

Domestic Violence: Unintended Social Implications

In sum, the labeling of all acts of physical aggression as violent can have unintended social implications.

K. Daniel O'Leary

The study of family violence is a complex, multifaceted experience. By its very nature, family violence involves physicians, nurses, psychiatrists, psychologists, family counselors, educators, social workers, attorney, judges, and law enforcement officials. All of these professionals have expertise in their own area of specialization. However, they may not understand or appreciate the difficulties experienced by others in their areas of interest.

Harvey Wallace

Warning

This is a hyperlinked research paper. If you **are not really concerned** about the issue of domestic violence you might as well end reading now. This research paper is written from the perspective of a retired police lieutenant who has both personally and professionally experienced (as contemporarily defined) domestic violence and researched the issue almost on a daily basis for the last 12 years. It is designed to assist law enforcement officials, interveners and public policy makers in the prevention, intervention, policies and solutions concerning domestic violence.

Purpose

This empirical evidence-based hyperlinked research paper is intended for all law enforcement officers in general and law enforcement administrators in particular. Law enforcement needs to begin lobbying public policy makers for changes in contemporary one-size-fits-all Duluth modeled policies, procedures and programs. Billions are being spent and the original goal of reducing fatal and non-fatal incidents has only fallen at the same rate of *or less* than the rate of violence in general.

And interveners and ideological researchers need to understand that I'm not lobbying to spend less nor deprive victims of the resources and the support they need. *The data clearly documents the need for law enforcement domestic violence intervention.* However, we need to spend the billions smarter and better than we are now. If current policies are not saving lives or reducing the number of victimizations, as the data in Massachusetts and elsewhere document they are not, then it is only logical that interventions, policies and procedures need to change.

It has been my personal and professional experience to recognize that the majority of domestic violence interveners and public policy makers believe that law enforcement officers are (classic cliché here) a part of the problem and not a part of the solution.

Nothing could be further from the truth. Law enforcement officers were very much involved with the conception and implementation of the Minneapolis Domestic Violence Experiment. Law enforcement officers also worked closely with the architects of the Duluth intervention model when that intervention was providing services for victims who were being beaten, battered and raped.

Most importantly, when interveners and public policy makers were demanding that law enforcement treat domestic violence crime just like they treat all other crimes, law enforcement knew – those many

years ago – that domestic violence is far more complex and multifaceted than most other crimes and it needed to be treated differently not the same as other crimes.

It is time that interveners and public policy makers understand or appreciate the difficulties presented to law enforcement by many of the contemporary definitions of domestic violence and the one-size-fits-all laws that are often far more subjective than objective.

The purpose of this paper is threefold: (1) to demonstrate that labeling all familial acts of aggression or coercion as domestic ***violence*** reduces resources and services for victims who are beaten, battered and raped, (2) mandatory arrest removes from law enforcement the ability to provide different interventions and services for the very dramatically different needs and desires of individually diverse victims and families and (3) ideological hunches and hope interventions need to be replaced with interventions supported by empirical evidence-based data.

Law enforcement officers also know that as long as interveners and public policy makers continue to claim, despite the data to the contrary, that contemporary domestic violence policies are working well and as long as interveners and public policy makers continue to think that this nation can arrest and incarcerate its way out of this enigma, domestic violence will surely continue to be the single call officers respond to more than any other.

Domestic Violence Awareness Month

Every year since 1989 the U.S. Congress has declared October as domestic violence awareness month. In 1994 the U.S. Congress passed the Violence Against Women Act. Since that date Congress has been providing billions with a primary goal of reducing fatal and non-fatal violence against women.

Approximately 16 years ago Massachusetts Governor William Weld declared the existence of a [state of emergency](#) in the Commonwealth because of the unacceptable frequency and severity of domestic violence. Weld established an Advisory Commission on Domestic Violence to make recommendations to the Governor to address this state of emergency. In addition to federal funding Massachusetts provided additional funding to domestic violence agencies and law enforcement for domestic violence incidents.

Approximately 16 years after the Weld proclamation of a state of emergency, at a June 5, 2008 [press conference](#) in my home state of Massachusetts, Governor Deval Patrick said that Massachusetts is facing a domestic violence public health emergency.

At the press conference the Massachusetts Coalition Against Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence (Jane Doe) reported that domestic violence incidents in Massachusetts rose 300% over the past three years. Jane Doe also noted that in 2007, 42 people were the victims of domestic violence homicides. The numbers of domestic violence homicides are up 50% from 2006, and nearly triple the number in 2005. The Massachusetts Lieutenant Governor said that the trend is moving in the wrong direction and *the administration's goal is to better understand patterns in domestic violence.*

If it is the goal of the Deval administration to better understand the patterns in domestic violence, the administration should begin listening to new voices and not the same ideological stakeholders who for 16 years have been receiving funding for intervention programs that have provided the above dismal results. There is little to no need for a \$1.3 million study to understand that as long as the vast majority

of the funding continues to provide reactive interventions based on 20th century hypotheses and theories, and not 21st century proactive educational initiatives, the numbers will continue to rise. The administration might begin by examining the data surrounding both fatal and non-fatal domestic violence incidents. Just a cursory examination reveals that fatal and non-fatal domestic violence incidents do not rise and fall concurrently with the rise and fall of the funding for contemporary intervention programs. As usual, it is not the money but the methods that are important.

Those responsible for our present interventions appear to have a history of refusing to accept any responsibility for the failure of their intervention process. In the above press conference, as they have in the past, they accept no responsibility for their failure and they simply blame the dismal results of contemporary intervention programs on the lack of funding and the lack of concern of past administrations.

It is time to recognize that the National Research Council report [Advancing the Federal Research Agenda on Violence Against Women](#) warns:

Because of inherent conflicts of interest (no program wants to be found ineffective), funds for program evaluation must be independent from the control of program sponsors so that the ability to evaluate interventions will not be constrained by legislative or other requirements placed on programs or by political considerations.

Ideologically Held Beliefs

At the press conference the director of Jane Doe claims that domestic violence is not socioeconomic or culturally more prevalent in certain areas. Reams of data from the [Bureau of Justice Statistics](#), document that the number of domestic violence non-fatal incidents and homicides, similar to all other crimes, are interconnected to the socioeconomic educational and cultural demographics of specific groups or individuals and their neighborhoods. The problem of domestic violence or violence in general should be the concern of everyone. However, as the data clearly documents intimate partner violence [risk factors](#) do effect some people far more than others.

The National Institute of Justice (NIJ) report, [When Violence Hits Home: How Economics and Neighborhoods Play a Role](#), documents that people living in disadvantaged neighborhoods, facing job instability and economic distress are at higher risk of intimate partner violence offending and victimization than others. That is true for domestic violence and crime in general.

The director also claims that research proves that domestic violence is “predictable and thus preventable.” Research studies from the [National Institute of Justice](#) document what the vast majority of criminologists know. While it is possible to predict that some members of the community are at much “higher risk” of domestic violence victimization, there are no studies that document that anyone can actually predict which specific individual will be injured or killed.

The report, [Maternal Mortality and Morbidity Review in Massachusetts](#) reviewed pregnancy-associated deaths caused by violence, drug overdose, and motor vehicle collisions. This study documents that for every 100,000 births approximately 3 women died because of intimate partner homicides. The report also documents the very relevant role of socioeconomics and culture.

The report found that black non-Hispanic women were over 10 times more likely and Hispanic women 4 times more likely to be murdered than white non-Hispanic women. The report also documents these

deaths do not represent pregnant women in general. What the report does document is that the majority of the victims lived in disadvantaged neighborhoods, there was financial stress in their relationship, the relationship was volatile, their partner had a history of violence in general and their partner had a history of psychological problems or criminal behavior.

There should be no question that when it is possible to identify someone who displays all or some of the above risk factors there absolutely is a need for programs and interventions to be in place to engage them in seeking services and support. However, engaging does not mean predicting they will suffer serious injury or death.

I have a long history with interveners who sadly recognize that there are many thousands of these people in Massachusetts and elsewhere who display some or all of these identifiable risk factors. However, the vast majority of them do not become murders or homicide victims. And most professionals agree that it is improbable to impossible to “predict with any accuracy” just who will be murdered by their partner and who will not. The authors of [Lethality Assessment Tools: A Critical Analysis](#) write that:

The question then arises: Is there something about these relationships in which women are killed that distinguish them from the vast majority of non-lethal but nevertheless abusive intimate relationships? If these lethal relationships are discernibly different, can we use these distinguishing characteristics as a means of identifying and screening out other high risk domestic violence relationships with a view to preventing their escalation to lethal outcomes? The simple answer to both these questions is no.

And to recognize which victims are at a *greater risk of abuse* than others we need to do the opposite of contemporary policies. We need to end generalizing the problem and to begin by recognizing that domestic violence is more prevalent in certain socioeconomic areas, in some cultural behaviors and within specific individuals. If the goal is to better understand domestic violence the Governor might want to begin by asking [Professor David Kennedy](#) at Harvard University. Professor Kennedy is the author of [Rethinking Law Enforcement Strategies to Prevent Domestic Violence](#).

Professor Kennedy believes that interveners and theorists who argue that domestic violence offenders who beat and batter their spouse or intimate partner at home simply represent “every man” in society “is often, and perhaps largely, wrong.” Kennedy also argues that mandatory arrest “frequently puts victims at *greater* risk from their abusers.”

And the data clearly documents that Kennedy is correct. [The Effects of Arrest on Intimate Partner Violence: New Evidence From the Spouse Assault Replication Program \(SARP\)](#) study found that, “While most victims reported no new incidents of aggression, about 8 percent of them reported a total number of incidents that represented more than 82 percent of the 9,000 incidents.

And while the SARP found that arrest did not seem to increase the danger for some victims, it must be remembered that the SARP study was limited to only minor incidents and the researchers did not review or report about the effects of the more serious injurious and life threatening arrests.

The data, certainly the data in Massachusetts, seems to indicate that many of the contemporary interventions and programs are based on 20th century theories and hypotheses that are simply not providing the desired results. To continue with those programs, as the data in Massachusetts indicates,

seems to be an exercise in futility. It is, as one of the presidential candidates keeps telling us, “Time to change!”

Since 1992 the Boston Globe has published the number of domestic violence related homicides in that year. I recognize that the domestic violence agencies in Massachusetts provide many needed resources and services to women and I agree those resources and services need to continue and perhaps increase.

However, the data seems to document quite clearly that the dramatic rise and fall of domestic violence related homicides in Massachusetts *do not rise and fall with the funding provided by the state or federal government.*

1992 – 44	1993 – 25	1994 – 31	1995 – 54
1996 – 26	1997 – 22	1998 – 16	1999 – 27
2000 – 19	2001 – 15	2002 – 20	2003 – 15
2004 – 28	2005 – 14	2006 – 24	2007 - 39

It is both disingenuous and dangerous for interveners to claim that more money will prevent deaths when the data seems to document that over the years the dramatic rise and fall of these horrific homicides do not in any manner, shape or form correlate in any way with the funding of domestic violence organizations.

There appears to be a very dramatic drop from 1992 to 1993 and that was before the Violence Against Women Act was passed. Spending vast amounts of money only to see the homicides and non-fatal injuries continue to rise should be a red flag that contemporary domestic violence intervention programs need to change.

The director of a local domestic violence agency claims that you can not blame external stressors for causing domestic violence incidents because everybody faces a variety of stress during the day. She seems unable or unwilling to recognize that it is the “variety” of stressors that make a dramatic difference.

The local director claims that financial hardships, substance abuse, unsteady relationships, and one person leaving the relationship are some of the factors connected to domestic violence homicides. Apparently she is not aware that most people at some point confront some of these “stressors” and they do not kill their intimate partner because of them. Studies, some of them researched in Massachusetts, clearly document that the above events might be more stressful for some people than others given the circumstances and complexities of individual lives and the problematical relationships they have with their intimate partner.

The leaders of these agencies should be aware that there continues to be a great many different theories and hypotheses about the cause of and risk factors for domestic violence. Each of these theories and hypotheses has its own group of proponents and advocates. And each proponent and intervener defines domestic violence from their individual perspective.

