Jim (c)
  7. Jim (c)

Risk Factors:
- Ongoing conflict
- Family court issues
- Family court issues
- Lengthy history of domestic issues listed back to 2007

January - September 2014
- Incidents: 4
  1. Jim (c)
  2. Julie (c)
  3. Jim (c)
  4. Jim (c)

Risk Factors:
- Ongoing conflict
- Property disagreements
- Family court issues
- Lengthy history of domestic issues listed back to 2007

Discussion

- What generalized issues do you see in these cases?
- What might be impacting police response to these cases?
- What would indicate a ‘good response’ by police and others?
- How can the risk evaluation be improved?
- How can the overall response be improved?

(potential considerations: police response, offering/accepting of support; children involved and how deal with?; potential attitudes of police and helping professionals?; housing and poverty issues?; drugs/alcohol misuse?)

Thank you!

Contact information:
Angela Hovey ahovey@lakeheadu.ca

Lakehead University