Domestic violence is far too complex and multifaceted for anyone to claim that it is either predictable or preventable. The most comprehensive college text, *Family Violence: Legal, Medical, and Social Perspectives* today about the issue of violence in the family notes that:

Researchers have interviewed, tested, observed, and evaluated thousands of people in an attempt to discover the factors that contribute to family violence. Unfortunately, to date no one authority has discovered the single correct answer.

The full extent of the cause, context, circumstances and consequences of domestic violence are still being debated. Simply defining what “domestic violence” is or is not continues to cause a great deal of controversy.

What is increasingly clear is that domestic violence does not begin the day heterosexual males and females reach adulthood. Child, sibling, intimate partner, spousal and elder victimizations and perpetrations do not exist in a vacuum and most of the risk factors of these abuses are interconnected regardless of age, gender or sexual orientation.

Crime

Criminality most often refers to the propensity to use physical force or fraud in the pursuit of self-interest. For an act of physical force or fraud to be a crime there must be a law that very clearly and very specifically details just what actions constitute a crime. For most crimes there is a clear, definitive and *objective* definition.

For most crimes there is someone who is clearly viewed by others and themselves as the victim. For most crimes there is someone who is clearly viewed by themselves, and others, as the criminal or the person who initiated or caused the criminal actions to occur.

For most crimes – robbery, car theft, forgery - the majority of people intend and understand that their actions are criminal. Most importantly of all, for most crimes the general public views that specific actions as a crime and victims want law enforcement criminal justice intervention and the victim will assist law enforcement in that criminal investigation.

The Criminalization of Domestic Violence

Domestic violence law enforcement intervention is now and always has been a necessary, but difficult challenge for law enforcement. Because of its multifaceted manifestations and the complexities of domestic violence legislation, law enforcement *domestic violence* intervention should be most concerned about the *violent* or *injurious physical assaults* that occur against children, siblings, spouses, intimate partners, and elders who are beaten, battered or raped.

Families most often accept intervention by law enforcement when the *violence* is “*systematic, persistent and injurious.*” Families do not want law enforcement to come into their homes and make arrests, regardless of age, gender or sexual orientation, for minor or isolated acts of **family conflict**.

In this 21st century *domestic violence* is often not about what the criminal justice system, or in fact most people, consider a *violent* physical assault by one person against another. Merriam-Webster online defines **domestic violence** as “the inflicting of physical injury by one family or household member on another, also a repeated or habitual pattern of such behavior.”

However, in this 21st century *domestic violence* acts need not be violent actions, physical assaults or repeated patterns of behavior.

Perception Becomes Reality

The perception of what domestic *violence* actually is or is not can now be a subjective belief rather than an objective fact. What is or is not viewed as a domestic violence *crime* has become different things to different people in different communities.

Contemporarily, (see the below Office on Violence Against Women (OVW) definition) domestic *violence* can be a perception or fear that a physical or coercive action might occur, rather than the fact that a physical or coercive action actually did occur. Studies document females are more fearful of crime than men and in physical assaults between women and men, women suffer more injuries than men. Under the OVW definition domestic violence can be the most minor act of family conflict. Under statute law, in many states, a criminal act of domestic *violence* can be a civil infraction of a civil order.

Domestic *violence* has been redefined, not only by domestic violence organizations, but the [Office on Violence Against Women, United States Department of Justice \(OVW-USDOJ\)](#) and by our [public policy makers](#). Domestic violence now includes not only *violent* physical assaults, but almost all aggressive, coercive or manipulative behavior that occurs or may occur between family members, intimate partners or people who simply live in the same household.

The criminal justice system has always separated the most serious of crimes – felonies – from the less serious – misdemeanors. An *intentional injurious physical assault* is a *violent* act, and hence a felony. A push or shove without the intent to harm is not viewed as a *violent* act, and hence a misdemeanor. The redefinition of *violence* and focus on all family conflicts as violent acts, regardless of intent, rapidity or severity, has taken the attention and resources away from victims who are beaten, battered or raped as chronic and severe offenses have become mixed together with the most minor.

The "[one-size-fits-all](#)" criminalization of all acts of family conflict can create a great deal of confusion for researchers and the criminal justice system. It seems that many social scientists are not aware of or do not seem concerned about the dramatic and traditional difference between criminal misdemeanors and criminal felonies. And most importantly, interveners and public policy makers do not understand that criminal definitions need to be objective rather than subjective. No one has described the problem more accurately than Harvey Wallace:

How does one accurately study or research a phenomenon if a definition cannot be agreed on because the definition of any act both sets limits and focuses research within certain boundaries? The lack of agreement in defining *family violence* has led to confusion and disarray in attempts to determine factors that cause or contribute to family violence.

The Confusion and Disarray

The [National Coalition Against Domestic Violence \(NCADV\)](#) is accepted by most interveners and public policy makers as the national voice of domestic violence organizations. The NCADV definition of domestic *violence* is:

NCADV believes violence against women and children results from force or threat to achieve and maintain control in intimate relationships as well as from societal abuse of power and domination via sexism, racism, homophobia, classism, anti-Semitism, able-bodyism, agism and other oppressions. NCADV recognizes abuse of power in society can foster battering by perpetuating conditions that condone violence against women and children.

Hence, domestic violence, as defined by the NCADV and member organizations is only a problem for women and children. By its definition the NCADV believes that domestic *violence* is not a problem for men and in fact by implication, *men are the problem*. The NCADV is a private agency and has the right to believe and express those beliefs. In its mission statement the NCADV clearly states its purpose is to lobby public policy makers to construct the above beliefs into public policy legislation

Federal Leadership

And that lobbying by the NCADV has gone very well. In 1994 our public policy makers created the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA). With funds from VAWA, the United States Department of Justice established the [Office on Violence Against Women](#) (OVW). The mission statement of the OVW is:

The mission of the Office on Violence Against Women (OVW) is to provide federal leadership to *reduce violence against women* (italics added), and to administer justice for and strengthen services to all victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking. This is accomplished by developing and supporting the capacity of state, local tribal, and non-profit entities involved in responding to violence against women.

I have searched at length and have yet to find any federal leadership similar to the OVW that attempts to reduce domestic violence against men. Apparently domestic violence against men is not viewed by the federal government, similar to the NCADV, as a problem for men. While the NCADV has the right to minimize, marginalize or ignore male victimization, the federal government should not.

And the architect of VAWA, Senator Biden, still publicly wonders why men do not think that VAWA is intended to help men. To begin with, it is titled the Violence Against Women Act! And the fact that to date *not a single penny* of the billions for VAWA has been spent on a program specifically designed for heterosexual men might be another of the many reasons men do not think VAWA provides them with assistance and resources. In fact Congress is playing an active role in minimizing, marginalizing and ignoring the victimization of men.

In 2007, the 110th Congress passed [House Resolution 590](#) to *raise awareness* about domestic violence. The resolution notes that one in four women will experience domestic violence sometime in her life. This same report about female victimization also notes male victimization, yet the 110th Congress ignores and excludes that information from the resolution. In fact, similar to the NCADV, the resolution excludes any concern about male victimization.

The resolution notes that 13% of teenage girls who have been in a teen dating relationship report being hit or hurt by their partners. Despite the fact that this same report notes that more boys than girls have been hit, slapped or pushed by their dating partners there is no mention of the victimization of boys by the 110th Congress. The resolution excludes any information about teenage boys being hit or hurt by their partner.

The 110th Congress resolution also ignores the fact that it funds the national [Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance](#) (YRBS). The YRBS documents that, 8.9% of males and 8.8% of females report being a victim of physical dating abuse ([CDC 2006](#)).

Despite the fact that males are 4 times more likely to actually *commit suicide*, the resolution reports that teenage girls are more likely to *report attempted suicides* because of dating violence. The resolution ignores the fact that far more boys actually commit suicide than girls.

There can be no doubt that H. RES. 590 reports the victimization of our daughters and intentionally minimizes, marginalizes, and excludes the victimization of our sons. This is just one example of our federal leadership concerning male victimization. If you doubt that the 110th Congress purposely or perhaps through ignorance *excludes* male victimization, you need to read the resolution.

Adding to the Confusion and Disarray

The OVW defines domestic *violence* as:

Domestic violence can be physical, sexual, emotional, economic, or psychological actions or threats of actions that influence another person. This includes any behaviors that intimidate, manipulate, humiliate, isolate, frighten, terrorize, coerce, threaten, blame, hurt, injure or wound someone.

- Physical Abuse: Hitting, slapping, shoving, grabbing, pinching, biting, hair-pulling, biting, etc. Physical abuse also includes denying a partner medical care or forcing alcohol and/or drug use.
- Sexual Abuse: Coercing or attempting to coerce any sexual contact or behavior without consent. Sexual abuse includes, but is certainly not limited to marital rape, attacks on sexual parts of the body, forcing sex after physical violence has occurred, or treating one in a sexually demeaning manner.
- Emotional Abuse: Undermining an individual's sense of self-worth and/or self-esteem. This may include, but is not limited to constant criticism, diminishing one's abilities, name-calling, or damaging one's relationship with his or her children.
- Economic Abuse: Making or attempting to make an individual financially dependent by maintaining total control over financial resources, withholding one's access to money, or forbidding one's attendance at school or employment.
- Psychological Abuse: Causing fear by intimidation; threatening physical harm to self, partner, children, or partner's family or friends; destruction of pets and property; and forcing isolation from family, friends, or school and/or work.

This presents a lot more confusion than clarity to the issue for the criminal justice system. In fact, much of the above behaviors seems analogous to the way many parents or caretakers, both male and female, raise children. The lesson taught to children is that those who have the physical or economic power in the family have the right to use those powers to control the behavior of those who do not. Perhaps this style of child rearing may have created some, "unintended social implications," that we as adults have little to no desire to explore.

Given this OVW very subjective rather than objective definition, it is likely that during everyone's lifetime they have or believe they have been an offender and a victim. Perhaps the domestic violence definition has been expanded to include the entire population in an effort to justify spending billions for a Violence Against Women Act that, overall, has meet few of its original goals.

The report [Controlling Violence Against Women](#) documents that the Violence Against Women Act has spent millions on untested ideological gender-driven and specific interventions using non-systematic polices that lack empirical support of effectiveness.

The National Violence Against Women Survey

The National Institute of Justice (NIJ) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) also sponsored research that makes claims similar, but not as broad, as the OVW definition. The [Findings from the National Violence Against Women Survey](#) (NVAWS) include minor, once in a life time acts of physical aggression as instances of domestic or intimate partner violence.

And despite the fact that the NVAWS authors report that 40% of surveyed women and 54% of surveyed men said they were physically assaulted as a child by an adult caretaker the authors of NVAWS choose to ignore their own data and conclude that domestic violence is first and foremost a problem for (heterosexual) women.

The NVAWS reports that 22.1% of women and 7.4% of men reported that they were physically assaulted by a current or former spouse, cohabiting partner, boyfriend or girlfriend, or date in their lifetime. These once in a lifetime acts of physical aggression, regardless of severity, are included as acts of domestic violence. The NVAWS documents that approximately 1.3 million women and 835,000 men report they are physically assaulted by an intimate partner annually.

The NVAWS documents that the majority of these once in a life time or annual physical assault reports are relatively minor events, pushing, shoving, slapping, etc. The NVAWS notes that women report these acts of aggression to law enforcement twice often as men. And the NVAWS notes that law enforcement officers are three times more likely to arrest or detain the offender when the victim is female.

This expansion of the definition of domestic violence from the earlier criminal justice concern about the safety of battered spouses sends a dangerous and incorrect message about criminal victimization. Certainly all acts of minor physical assaults or verbal aggression are wrong regardless of who the perpetrator is. However, the labeling of all acts of physical aggression or coercion as *violent* has had unintended social implications.

Is it beneficial to request or mandate criminal justice intervention for each and every isolated act of family conflict? Or should we limit criminal justice domestic violence intervention to its original intent of saving lives and providing assistance and resources for the very real victims who are beaten, battered and raped?

The OVW styled definitions of domestic violence provides fodder to the growing belief among many researchers myself included, that preferring or mandating domestic violence arrest for every act of physical aggression causes communities to ignore the real and serious needs of some domestic violence victims.

Using the OVW definition of domestic violence, incidents of domestic violence occur in almost all families. Certainly many if not most parents use some of the OVW behavior while raising children and aggression and physical assaults appear regularly among siblings.

The OVW definition can unnecessarily reduce a community's criminal justice and civil resources while at the same time it trivializes the plight of victims who are beaten, battered and raped by claiming that almost every family has a domestic violence victim.

The Crux of the Problem

The predominant purpose of my domestic violence column on www.policeone.com is to introduce a rational, reasoned and relevant empirical evidence-based perspective concerning domestic violence intervention for law enforcement. Too often domestic violence policy is driven by **ideological interveners** (personnel, programs and philosophy firmly fixed in place) and impenetrably interlocked with the stakeholders "one-solution-fits-all" (Duluth Model) hypothesis.

With little to no empirical support **the Duluth Model** has influenced civil and criminal justice intervention far more than any other model. Central to the Duluth philosophy is that domestic violence is (see the above NCADV definition) gender based. In fact, Duluth proffers that adult heterosexual females are the only or primary victims and adult heterosexual males are their abusers.

The Duluth philosophy claims that domestic violence occurs because of the patriarchal organization of contemporary society and domestic violence is used only or primarily by adult heterosexual men to maintain male privilege and to oppress and subjugate adult heterosexual women. Duluth rejects concepts of male and female mutuality or symmetry in abusive relationships.

In the academe, among members who are not ideologically fixated on the Duluth Model, there is little to no question that the issue of domestic violence is far more complex than to be explained by any single model.

In fact, the laws in almost all fifty states define domestic violence as child, sibling, spousal, intimate partner and elder abuse. In this 21st century it should be understood by interveners and public policy makers that domestic violence does not simply rear its ugly head the day male and female heterosexuals reach adulthood. Nor is domestic violence, by law in all fifty states, the exclusive or primary domain of adult heterosexuals.

However, the majority of the nationally recognized and sometimes publicly financed domestic violence organizations, **as their websites indisputably document**, continue to believe and proffer, that domestic violence is only or primarily a problem for adult heterosexual women and their children.

These organizations also continue to believe, with little to no evidence-based empirical data to substantiate their beliefs, that the emotional, economic and physical confrontations between adult heterosexual women and men are dramatically different than the same confrontations between all other family members or intimate partners.

Given the fact that we have a Violence Against **Women** Act, and not a Family Violence Act, it seems apparent that these "Duluth" styled domestic violence organizations have convinced our public policy makers, despite reams of empirical research to the contrary, that domestic violence, with little to no exception, is gender based and domestic violence is exclusively or primarily a problem for adult heterosexual women.

Data does document that *some* domestic violence does occur because of the misogynist or sexist behavior of *some* males. However, there is no data that documents that only males desire to have the power to control familial behavior or intimate partner relationships.

A recent [CDC study](#) found that females initiate 71% of the one-way intimate partner violence, the Duluth Model interveners in the criminal justice system continue to claim that women only initiate between 5% and 10% of all domestic violence incidents.

Despite growing empirical research to the contrary, the Duluth Model remains the single or primary engine that drives almost all contemporary criminal justice domestic violence intervention and training. In law enforcement domestic violence training, most always sponsored through VAWA or NIJ funding, the *victims* are universally referred to as “*she*” and *offenders* as “*he*.”

At the root of a great deal of prejudice and discrimination are word associations, sometimes referred to as “implicit associations.” These “implicit associations” can unconsciously shape our thinking. The NIJ report, [Causes and Consequences of Intimate Partner Violence](#), discussed below might have been effected by “implicit associations” as the author not once mentions a single male victim.

The NIJ sponsored report, [Documenting Domestic Violence: How Health Care Providers Can Help Victims](#) refers to the victims only as women. The report claims this is because women are injured more often than men in domestic violence incidents. While that disclaimer is true, that is not the reason male victimization was not explored in this report. The *only victims* studied in this report *are women*.

The two major institutions involved in the above report, the Northeastern University [Domestic Violence Institute](#) (NUDVI) and the Boston Medical Center (BMC) only interview women patients to assist only women in need of domestic violence assistance. Following the Duluth Model both the NUDVI and the BMC avoid the issue of male victimization.

Is it possible that the NIJ, NUDVI and BMC are unaware that the NVAWS reports that 39.0% of female physical assault victims and 24.8% of male physical assault victims reported being injured during their most recent physical assault? Is it possible that the NIJ, NUDVI and BMC are unaware that the NVAWS also reports that female and male victims had similar rates and types of medical care and that their injuries were similar in severity?

Or is it possible that because the NCADV ignores or minimizes male victimization and VAWA funds gender specific research only about female victims, that the above organizations and the NIJ simply follow the ideological lead of the NCADV and follow the VAWA gender specific funding trail?

Research

None of my domestic violence columns on www.policeone.com are intended to represent or foster any of my personally held beliefs about domestic violence. I believe that the data clearly documents that females suffer more from domestic violence and females need more assistance, support and resources than do males.

However, I also believe that it is counter productive for federally supported domestic violence organizations and federal and state governmental agencies to willfully and purposely minimize, marginalize and ignore the victimization of both boys and men.

I continually strive to be unbiased [no one is completely bias free]. My beliefs are solely founded upon contemporary empirical research. This paper is best read online as much of the research is provide in hyperlink format. That being said, there is little doubt that at times some of my personally held beliefs do make their way into some of these columns. For that I apologize.

The majority of researchers and criminologists, who remain open minded and do not examine domestic violence in the context of a feminist ideology (using a methodology in pursuit of gender equality), recognize that there often seems to be a reality disconnect or detachment between contemporary criminal justice domestic violence policies and current empirical research findings. Public policies often do not reflect the knowledge of contemporary findings that have been derived from recent relevant empirical studies.

The National Academy of Sciences (NAS) is mandated by Congress to advise the federal government on scientific and technical issues. The NAS has concluded and advised Congress that *all victims* of domestic violence would be better served through *an integration of the intervention process*.

[Congress has chosen to ignore the NAS advice](#). Domestic violence public policy remains representative of agency or stakeholder “hypothetical theory” or the “personal philosophies” of interveners that are grounded in little to no contemporary empirical evidence. In [H.RES.590](#), Congress parrots the Duluth philosophy. H.RES.590 details female victimization and the congressional resolution ignores or minimizes male victimization.

Agree With One, Ignore The Others

Over the last decade research reveals that far too many domestic violence interveners and public policy makers have only a general or mistaken understanding of the landmark 1984 Minneapolis Domestic Violence Experiment ([MDVE](#)). The MDVE supports *officer discretion* and not mandatory or pro-arrest policies concerning arrest. The MDVE actually warned against the use of mandatory arrest.

The interveners and public policy makers ignored that [concerning mandatory arrest, the interveners and public policy makers ignored that](#) (1) the authors warned about generalizing the result (arrest works best) from a single study, (2) suggested arrest sometime can be counterproductive and (3) recommended law enforcement officers continue to be allowed the discretion to arrest depending upon, the *context, circumstances* and *needs* of those involved.

In fact, many interveners and public policy makers I have spoken with over the last decade have little to no knowledge that there were follow-up studies that are just as important as the MDVE and that they were sponsored by the National Institute of Justice. These studies are collectively known as the Spouse Assault Replication Program (SARP).

Domestic violence interveners and public policy seem to deem the MDVE as important and relevant research. At the same time, these same interveners dismiss the data in SARP studies when that data conflicts with the Duluth Model and mandatory arrest.

All domestic violence interveners and public policy makers should to read [“The Effects of Arrest on Intimate Partner Violence: New Evidence From the Spouse Assault Replication Program”](#). This report is an analysis of the SARP studies.

And all domestic violence interveners and public policy makers should read “[Advancing the Federal Research Agenda on Violence Against Women](#)”. This report was compiled by members of the NAS and presented to Congress. I suggest that if interveners in general and public policy makers in particular read these two reports, contemporary criminal justice policy might be changed.

In a very small and perhaps inconsequential way, my columns are intended to disseminate relevant research to criminal justice administrators, domestic violence interveners and public policy makers by making applicable and important contemporary relevant research available at the click of a mouse through the hyperlinked reference sections.

Disagreement and Misunderstanding

My last two columns, “[Mandatory Arrest: A flawed policy based on a false premise](#)” and “[The Minneapolis Domestic Violence Experiment](#)” have been interpreted by some readers as being “anti-domestic violence arrest” columns. One reader wrote, “Show me a study that proves not arresting violent [emphasis added] offenders saves lives.”

The fact is that I have never, nor will I ever, recommend that violent offenders should not be arrested. It should be obvious to all law enforcement officers that violent offenders should be arrested. The criminal justice system needs to identify, arrest and incarcerate offenders who are chronic or violent offenders.

Research in general and the [SARP in particular](#) clearly documents that the most serious domestic violence is committed by a small number of classic violent offenders against high-risk victims and this sub-group of offenders and high-risk victims create the vast majority of domestic violence interventions.

And perhaps this same reader mentioned above forgot that it is improbable to impossible to prove a negative. No one has produced an empirical study that proves that the “one-solution-fits-all” arrest process or Duluth Model intervention actually has saved lives. In fact, a growing body of empirical evidence-based research suggests just the opposite might be occurring.

Homicide

Those of us in law enforcement do not need [researchers or surveys](#) to tell or convince us that males commit more crimes than females and males are more violent than females. This is true for almost every violent crime and the fact that men are more violent than women has held true throughout the history of all societies

The Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) online report, “[Homicide Trends in the U.S.](#)” clearly documents that serious and lethal violence is a problem for males far more than it is for females. Males are approximately ten times more likely to murder and be murdered than females. Males are far more likely to kill themselves than to kill females. There is no question that males display lethal violence inside and outside the familial settings more than females. However, males do not kill males because they are male.

Females kill males far more often than females kill each other. Females kill males in family or intimate partner relationships more than they kill acquaintances or strangers. Females are more assaultive in the

home than they outside the home. However, there is no data that can document that either gender kills the other specifically or primarily because of their gender.

If the intent of researchers, interveners and public policy makers is to reduce domestic violence death, researchers need to accept the cold hard fact that the causal factors of domestic violence are complex and multifaceted. Remaining fixated on a single silver bullet answer or myopic ideology is more harmful than helpful.

The 2003 Massachusetts [Domestic Violence Homicide Report](#) very clearly documents that the causal factors of domestic violence homicides and the homicide/suicides can be complex and multifaceted events. The horrific homicides clearly document that there is very little well reasoned or carefully and clearly thought out behavior occurring that caused most of these homicides.

There is a complete lack of any empirical evidence-based data in the above report that can document social norms promote violence against women and those social norms were responsible for a single homicide. Yet the homicide report calls for the transformation of “social norms (without noting what social norm[s] they are thinking of) that actually sustain or promote violence against women.”

The authors, despite presenting any empirical evidence-based data in their own study, continue to believe that domestic violence homicides are caused by sexist social norms. Remaining fixated on a single belief prevents interveners and researchers from discovering *the fact that there are many different underlying factors*.

The data also documents that while murder is certainly the most serious form of criminal behavior it is, by far, the least common form of criminal behavior or abuse. In 1999 only 15,530 out of a total 11.6 million index offenses known to law enforcement were murders or non-negligent manslaughter. Hence, homicides amount to approximately only one-tenth of 1% of all crimes.

To the best of my knowledge criminologists and sociologists do not study murderers, familial or otherwise, to understand why crimes are committed. Criminologists and sociologists know full well it is improbable to impossible to study the behavior of a small subgroup of a population and then claim that specific behavior is applicable to the entire population.

Domestic Violence Homicide

In the above report, in the section, “The proportion of all homicides involving intimates by gender of victim, 1976-2005”, the data documents that prior to the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) from 1976 to 1993 the number of female intimate partner homicides decreased from 34.5% to 28.2%.

However, after the passage of VAWA and the implementation of federal and state sponsored “one-size-fits-all” intervention policies from 1994 to 2005 the same homicide report documents that while the percent of non-intimate or unknown homicides of women continued to *decrease* from 72.0% to 66.7% the number of intimate partner homicides of women during that same period *increased* from 28.0% to 33.3%.

This data seems to indicate that rather than being helpful for everyone, some of the contemporary policies and one-size-fits-all domestic violence interventions are as harmful for some as they helpful for others.

There appears to be general agreement that when females are placed into domestic violence intervention programs those interventions need to be [tailored to fit their needs](#). Why then, other than it is cost effective, is their logic in continuing to place [male offenders](#) into one-size-fits-all programs that are not tailored or individualized to fit their often dramatically different needs? Is ideology hindering more than helping?

Another important study that seems to have been ignored by public policy makers is the [“Exposure reduction or backlash? The effects of domestic resources on intimate partner homicide, final report.”](#) This report documents that the *increased* number of domestic violence prosecutions have resulted in an *increase* in homicides for white married intimates, black unmarried intimates and white unmarried females.

This *increase* in homicides for some demographics of women certainly was not the intent of interveners or public policy makers. And the astonishing *decrease* of homicide victimization by 87% for black men between 20-44 years old was totally unexpected. This data clearly refutes the claim by interveners that everyone across the socioeconomic educational strata of society is equally affected by domestic violence.

It is difficult to understand why the recent study, [“Does the Certainty of Arrest Reduce Domestic Violence? Evidence from Mandatory and Recommended Arrest Laws”](#), has been largely ignored by interveners, public policy makers and the media. This study documents that the homicides in states that have laws that mandate arrest for intimate partner incidents have *increased* by 54%.

Homicide and Suicide

A recent report by the CDC [“Surveillance for Violent Deaths -- National Violent Death Reporting System, 16 States, 2005”](#), documents that 51.9% of female homicides and 8.8% of male homicides were precipitated by intimate partner violence. It also notes approximately 30% of suicides are precipitated by a problem with an intimate partner.

The above report also documents a tragedy that remains under the radar of interveners, public policy makers and researchers. Table 9 of the above report notes that of the 16 states reporting intimate partner problems precipitated 2,301 of the male suicides and 439 of the female suicides.

In the 1990's approximately 30,000 people per year took their own lives. This report seems to suggest that it is possible that each year there are approximately 6,750 male and 2,250 female suicides that were precipitated by a problem with an intimate partner. These deaths are domestic violence related deaths that far exceed the number of domestic violence homicides.

While approximately twice as many females than males attempt suicide, the rate of completed suicides in this report was nearly 4 times greater for males than females. Studies also suggest most people who commit suicide are clinically depressed, have other mental health disorders or face life altering stressors.

Most domestic violence interveners and public policy makers provide little to no positive proactive intervention concerning homicide/suicide. Perhaps it is time to consider more positive proactive interventions to prevent these types of homicide/suicides for the potential victims and victim/offenders.

A report, “[Reviewing Domestic Violence Deaths](#)”, sponsored by the NIJ and appears in the November 2003 issue of the [NIJ Journal](#). This NIJ sponsored report notes that fatality reviews might lead to changes to the system that could prevent future domestic violence related deaths. In a report (Kimmel, 2002) covered below, the author repeatedly notes that there should be compassion for all victims of domestic violence.

Apparently, whoever was responsible at the NIJ did not notice that the author of the “Reviewing Domestic Violence Deaths” did *not once* make mention of a single male domestic violence related deaths by homicide or suicide.

Approximately one of every three domestic violence homicides includes the intimate partner related suicide of the offender. Perhaps interveners and public policy makers might recognize that if they provide funding for studies concerning the risk factors for suicide/homicides and resources for screening of the threats of suicide in intimate partner relationships some of these [homicide/suicides](#) might be prevented.

Researchers must consider all factors and be willing to explore multiple belief systems. There appears to be no “[bright line](#)” that separates child, sibling, spousal, intimate partner, and elder abuse. And a great many studies document that the issue of power and control runs through all these forms of abuse.

Domestic violence is a human rights issue not just an adult heterosexual women’s rights issue. The United States has a history of setting the rights of one group of people above the rights of another group. Researchers need to understand that this “my group is more important than your group,” belief was wrong in the 17th, 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries and it is wrong in this 21st century.

Violent Offenders

I am in absolute, that is 100% agreement, with the readers who believe that law enforcement should arrest all **violent** offenders. I also agree that law enforcement can do no more, nor no less, than to arrest **violent** offenders and at least temporarily end their **violent** behavior. In fact law enforcement needs to do more to identify **violent** offenders and their victims.

Additionally, once these **violent** offenders are convicted, they need to be incarcerated for as long as the law allows. Despite what any interveners or public policy maker claim, the only real “protection” the criminal justice can provide victims of domestic violence is incarceration. And, if I might state a personal opinion that has been fostered by empirical research, the longer the incarceration for **violent** offenders, the longer the victims remain safe.

Only people who have never studied or ignore history think that men and women are equally **violent**. In the entire history of humankind there has never been an army of women who plunder, murder and rape. All homicide data of all societies throughout history reveal that women commit far less **lethal violence** than men.

However, all contemporary studies demonstrate that domestic **violence**, as contemporarily defined (please review the OVW definition on pages three and four above) is most often not serious, lethal nor what most people consider to be **violent** behavior. It is generally agreed that social scientists who attempt to generalize the behavior of a small subset of subjects across the general population are doing a disservice to everyone involved.

Also (thinking caps please), most children are very much aware, as the data documents, that mothers can (this should ring a bell) intimidate, manipulate, humiliate, isolate, frighten, terrorize, coerce, threaten, blame, hurt, or injure them as often as fathers.

Born To Be Wild

An intriguing new study, “[The Origins of Youth Violence \(OYV\)](#)”, demonstrates that when we begin to explore all uses of physical aggression rather than just the subset of criminally violent behavior, we discover that the most physically aggressive population that uses the threat of force, aggression and assaults to get what they want, are children. Children exhibit physically aggressive behavior from birth and at age four they exhibit the highest levels of physical aggression.

And the data confirms what most parents know. Boys exhibit more direct (hurting and harming someone through physical assault) aggression than girls and girls exhibit more indirect (hurting and harming someone without the use of a physical assault) aggression than boys. Regardless of gender or method of aggression most children learn to exhibit less physical assaults as they grow older. However, the use of indirect aggression increases for all children as they grow older.

The research indicates that we do not *learn* to use the threat of force, aggression and assaults to get what we want. There is not a different set of [Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs](#) for males and females. Babies are not taught to cry, scream and thrash about to get fed. Toddlers are not taught to be physically dominant over another toddler to get the toy the other toddler has. It appears that we have the “teaching and learning” process about violence backwards.

A growing number of studies seem to document that *we do not learn to be violent rather we must learn not to be violent*. Infants and toddlers must be socialized to use alternatives to the physically aggressive instincts they come into the world with. We seem to have done a better job at socializing girls to use less physical assaults than boys. However, if the family they are born into, regardless of gender, uses force, threats and physical assaults, children will also continue to exhibit the aggressive behavior they are born with. Children who are born into violent homes and neighborhoods are more likely to exhibit more violent, boys directly and girls indirectly, aggression than children born into peaceful homes and neighborhoods.

The above study suggests that, as they grow older, females, because of their lack of physicality and the gendered socialization process, learn to use indirect violence more often than males. Males are, for the most part, bigger and stronger than girls, and boys socialized to be tough. Boys simply continue with their use of direct violence – pushing, shoving and hitting are common behavior among boys.

Hence, males continue their use of direct violence, because as some experts in the field note, it is far more socially acceptable for them to continue to do so than it is for females. There are no – I repeat – there are no studies that document that males want to get their way more than females. In fact, evidence from the NVAWS seems to suggest that while [the methods of control](#) differ for males and females the desire to control does not.

Given this data are we to believe that there is a magical and mystical age where ethics and a higher morality cause females to stop using physical aggression and they make the ethical and moral decision to end their use of direct violence and become more passive and nurturing in their familial relationships?

Or is it more likely that females cease their use of direct violence when they lose their physical size and economic power to control the behavior of other family members? As adults crime data documents that men commit more violent crime – physical assaults and homicides – than women. However, in non-violent crimes of similar to forgery document that females remain just as manipulative or criminal as males in their pursuit of real or perceived needs.

Recent studies that follow children from birth to adulthood reveal that children who are not taught to cease their aggression and learn peaceful socialization will suffer negative consequences. These negative consequences will be felt by their peers, their spouse or intimate partner, their children and the community they live in.

The above OYV concludes that when children who have parents or caretakers who teach their children to control their instinctive desires to use threats of force, aggression and assaults to get what they want, children regardless of gender, are more apt not display chronic physical aggression when they enter society. The NVAWS documents that boys are more often physically assaulted than girls by their adult caretakers.

Because of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, most people use what ever tools that appear to work best – at least in the short term - for them. When children and adults continue to use aggression, studies documents that females are more successful when they use indirect aggression and males continue to use more direct aggression because it appears to work best for them. However, the latter is not true as serious and lethal violence is far more often the result of direct aggression than indirect aggression regardless of gender.

The Learning Pool for IPV

Studies document the dangers presented in dating/domestic violence/abusive physical assaults that occur in our secondary schools and college campuses. It is generally agreed that domestic violence does not begin the day heterosexual males and females become adults. It is generally agreed that the behavior exhibited by teenagers often continues into adulthood.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and [National Center for Injury Prevention and Control](#) define dating violence as the physical, sexual, psychological or emotional violence within a dating relationship. The [National Domestic Violence Hot Line](#) (NDVH) defines abuse as a pattern of coercive control that one person exercises over another.

[Dating violence/abuse studies](#) consistently document that males and females equally abuse and/or physically assault each other. Despite these empirical studies, many interveners continue to dismiss the dangers of female initiation and female offending, claiming that most studies do not consider the “*meaning, context, or consequences*” of female assaultive behavior (O'Keefe, 2005).

Meaning, Context and Consequences

Dating violence *meaning* and *context* are reported in the [Teen Relationship Abuse Survey](#) sponsored by Liz Claiborne Inc. On page 3 it notes, “[P]ower and control actions and attitudes are pervasive in teen relationships – many young people have dealt with a boyfriend or girlfriend who tried to *control* their whereabouts.” The survey asks if the boys or girls had partners who want to know:

- Who were they with all the time, 32% of boys and 39% of girls responded yes.

- Where they were all the time, 31% of boys and 35% of girls responded yes.
- Tried to tell them what to do a lot, 33% of boys and 31% of girls responded yes.
- Asked them to only spend time with him/her, 24% of boys and 24% of girls responded yes.
- Tried to prevent them from spending time with family or friends, 22% of boys and 21% of girls responded yes.

The TRAS documents more similarities than differences except for serious relationships. The TRAS, on page 4, reports there are greater differences in “serious” as compared with “non-serious” relationships.

However, the problem is that the TRAS provides no definitional distinction between “serious and non-serious” relationship for the respondents. That important distinction is left open for the respondents to define and assign to themselves. Perhaps when the dating relationship involves sexual behavior far more girls than boys deem that to be a “serious relationship.”

On page 15 the TRAS explores relationships between boys and girls who have endured emotional abuse from their partner.

- 59% of boys and 64% of girls report that their partner made them feel bad or embarrassed about themselves.
- 28% of boys and 26% of girls report that their partner called them names or put them down.
- 8% of boys and 10% of girls report that their partner became physically or verbally abusive when drunk or high.

Paradoxically, the majority of dating/domestic violence/abuse organizations and many research journals publish the ubiquitous “1 in 5 female high school victimization” data. This “fact” was first published in [Dating Violence Against Adolescent Girls Linked with Teen Pregnancy, Suicide Attempts, and Other Health Risk Behaviors](#), and was gleaned from the 1997-1999 [Massachusetts Youth Risk Behavior Survey \(MYRBS\)](#).

What many interveners ignore or are unaware of is the “fact,” that the MYRBS data *they present* as “fact” does not document the, “*meaning, context or consequence.*” And *the interveners* also seem to ignore or are unaware of the “fact” that the MYRBS does document male victimization. If female victimization is a fact then male victimization must be a fact.

Nationally the 2003 Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) documents that 8.9% of males and 8.8% of females report being a victim of physical dating abuse ([CDC 2006](#)). It is important that all advocates recognize that the *risk factors* of abusive incidents are escalated when someone, regardless of gender, initiates a physical assault regardless of its severity. It is also important that everyone, regardless of age or gender, understand the significance of developing safe relationships ([O’Keefe, 2005](#) & [Whitaker, Haileyesus, Swahn & Saltzman](#)).

Self-Defense

In the 2005 VAWnet report O’Keefe, *suggests but does not provide any empirical evidence-based data that documents girls primarily use physical assaults in self defense.* O’Keefe may, similar to many other advocates, *intuitively believe* violence by girls is committed in self-defensive. However O’Keefe

in her own studies provides *no empirical evidence-based data* that documents girls actually report they did use their violence primarily in self defense.

On page 562 of, *Predictors of dating violence among high school students*, (O’Keefe, 1997), she *suggests* that “... it is also *possible* that females *may* inflict more violence than males in self-defense or in retaliation for sexual assaults.” However, the fact is that respondents in her survey *did not report* that their assaultive behavior was in self defensive or used in retaliation of a sexual assault. Somehow the intuitively held beliefs of O’Keefe have taken precedence over the empirical evidence she documents.

On page 563, (O’Keefe, 1997), “Whereas being a victim of dating violence was a stronger predictor for females compared with males *suggesting* (Italics added) that females are more likely than males to hit in self-defense or retaliation.” O’Keefe in her 2005 VAWnet paper cites (Foshee, 1996) but O’Keefe *does not* acknowledge in her 2005 VAWnet paper that the Foshee study she cites actually documents that even when controlling for violence perpetrated in self-defense girls perpetrate more dating violence than boys.

The O’Keefe, 1997 study documents that girls and boys, for their own safety, need to realize that *their initiation* of dating violence and that *their use* of minor or serious physical assaults are *risk factors* that *place them in danger* of injury and emotional harm. Those risk factors are important findings if the intent of dating violence interventions are to *prevent* or *minimize* victimization.

In the VAWnet report, O’Keefe claims that girls and boys have *different motivations* for their use of physical assaults. However, O’Keefe reports on page 14 of a study that she co-authored, “*Victims of Dating Violence Among High School Students* (O’Keefe & Treister, 1998), that:

Also, of interest is the finding of no gender differences in the amount of interpersonal control exhibited by males and females in dating relationships, suggesting that interpersonal control may not be gender-specific and that despite women’s subordinate position in the larger social structure, they are just as likely to act to control their dating partner.

And most importantly, dating violence prevention programs need to heed the VAWnet dating violence report warning on page 9 where the report notes:

It is naïve to think a change in attitudes or behavior can occur unless a long term, integrated and multi-dimensional approach is launched at all system levels.

The U.S. Department of Justice sponsored report, [Violence Against Women: Synthesis of Research for Secondary School Officials](#), should be read by advocates and school officials before they consider implementing secondary school dating violence educational programs. Interventions that ignore or minimize the victimization of boys and excuse the offending of girls need to understand that those beliefs and behaviors may, without intent, place both girls and boys in greater not less danger of dating violence victimization.

Most dating/domestic violence/abuse interveners claim that female offenders are not equally guilty of offending and they offer the following as “*evidence*” of that claim.

- (1) Females are injured more often than males;
- (2) Females seek medical treatment more often than males;

- (3) Females fear for their safety more often than males; and
- (4) Females are hurt or harmed emotionally more often than males.

Interveners seem unwilling or unable to recognize that the above four factors are all *consequences of an event not the initiation of an event*. And, it is obvious that these four factors offer no evidence about who *initiated* the abusive event. *Initiation* is important for females and males as studies document that the primary predictor of [dating violence physical assaults](#) is to [physically assault another person first](#).

The NIJ report [Violence Against Women: Identifying Risk Factors](#) documents that women who engage in physical assaults are at increased risk of being severely abused by their partner. The majority of women in this report indicated that they also initiate the violence.

Most reasonable and prudent people understand that the *initiation* of an abusive event is not a defensive act. Most reasonable and prudent people also understand the *initiation* of a minor abusive event does not allow, morally or legally, the person who has been assaulted first to use a far more serious or lethal response.

The majority of domestic violence interveners rarely if ever mention female aggression, perhaps because they want to avoid the appearance of “blaming the victim” because they almost always believe that females are the victim. However, if we are to develop *preventive* strategies both boys and girls need to be informed that the number one risk factor for being physically assaulted is to physically assault, regardless of severity or intent, someone else first.

Many interveners also seem unwilling or unable to acknowledge that the majority of dating/domestic violence/abuse incidents are minor ([National Violence Against Women Survey](#)). Domestic violence homicides are horrific events, however, they can not be presented as being representative of the vast majority of dating/domestic violence/abuse.

In fact, homicides are not actually representative of the behavior of criminals. Nevertheless, it is reasonable to conclude that there is an inherent danger that some minor incidents may evolve into more injurious assaults.

I do not dispute studies that document that females suffer more severe injury, seek more medical attention, are more emotionally distressed and are more fearful concerning domestic/dating violence/abuse than males. There are now a number of [studies](#) that document the differences between male and female victimization and offending.

However, if the goal is to *prevent or minimize* dating and domestic violence, the nationally recognized domestic violence organizations must practice what they preach and recognize the [context, circumstances, characteristics and consequences](#) of all [offenders and victims](#).

More boys and men may become engaged in prevention and intervention efforts when dating and domestic violence/abuse organizations, as their websites document they do, and researchers [and researchers](#) cease dismissing female initiation as insignificant and cease insisting that male victimization is so rare that it is inconsequential.

We need to provide *equitable* dating/domestic violence/abuse [prevention and treatment programs](#) for females and males. *Cause* is generally defined as that without which an effect or a phenomenon would not exist. Therefore if we are to effectively minimize or eliminate the negative consequence the proper *cause* must be placed before the *consequence*.

Domestic Violence Laws

The central premise of most of my columns on www.policeone.com, is that the majority of contemporary domestic violence laws in most states (see Delaware below) are not specifically or properly directed at violent offenders. Most domestic violence laws now include some characteristics found under the very large OVW umbrella.

Delaware law, which is similar to domestic violence laws in most of the states, defines domestic violence as the occurrence of one or more of the following acts of “abuse” between “family” or “household members.” Domestic violence laws in the states are rarely so specific that they are intended only or primarily for violence between intimate adult heterosexual partners.

- Actual physical injury or sexual offenses
- Threatening physical injury or sexual offense
- Damaging, destroying, or taking property
- Trespassing
- Child abuse
- Kidnapping
- Unlawful imprisonment
- Interference with custody
- Causing fear or emotional distress
- Any other conduct that a reasonable person would find threatening or harmful

A state by state search on www.womenlaw.org for the definition of *domestic violence* reveals that none of the state definitions of *domestic violence* actually require that an act of *domestic violence* has to be either a chronic or a violent act.

The majority of domestic violence interveners willingly and compassionately understand that many of the [females arrested](#) for domestic violence are not violent offenders nor are they chronic offenders. Rather, the interveners understand that many of these women have been ensnared by domestic violence laws that do not actually require a violent act actually occurred nor that any battering behavior took place. A central point of many of my columns is that this is true for everyone regardless of age, gender or sexual orientation.

There is a need for public policy makers and law enforcement administrators to separate individual incidents of family conflict from battering behavior. And the criminal justice system certainly needs to do a better job of identifying chronic violent offenders who wreak the majority of the havoc.

The Rise In The Arrest Of Females

The number of women in prison tripled between 1980 and 1990 and more than doubled between 1990 and 2001. In 1999, women accounted for approximately 35% of all domestic violence arrests in Concord, New Hampshire. In Vermont, women accounted for 23% of all domestic violence arrests.

In Colorado in 2002, approximately 76% of those arrested for domestic violence were men and 24% were women. A local intervener admits she is troubled by the number of women being arrested.

All interveners should be troubled by the number of people being arrested for domestic violence, regardless of age, gender or sexual orientation, when that “violence” is actually minor abusive behavior that is frequent in most families or minor violations of civil court orders. Many of these people, regardless of age, gender or sexual orientation clearly are not “batterers.”

As noted above, the number of women being arrested nationwide has increased. A [California study](#) documents that domestic violence arrests for males and females have increased since the introduction of mandatory or pro-arrest domestic violence policies. In California, the number of males arrested for domestic violence has increased by 37% while female arrests increased by 446%.

The same study also documents that the greatest *rise* has been in *conviction rate of females arrested*. Convictions rose by 131% for males but by 1,207% for females. It is even greater for male Hispanics, 126% and for female Hispanics, 1,650%.

This *conviction rate* seems to contradict the hypothesized claim made by domestic violence interveners who believe, without any empirical studies or evidence-based data to document their beliefs that the rise in female arrests is due to law enforcement officers not knowing “*who to arrest.*” Regardless of gender, it must be remembered that contemporary domestic violence laws do not require one to be a violent offender to be arrested for domestic violence.

Despite the dramatic difference in the conviction rates between males and females, the fact is that the national data continues to document that male victims are three times more likely to be arrested in dual arrests than females. It seems logical that far more males will be arrested when law enforcement “implicit association” training refers to all offenders as “he” and victims as “she.”

This data disparity in *arrest* and *conviction* rates between males and females suggests that more males than females might be arrested because of contemporary Duluth styled domestic violence law enforcement training where offending is synonymous with being male and victimization synonymous with being female.

A NIJ Ideological Hypothesis

The NIJ website describes its purpose as:

NIJ is the research, development, and evaluation agency of the U.S. Department of Justice and is dedicated to researching crime control and justice issues. NIJ provides objective, independent evidence-based knowledge and tools to meet the challenges of crime and justice, particularly at the State and local levels.

This report [Measuring Intimate Partner Violence](#) (MIPV) is on the NIJ website dated October 24, 2007. Despite the NIJ claims of objectivity and evidence-based knowledge the MIPV appears to be an ideological polemic concerning the academic discussion about the issue of domestic violence gender symmetry. The MIPV and in turn the NIJ are guilty of turning a hypothesized belief into a finding of fact.

Gender symmetry proffers that an equal number of women and men are victims (it is important to note gender symmetry is about victimization, not offending) of intimate partner violence (IPV) regardless of severity.

The data presented in the MIPV sometimes appears to be an **apples and oranges** presentation:

Apples: The gender symmetry of the OVW definition of domestic *violence*.

Oranges: The subset of “systematic, persistent, and injurious” *violence*.

It should be obvious to the USDOJ, the NIJ and the OVW, that the data in the MIPV, outlined below, does not meet the characteristics presented in the OVW definition of domestic *violence*.

A review of the research *found* (italics added) that violence is instrumental in maintaining control and that more than 90% of “*systematic, persistent, and injurious*” (italics added) violence is perpetrated by men (Kimmell, 2002). BJS reports that 30% of female homicide victims are murdered by their intimate partners compared with 5% of male homicide victims, and that 22% of victims of nonfatal intimate partner violence are female but only 3% are male. (Catalano, 2006).

The review by (Kimmel, 2002) only examines 100 of the now more than 200 studies concerning domestic violence. The MIPV claims that Kimmel “*found*” that violence is *instrumental in maintaining control* and that more than 90% of “*systematic, persistent, and injurious violence* is perpetrated by men.

If one actually takes the time to read the Kimmel review, little of what the MIPV claims to be fact, other than injury, is supported by objective, independent evidence-based knowledge. Kimmel himself clearly acknowledges that his claim is only a *hypothesis* or an *argument* and his hypothesis is not an empirical evidence-based data to support a scientific *finding*.

Whoever is responsible at the NIJ for the MIPV either did not read the Kimmel review, misread the review or is purposely misrepresenting the review. Kimmell *did not find* empirical data that supports the MIPV 90% claim. The [National Criminal Justice Reference Service abstract](#) (NCJRS) of the Kimmel review document that what Kimmel actually did was to “hypothesize” that 90% number. It does not seem that a “*hypothesis*” meets the NIJ standard of “*independent evidence-based knowledge*.”

One need not be a NIJ researcher or NIJ sponsored researcher to know that all researchers are expected to be both “technically competent” and “fair-minded” while conducting their research. The “systematic, persistent, and injurious violence” is only a small subset (oranges) of OVW definition of domestic violence (apples).

It seems that Kimmel draws conclusions from data that agrees with his position and excludes data that does not support his position. That style of research is a misleading tactic that does not seem to be totally objective or fair-minded.

Another example of misrepresentation is the claim Kimmel makes on page 1345 of his review. Kimmel claims to document that, “Men who are assaulted by intimates are actually more likely to call the police ...” Kimmel then lists three citations to substantiate and validate his claim.

It is clear that throughout his review of the research Kimmel repeatedly uses citations from the [National Violence Against Women Survey](#) (NVAWS) when NVAWS supports his position. In the

claim above, as elsewhere in his review, Kimmel seems to make the decision to exclude information from the NVAWS that refutes his position and includes information that supports it.

The NVAWS found that women, in all instances, were *significantly more likely than men to report being victimized*. As for law enforcement, the NVAWS reports that *women are more than twice as likely to report their victimization to the police*. It is improbable to impossible to believe that Kimmel is not aware of this NVAWS data. It appears that Kimmel might have simply ignored that data because it did not support his claim.

It also appears that the MIPV is unaware or unwilling to acknowledge that there is another stark contradiction in Kimmel's "review of the research" that begins with his claim that domestic violence has emerged as *one of the world's most pressing problems* while the National Crime Victimization Survey documents it effects less than ½ of 1% of Americans. And for many researchers and the MIPV crime data seems to be the defining difference when it supports their position and the same crime data is ignored and when it does not.

All of the national recognized domestic violence organization including the [USDOJ Office of Violence Against Women](#), the [National Coalition Against Domestic Violence](#) and the [Domestic Violence Hotline](#) include minor assaults and lesser actions as acts of domestic *violence*. In fact, most state laws include actions far more minor than physical assaults, to be acts of domestic *violence*.

The NVAWS clearly documents that the majority of IPV is minor and does not produce injury or death. Each and every major nationally recognized domestic violence agency (see above) features data about victimization that is data drawn from Conflict Tactics Scale styled surveys and many (the OVW for example) include actions far more minor than those documented in the CTS.

Kimmel does not present any empirical evidence-based data in his review that can document any of the violence being used is, "instrumental in maintaining control." This claim is familiar and has been presented before in the guise of empirical evidence-based data despite the fact that any evidence-based data to document that claim is gender specific or drawn from a small sub-group of the population.

Kimmel is not the only researcher to reach that conclusion without the empirical data to support it as scientific fact. The authors of the findings from the National Violence Against Women Survey, conclude on page iv of "[Extent, Nature, and Consequences of Intimate Partner Violence](#)" that, "These findings support the theory that violence perpetrated against women by intimates is often part of a systematic pattern of dominance and control."

I will not argue that some of the violence against women and, in fact all family members or intimate partners can be a part of a systematic pattern of dominance and control. However, no where in the above report (a click of the computer mouse will allow you to read the above report) do the authors present any **empirical evidence-based data** that documents their claim to be true.

I also agree that the reason for some of the violence or assertive and aggressive behavior between intimate partners include the issue of "dominance and control." However, the issue of dominance and control [runs through family and intimate partner violence](#) regardless of age, gender and sexual orientation. The causes of domestic violence appear to be as complex, multifaceted and varied as the many definitions of just what domestic "violence" is or is not.

It should be obvious to all interveners and public policy makers that these domestic violence actions do not arise suddenly and unexpectedly the day heterosexual intimate partners reach adulthood and then require criminal justice intervention. Intervention needs to begin at the beginning of this behavior and not simply react after the consequences of that behavior. And most importantly, interventions need to be individualized to fit the needs of those involved.

Many of the assertive and aggressive actions under the OVW definition are not what most people commonly associate with “violence.” These actions commonly occur among very young children and siblings without criminal justice intervention. Harvey Wallace notes in his college text, *Family Violence: Legal, Medical, and Social Perspectives* that:

Researchers have interviewed, tested, observed, and evaluated thousands of people in an attempt to discover the factors that contribute to family violence. Unfortunately, to date no one authority has discovered the single correct answer.

The most troubling lack of “fair-mindedness” in the Kimmel review is that Kimmel devotes more than 12 pages in rebuking the use of data that is based on the Conflict Tactics Scale that was developed by Murray Straus and his colleagues.

Kimmel and the MIPV know full well that all the nationally recognized domestic violence organizations make use of the CTS data and the Domestic Violence Hotline – funded by millions from the federal government, actually includes being called, “bad names” in their CTS styled definition. And as noted above, the OVW definition is far weaker than the CTS. In fact much of the behavior listed by the OVW might very well include actions used in every family in America.

Mathematical Manipulations

Furthermore, while not unethical, it does seem manipulative for the MIPV to report the claim that “30% of female homicide victims are murdered by their intimate partners compared with 5% of male homicide victims, and that 22% of victims of nonfatal intimate partner violence are female but only 3% are male.”

The above may not amount to apples and oranges but it seems to be at least pears and peaches. Whoever is responsible for the MIPV knows, or should know, that the apparent dramatic difference is technically correct but not present an actually or honest differential. The apparent dramatic differential is a result of mathematical manipulation.

The difference in intimate partner victimization only “appears” that dramatic because far more males are homicide and nonfatal violence victims than females. Again, researchers should have the freedom to present data any way they want. However, should the USDOJ, the NIJ and the OVW be involved in what appears to be a manipulation of the data?

This misrepresentation or manipulation of domestic violence data is the cause of much of the confusion and disarray in the criminal justice system. And it is OVW definition along with the definitions of domestic *violence* by the majority of the national recognized domestic violence organizations that adds to the trivialization of the victims of serious and lethal violence.

The MIPV notes that the data compiled through the CTS may not be appropriate for intimate partner research. Perhaps it is time that the USDOJ and all of the agencies it supports to caution all of the

nationally recognized domestic violence organizations against using data that may not be appropriate for intimate partner research that is compiled from the CTS.

It is a fact, as their websites very clearly document, that all of the nationally recognized domestic violence organizations use CTS styled data to document female victimization while they ignore the CTS styled data that supports the gender symmetry argument.

The misuse of the CTS data – using only the data that supports female victimization and ignoring the data that supports male victimization - began decades ago by all the national recognized agencies and it continues unabated.

I do not think that it is appropriate or logical for a social scientist to present a hypothesis and then have the USDOJ-NIJ through the MIPV declare that hypothesis an empirical finding. And it is worse still for a governmental agency – the United States Department of Justice - to redefine the issue of domestic violence regardless of age, gender, or sexual orientation into an issue primarily about the violence against women and then minimize, marginalize and ignore the victimization of boys and men.

Compassion, Understanding and Intervention: Zero

The reason I became very much interested in the issue of domestic violence, those many years ago, is that it became clear to me that victims of violent and injurious domestic violence incidents, who were more often female than male, were not being extended the proper compassion, support and intervention by the criminal justice system. That compassion, support and intervention should be extended to all victims, regardless of age, gender, or sexual orientation.

Kimmel writes on page 1354 of his review:

Reasonable people would naturally want to extend compassion, support, and interventions to all victims of violence.

And if it is true, as Kimmel professes in his review, that minor violence often escalates into more injurious and lethal violence, both public and private professionals concerned about the issue of domestic violence should be concerned about all offending and victimization regardless of severity. If it is our intent to *prevent* domestic violence, it seems logical that education not arrest should be our first priority. We can not arrest and incarcerate our way out of this enigma. I'm sure all interveners will agree that for far too many years the victims of domestic violence were minimized, marginalized and ignored

The [National Conference on Family Violence: Health and Justice](#) convened in March 1994. This was 10 years after the first Attorney General's Task Force on Family Violence. The 1994 conference noted that the problem of family violence in the United States is epidemic and estimated that the annual incidence of family members is at 2 to 4 million for children, nearly 4 million for women, and 1 to 2 million for elder adults.

This conference was co-sponsored by the American Medical Association and the National Institute of Justice. One need not be a National Institute of Justice researcher to note that the 400 professionals and 80 national experts that attended this conference estimated 4 million women were victims. The experts at this conference noted **zero** men as victims of domestic violence..

The [National Coalition Against Domestic Violence](#) works for major societal changes necessary to eliminate both personal and societal violence against all women and children, not men. The total of men who are victimized is zero.

The National Domestic Violence Hotline [Decade for Change: Final Report](#) notes, “Despite significant efforts over the past decade to address the problem of domestic violence in our country, 33 million American women continue to experience abuse every year. The total number of men who might experience domestic violence victimization appears to be zero.”

The [May 19, 2006, “Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report”](#) in the section titled “Physical Dating Violence Among High School Students – United States, 2003” notes, “Among adult women in the United States, an estimated 5.3 million IPV incidents occur each year, resulting in approximately 2 million injuries and 1,300 deaths. The number of IPV incidents, injuries and deaths for men is zero.”

The above report noted that dating violence victimization can be a precursor for IPV. It notes that 8.9% of males and 8.8% of females reported experiencing physical dating violence. My home state is Massachusetts. Massachusetts is one of the most politically liberal of states and it is a state that is proud that it stands up the rights of all of its citizens. Jane Doe is the Massachusetts Coalition Against Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence.

The [Jane Doe website](#) notes that 1 in 5 female high school students report being physically and/or sexually abused by a dating partner. The number of male high school students Jane Doe implies, by their absence, is zero.

The number of male victims that the authors of the [Findings from the National Violence Against Women Survey](#) wanted to interview about IPV victimization was zero. Despite this obvious bias they were allowed to conduct the NVAWS. After reporting that 40% of surveyed women and 54% of surveyed men said they were physically assaulted as a child by an adult caretaker, the authors conclude that IPV is first and foremost a problem for women. Is it possible that the authors over looked another precursor for IPV?

The CDC report, “[Intimate Partner Violence Surveillance: Uniform Definitions and Recommended Data Elements](#)” (IPVS), documents that the lack of an agreed upon definition of domestic violence limits the ability to properly identify victims at highest risk who need focused intervention and increased services. The victims at highest risk are not the only lost victims. The total times a male victim is mentioned in the IPVS is zero.

In criminal justice training, funded by the USDOJ, the NIJ and the OVW the offender is always referred to as “he” and the victims as “she.” This would seem to amount to zero male victimization. This “implicit association” – males are the offenders and females their victims – remains first and foremost in the minds of those who receive this training and remains when they respond to domestic violence incidents.

The 110th Congress passed a [resolution](#) that purports Congress support October as being National Domestic Violence Awareness month. The resolution seems to want the general public that men abuse women and children and boys abuse their parents and teenage girls are hit by their dating partner. The number of times this resolution mentions men as being victims of IPV is zero.

I think it makes no sense argue about the issue of gender symmetry when there is no agreement on just what domestic violence is or is not. However, it certainly is wrong if not unethical for the USDOJ, the NIJ, the OVW, interveners and our public policy makers to minimize, marginalize or ignore male victimization. It appears that the USDOJ, the NIJ, the OVW, interveners and our public policy makers are not reasonable people as they display little to no compassion, understanding and intervention concerning male victimization and female offending. Male victimization is minimized or ignored on the websites of the nationally recognized domestic violence organizations and now the same is true, as their websites document, for many agencies of the federal government.

The NIJ Paints Them Invisible

On the NIJ website on August 15, 2008 under [Causes and Consequences of Intimate Partner Violence \(CCIPV\)](#) the article notes that researchers supported by the NIJ have identified some of the causes of and risk factors for IPV.

The NIJ also notes here that the NIJ is, “The Research, Development, and Evaluation Agency of the U.S. Department of Justice.” The CCIPV notes that, “Intimate partner violence has serious physical, psychological, economic, and social consequences.” Apparently the authors of the CCIPV article do not believe that IPV has any serious, physical, psychological, economic, or social consequences as the CCIPV simply paints male victimization, [despite what the empirical data documents](#), as inconsequential or irrelevant.

- One in five women killed or severely injured by an intimate partner had no warning: the fatal or life threatening incident was the first physical violence they had experienced from their partner. Number of men mentioned here as victims is **zero**.
- Early parenthood is a risk factor. The researchers do mention men here. They note that men who had fathered children by age 21 were more than three times as likely to be abusers as men who were not fathers at that age. Numbers of woman abusers **zero**.
- Although alcohol is not the cause of violence against women, a significant relationship exists between male perpetrator problem drinking and violence against intimate female partners. Number of male victims mentioned is **zero**. Number of female problem drinkers and offenders is **zero**.
- Intimate partner violence is linked with unemployment; one study found that intimate partner violence impairs a woman’s capacity to find employment. Number of men mentioned here is **zero**.
- Women who have experienced serious abuse face overwhelming mental and emotional distress. Number of male victims here is **zero**.

Apparently the correct title should be the Causes and Consequences of Intimate Partner Violence for Women. Although this appears on the NIJ and not the OVW website, the NIJ, or at least whoever is responsible for the CCIPV, apparently has simply decided to join in the effort to marginalizing, minimizing, and here in the CCIPV ignoring any mention of male victimization [male victimization](#).

Picking and Choosing

One of the works cited by the CCIPV is the [Findings about Partner Violence from the Dunedin Multidisciplinary Health and Development Study](#). The Dunedin study, as the above NIJ website notes, “examines the continual nature of antisocial behavior from adolescence through adulthood in an

attempt to explain partner violence. The NIJ Research in brief reports that the key findings of the Dunedin study are:

- Although both partners in a relationship may not recall the same acts in precisely the same way, 70-80 percent of one partner's report was in agreement with the other partner's report on whether physical violence took place and on the extent of the abuse.
- Risk factors in childhood and adolescence for male perpetrators included poverty and low academic achievement. Female perpetrators included poverty and low academic achievement. Female perpetrators showed risk factors of harsh family discipline and parental strife. Both male and female perpetrators also had histories of aggressive behavior.
- The strongest risk factor for both male and female perpetrators and victims was a record of physically aggressive delinquent offending before age 15. More than half the males convicted of a violence crime also physically abused their partners.
- About 27 percent of women and 34 percent of men among the Dunedin study members reported they had been physically abused by their partner. About 37 percent of women and 22 percent of men said they had perpetrated the violence.
- Domestic violence is most prevalent among cohabitating couples.
- Sixty-five percent of females who suffered serious physical abuse and 88 percent of male perpetrators had one or more mental disorders (as defined by the American Psychiatric Association in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of the American Psychiatric Association ["DSM-111-R]).
- Women who had children by age 21 were twice as likely to be victims of domestic violence as women who were not mothers. Men who had fathered children by 21 were more than three times as likely to be perpetrators of abuse as men who were not fathers.

It seems that federal agencies replicate the behavior of the nationally recognized domestic violence organizations. The CCIPV only used the last key finding. However, it seems obvious to me that to get to the last finding, who ever is responsible for the CCIPV must have noticed at least some of the other findings that note male victimization.

The Dunedin study notes that the very first lesson the researchers learned is that there are no tidy and distinct groups of victims or perpetrators. The researchers note that women report perpetrating partner violence more frequently than men. The researchers also report that it is clear that in most cases of partner violence the parties are involved in mutual violence.

Again, most researchers agree that women do suffer more because of domestic violence than men. However, is that any reason for the USDOJ and the NIJ – similar to most nationally recognized domestic violence organizations – to minimize, marginalize or ignore male victimization?

There can be no question that who ever is responsible for the CCIPV they have purposely ignored male victimization - the number of male victims mentioned in the CCIPV is **zero**. The CCIPV only mentions men as abusers and by implication, that men are the cause of domestic violence and only women suffer the consequences. Is it now the purpose of the NIJ to simply to parrot the voice of the NCADV and minimize, marginalize and ignore male victimization? As the parent of three girls and two boys, is the CCIPV what I can continue to expect from the NIJ?

Future Direction

As mentioned in the first paragraph, the original intent of criminal justice system was to provide intervention, protection and resources for victims of domestic violence who are beaten, battered and raped. I believe that those interventions, protections and resources are still lacking because of the gender schism that has been created by organizations, similar to the NCADV, declaring that their victims (adult heterosexual women) are more important than other victims (everyone else).

And the VAWA fosters the beliefs of the NCADV that the problem of domestic violence is a problem first and foremost for adult heterosexual women. The CCIPV – on a federal agency website - also presents the issue of IPV as only a problem for women. The CCIPV makes no mention of male victimization.

Somehow, somewhere this effort to help victims who are beaten, battered and raped has, as the OVW definition of domestic violence clearly documents, morphed into each and every real or perceived physical, sexual, emotional, economic or psychological action of one family member or intimate partner against the other. And somehow, somewhere, someone had decided that we need to begin changing all of these behaviors through the use of our civil and criminal courts.

In the epigram, O’Leary foresaw problems with labeling all acts of *physical* aggression as being violent. Now, the OVW includes acts of domestic violence as; pushing, shoving, coercion, constant criticism, and name-calling. Is it any wonder that so few people, regardless of gender, are satisfied with contemporary civil and criminal justice domestic violence intervention.

Even stranger than the OVW definition of domestic violence is the argument over gender symmetry or who are more violent, men or women. This argument continues despite the fact that there is no agreement. See, “[Future Research on Gender Symmetry in Physical Assaults on Partners](#)” about what *violence* is or is not.

Susan Faludi writes in her book, *Stiffed, The Betrayal of the American Man*, “Men have no clearly defined enemy who is oppressing them.” The deliberate and obstinate minimization, marginalization and ignorance of male victimization by the national domestic violence organizations, academic ideological researchers, the federal government, the criminal and civil court system and public policy makers may not be oppression, but it sure looks close enough through the eyes of an ever growing segment of the population [segment of the population](#), both male and female.

And just when it seems the issue can not become more paradoxical, some researchers insist on prioritizing the consequences over the cause. Almost all studies continue to ignore the core question of who initiated or began the physical or verbal abuse. There should be little disagreement among researchers that women suffer more serious consequences, i.e. serious injury and death. However, there should be no disagreement that the one of, if not the highest, of risk factor for those consequences is the initiation of the event.

Inside and outside the home, if you hit someone first the odds are very high that you will be hit in return. Inside and outside the home, if you hit someone first who is bigger and stronger than you are, the odds are that you will be hit in return. And the odds are you will be hurt more than they were when you hit the person who is bigger and stronger than you. In addition to being a primary IPV risk factor, it is just not a good idea to initiate a physical assault against anyone.

On August 19, 2008 the CDC website has an article titled: [Intimate Partner Violence Prevention Scientific Information: Risk and Protective Factors](#). The article notes that risk factors are associated

with a greater likelihood of intimate partner violence (IPV) victimization or perpetration. The CDC does not list initiation or hitting someone else first, as a risk factor of IPV.

No matter how much or how long I try, it is difficult for me to understand how or why the person responsible for the above CDC report can list perpetrating psychological aggression as a risk factor and ignore perpetrating a physical assault as a risk factor.

In my grassy-knoll mind, it seems that the CDC may ignore listing initiation as a risk factor because when the question of initiation is asked – and most often studies ignore asking about initiation - more often than not the number of females that initiate physical assaults in IPV is higher than male initiation. Given the danger of retaliation associated with initiation for females, the CDC should explain why psychological aggression is listed as a risk factor and the initiation of physical assaults is ignored as a risk factor.

Also, all data, criminal justice or otherwise, very clearly documents that the vast majority of domestic violence incidents do not result in serious injury or death. The causes and consequences are almost as complex and multifaceted as the various definitions.

The simple and undeniable fact is that there are multiple millions of minor domestic violence incidents annually. Of these incidents only a very small number result in serious injury or death. This data alone should document that most domestic violence incidents do not increase in intensity to serious injury or death.

This schism may very well have begun when the majority of the nationally recognized domestic violence organizations began the specious claim that **one in every three women** in the world has been beaten, coerced into sex, or otherwise abused in her lifetime. At the same time these organizations, as their websites clearly document, minimize, marginalize or ignore male victimization.

Lost in this, unnecessary and dangerous gender symmetry academic disagreements are the victims of serious and lethal violence that Kimmel is concerned about.

Serious and lethal consequences do not occur in a vacuum and domestic violence does not begin the day male and female heterosexuals reach adulthood. Perhaps if and when researchers can take care of the less serious “domestic violence” problems the criminal justice system will have less serious problems to respond to.

A domestic violence workshop that was oriented towards issues of justice enforcement was sponsored by the USDOJ and met on November 20, 2000.

The complex nature of the work has to be communicated clearly to the media and the public in order to avoid distortion, using explanations that carefully interpret effects of gender, race, and social class using local survey strategies. There may be geographic variations in different cities (as already found in the U.K.).

Regardless of whether men or women are perpetrating violence, it does not exist in a vacuum. Too often, Dr. DeKeseredy said, we miss linkages between economic and political difficulties where families are living and bearing stresses that are internal to the family. These are opportunities to connect “personal troubles to public issues” as Mills would say. The ultimate

sociological question involves linking the macro level forces with those acting on the individual level.

I agree 100 percent with this summarization and assessment by Dr. DeKeseredy. DeKeseredy has best described both the problem and the solution. The problem is that the majority of criminal justice intervention continues to be based on the “Duluth Model.”

The exclusive focus on this single theory has caused researchers like DeKesredy, interveners like the director of Jane Doe, and public policy makers like the entire House of Representatives to miss those many linkages.

The “Duluth Model,” founded on the presumption that in abusive relationships, regardless if the abuse is child, sibling, spousal, intimate partner, or elder abuse, has a male perpetrator and a female victim. Central to the “Duluth Model” perspective is “. . . a gender analysis of power, which holds that domestic violence mirrors the [patriarchal organization of society](#) In this perspective, violence is one means of maintaining male power in the family.”

Mandatory arrest and “dominant aggressor” policies were implemented only after interveners believed that far too many females were being arrested for domestic violence incidents after violence was legally redefined as a push or shove.

Kimmel, the MIPV and in fact no researcher has, to date, presented any evidence-based empirical data that can refute that women and men are approximately equally abusive when excluding injury and lethal violence. And injury and lethal violence, as many researchers note, does not occur in a vacuum.

Duluth model interveners wondered why if the perpetrator should almost always be male and the victim almost always female, law enforcement officers were arresting so many females. Some criminal justice training continues to claim that the correct number at 95% male vs. 5% female offenders. If the arrest numbers exceed that 5% differential, interveners believe, more law enforcement domestic violence training was needed.

The conviction rates in the California courts, noted above, seem to indicate that officers do know who to arrest concerning female offending, yet still seem to have problems arresting men without enough evidence to support convictions.

The “Duluth Model” requires the criminal justice system to ignore the warnings by DeKeseredy about the linkage between economic and political stresses that, as criminal justice data documents, has dramatically different effects concerning gender, race and social class.

Summary

Let me be clear here. The data, criminal and otherwise, documents that men, in the traditional sense of violence, are more violent than women. However, that is violent concerning the traditional acceptance of the definition of violence and not as in the contemporary definition [[see the OVW definition](#)] of domestic violence.

And, I agree with Straus and most of his colleagues that females suffer the consequences of domestic violence more than males. It is certainly clear to me and my colleagues that our concerns about

contemporary domestic violence interventions are not motivated by a desire to undermine or dismantle the initiatives that administer to female victims.

What we do expect is that contemporary interveners, public policy makers, the UDSOJ, the NIJ and the OVW to end their most recent attempts at minimizing, marginalizing or ignoring male victimization. It is not ethical, moral nor necessary to throw male victims under the bus to provide services and resources for female victims.

Kimmel, on page 1336 of his review paper, asks (1) why there are so few males in shelters or reporting their injuries to hospitals and (2) why if men's rates of violence outside the home far greater than women's, why should anyone believe they would be equal inside the home. Although I am only a retired police lieutenant and not a social scientist, I believe there are simple answers for his questions.

As for shelters and emergency rooms; there are almost no shelters for men and the shelters in place for females most often refuse to admit men. Perhaps Kimmel forgets that once there were few to no women in shelters because there were no shelters for them. And the NVAWS and many other studies document that women *report* these events far more often than men.

Straus and the majority of his colleagues agree that women suffer the *consequences* of domestic violence more than men. Men are more prone to injurious and lethal violence than women. Women are seriously injured and killed more than men in domestic violence incidents.

As evidences by the Olympics men are, most often, bigger, faster, stronger and criminal justice data documents that men use direct and lethal violence more than women. Perhaps if we understand why men kill themselves far more often than women kill themselves, we might discover why men kill other men and women more often than women do. I am not a social scientist, but it does not appear that men are killing themselves to oppress and subjugate women.

Many females, for a variety of reasons – child bearing, females are less assertive and aggressive than males in the workplace, and the socialization of females are just a few - still have less economic stability than men. Because of these differentials we need far more shelters for women than men.

However, most domestic violence incidents, as all studies document, are not injurious nor are they lethal. I agree with Kimmel that we should separate the minor from the serious. However, Kimmel seems to ignore the fact that all of the major domestic violence organizations and the laws passed by public policy makers do not make those distinctions.

Those of us in the criminal justice field do not need studies to demonstrate to us that men commit more violence outside the home than inside the home. However, perhaps Kimmel is unaware that the Bureau of Justice Statistics data documents that that women commit more of their violence inside the home than outside of it.

My real concern is not the Kimmel review of the research. As I have stated it is Kimmel's right to interpret the data any way he wants. My concern is that the NIJ through the MIPV has taken Kimmel's *hypothesized argument* and presented his hypothesis as an empirical evidence-based fact. Perhaps whoever is responsible for placing the MIPV on the NIJ website never read the Kimmel review. On page 1358 Kimmel writes:

...I would therefore *argue* (italics added) that violence as an expression of family conflict is *somewhat less than symmetrical* (italics added) but would include a significant percentage of women. I would *hypothesize* (italics added) that including assaults and homicides by ex-spouses, spousal homicide, and sexual assault, the gendered ration of male perpetrated violence to female-perpetrated violence would be closer to 4:1.

And the MIPV claims that:

NIJ researchers have found, however, that collecting various types of counts from men and women does not yield an accurate understanding of battering and serious injury occurring from intimate partner violence. National surveys supported by NIJ, CDC, and BJS that examine more serious assaults do not support the conclusion of similar rates for male and female spousal assaults. These surveys are conducted within a safety or crime context and clearly find more partner abuse by men against women.

The fact is that Straus and the majority of his colleagues, have for decades now written over and over again, as the Kimmel review notes, that:

Straus also understands that women, on average, suffer much more frequent and more severe injury (physical, economic, and psychological) than do men (see also Stets & Straus, 1990, Straus, Gelles, & Steinmetz, 1980).

I have, or at least attempted to, make this very same point since the day I retired more than a decade ago. Almost every law enforcement officer in this nation knows that it makes little to no sense to mix the most minor of family conflicts with violent battering behavior.

Law enforcement has always separated the serious crimes (felonies) from minor crimes (misdemeanors). This mixing of “battering and serious injury” with the less serious family conflicts lies in the hands of the majority of domestic violence organizations and our public policy makers, not Straus and his colleagues. I suggest that:

- (1) If whoever is responsible for the MIPV does not believe that the fault of mixing the problems of the victims of serious and lethal incidents with the most minor problems of family conflicts lies in the hands of the nationally recognized domestic violence organizations and the public policy makers they need only to begin with a visit the OVW website and view what the OVW claims is domestic **violence**.
- (2) They may then move on to the definitions of domestic **violence** on the websites of all of the nationally recognized domestic violence organization.
- (3) They may then finish by visiting the domestic **violence** laws passed by public policy makers in all fifty states.

The stereotyping of a subgroup of offenders (criminally violent offenders) and victims (women who were beaten, battered and raped) does have some validity for law enforcement intervention concerning **battering behavior**, which is truly violent behavior. However, the data clearly documents this is not necessarily true for all instances of **family conflict** which consists of isolated or minor family physical or verbal aggression.

Mandatory arrest demands that law enforcement officers arrest serious offenders who murder and rape along with minor offenders who push and shove. No-drop prosecution mandates that the courts must try murders and rapists along with offenders who push and shove. The NIJ researchers will, if they look, discover that females and males do push and shove each other on an approximate equal basis. Law enforcement officers follow the dictates of mandatory arrest laws, not the research of social scientist.

Voices for Change

And I am certainly not alone in believing that contemporary “one-solution-fits-all” Duluth Modeled mandatory arrest intervention for all domestic violence incidents is not working as intended and is in need of change. The following people, I believe, have no desire to undermine or dismantle the resources now available for the female victims of battering and serious assaults.

Ellen Goodman, one this nation’s leading spokeswoman for women’s rights, acknowledges that once the social and economic constraints are equal women can be as manipulative, coercive and assaultive as men.

Caryl Rivers, the co-author of the book, *Same Difference*, claims that it is a myth that women, simply because they are women, are much more caring and empathetic than men. Rivers believes that all the systematic research demonstrates that the behavior of men and women come out about equal.

[Linda Mills](#), a professor at New York University who is a past victim of domestic violence, says that domestic violence is portrayed as one-sided aggression, when it’s often an unhealthy dance between two partners. Mills believes that mandatory arrest laws actually hurt instead of help women.

[Ellen Pence](#) who created the Duluth Model acknowledges that it is wrong for the criminal justice system to treat all cases of domestic violence under “one-solution-fits-all” intervention policies. Pence claims that in doing so, there are now many men and women in mandatory “batterers” treatment programs that do not belong there. Pence believes that arrests should not be made for every, slap, push or hit. Pence claims the system is letting chronic violent batterers off the hook. I agree with Pence.

[Cheryl Davis](#) (no relation) the administrator for Colorado’s Domestic Violence Offender Management Board notes that, “There is conflict in a lot of relationships. Domestic violence is not about [family] conflict.” I agree with Davis, yet Davis does not acknowledge that Colorado law does not agree with either one of us. Any family conflict is domestic violence under Colorado law.

[Ester Soler](#) is the founder and president of the [Family Violence Prevention Fund](#) (FVPPF). Soler believes that not every incident of family conflict is domestic violence. And recently the FVPPF acknowledged that the victimization of males is more than a rare occurrence.

Soler claims that domestic violence is a serious ongoing pattern of fear, intimidation and violent assault. I agree with Soler. However, the laws in none of the states nor the policies of Soler’s FVPPF reflect the definition that Soler proffers.

The problem is that in all fifty states the laws passed by our public policy makers and supported by the vast majority of the national recognized domestic violence organizations rarely makes the proper distinction between “battering behavior” and “family conflict.”

On November 20, 2000, the USDOJ sponsored a workshop discussion on gender symmetry [workshop discussion on gender symmetry](#). Dr. Michael Johnson presented evidence of something all law enforcement officers have known, perhaps since the beginning of contemporary policing in 1835.

There are dramatic differences in the forms of physical assaults that occur in families and as the Dunedin report concluded, the officers know that there are no distinct groups of victims or perpetrators. As noted above, domestic violence laws rarely make these distinctions. Mandatory arrest demands that law enforcement officers ignore those distinctions.

At the conference, Dr. Evan Stark concluded that by mixing the very different forms of violence, “one-size-fits-all” styled intervention, the criminal and civil justice systems could inadvertently trivialize the circumstances of battered [victims] women. In fact, almost all of the participants in this workshop agreed that there are dramatic differences in the context and circumstances of offending and victimization. Mandatory arrest mixes different forms of violence and ignores any and all of those important distinctions.

A Basic First Step to Safety

It has become commonplace for many academic researchers to hypothesize a conclusion and then present reams of citations from studies that are then used to support their hypothesis. That is their right. However, the USDOJ, the NIJ and in fact all federal agencies should not enjoy that same academic freedom.

If it is the task – as the NIJ claims – to provide objective, independent, evidence-based knowledge and tools to meet the challenges of crime and justice, the NIJ can not do so by supporting only studies some of its researchers agree with while ignoring others. Without question, gender specific sponsored studies are important, however, by their very nature they will only provide gender specific conclusions.

We can not advance our full knowledge of all the victims of domestic violence through the use of gender specific studies. If we are to provide comprehensive intellectual research, it is an empirical and ethical necessity to include all victims of domestic violence. And it is vital that all public policy for violence prevention and deterrence strategies are based on empirical evidence-based data and not academic hypotheses or the personally held beliefs of anyone at the USDOJ or the NIJ.

The Kimmel review, despite the claim of the MIPV, does not “**find nor provide empirical evidence-based data**” that can document that 90% of the “systematic and persistent violence” is committed by men. It is troubling that whoever is responsible for the MIPV seems so willing to accept the Kimmel *hypothesis* as an *empirical fact*. The data does document that males are responsible for more “injurious” violence than females. However, Kimmel did not provide any evidence based data to document his “systematic or persistent” claims.

Again, while it is Kimmel’s right to hypothesize or argue what ever he wants, it is not the right of the USDOJ or the NIJ to document the Kimmel hypothesis as a scientific finding. It is troubling that who ever is responsible for the MIPV seems so willing to change the Kimmel hypothesis into an empirical finding or fact.

The data does document that women do suffer from serious and lethal IPV more often than men. However, serious and lethal violence are the consequences of events and not the cause. To date there is

little to no evidence, *that includes both male and female victimization*, that documents males are any more “systematic or persistent” concerning IPV as defined by the OVW.

Kimmel on page 1357 notes, that for domestic violence intervention strategies to be successful interveners must understand and account for the differences. Kimmel notes in his review that there are differences between “battering behavior” and “family conflict.” I agree 100 percent with this Kimmel claim. However, that lack of understanding has not been caused by [Straus and his colleagues nor the CTS](#) .

The organizations and people most responsible for contemporary “one-size-fits-all” interventions are the OVW (read its definition of domestic violence), the nationally recognized domestic violence organizations, (the Domestic Violence Hotline website implies that there are 33 million female victims and no male victims) and the “one-size-fits-all” laws (no distinction between serious and minor violence) passed by our public policy makers.

And making sanctions and intervention that are clearly not working well even more draconian is an almost classic example of doing the same thing over and over again with the expectation of different results.

What, Kimmel, the interveners and public policy makers need to understand is that if we want to prevent the serious forms of “systematic, persistent, and injurious” violence, there is a need to recognize that the majority of the empirical evidence-based data continues to document that women are more likely to initiate and engage in minor violence more often than men.

Hence, is it not logical to prevent or deter minor violence from escalating to more serious violence, as Kimmel claims is the case, a basic first step should be educational efforts to help females understand the dire consequences of their initiation of verbal and physically assaultive domestic violence behavior regardless of how inconsequential they think it is.

Based on *the majority of the below hyperlinked studies that law enforcement and public policy makers should be aware of*, I make the following recommendations. Further, I suggest that any reasonable and prudent person who reads the same studies (most are available here at the click of a computer mouse) will reach the same conclusions I have. These are not intended as my personal beliefs, but are representation of the opinions of the experts in the field. For a much more extensive list of the studies, book and papers concerning domestic violence please visit [Family Non-Violence Inc.](#)

Recommendations

- (1) The authority, without the mandate or preference, that officers make arrests should continue. Officers should continue to have the authority to make arrests in all witnessed and un-witnessed incidents regardless of severity. Minor events that are chronic need to be addressed and the families often need intervention. The authority to arrest is important, however, it should remain in place as a right and not a mandate or preference.
- (2) Pro-arrest should remain in place for incidents that result in severe injury or for offenders or for families with a history of chronic violence inside or outside the family or any history of criminal behavior.
- (3) Pro-arrest arrest should remain in place for all felony cases. Felony cases most often include injuries and/or the use of weapons.

- (4) Officers should always check their computer or with the dispatcher to ascertain if there have been prior calls at the same address or for the same offender of a victim. Officers should always check for outstanding warrants.
- (5) Officer discretion should be allowed for victim preference except where families, victims or offenders have records of chronic behavior or repeat calls to law enforcement. This does not mean that officers should or must adhere to victim preference, only that victim preference should be considered within the complete *context* and *circumstance* of individual incidents.
- (6) Studies document that more often than not the offender has left by the time law enforcement arrives. Officers should apply for arrest warrants where requested and/or when applicable.
- (7) In minor incidents where there no injuries or there are no witnesses, officers should record all of the pertinent information and request a court date whereby both parties involved would be compelled to appear before a judge or a magistrate who can then determine the proper criminal or civil intervention for that family.
A list of criminal justice and social service agencies should always be provided to all relevant interveners. Social service agencies should be notified about the law enforcement response and those agencies should provide those families with a list of their resources.
- (8) Law enforcement agencies should have computer programs in place that can document calls from chronically abusive couples. It has been found that a small number of chronically aggressive intimate partners produce a high-rate of repeat offenders. Follow-up interviews in studies document that about 8 percent of victims reported a total number of incidents that represented more than 82 percent of the 9,000 reported incidents. The vast majority of research documents that while domestic violence crosses all socioeconomic educations strata of society, most serious domestic violence is committed by classic high-rate offenders upon classic-high risk victims.
- (9) Less than 1/2 of 1% of domestic violence incidents are lethal and there no effective tools to distinguish between lethal and non-lethal behavior, once arrested abusers should to be identified, using dangerousness assessment guides, for heightened risks of violent behavior. While these assessment tools can not effectively predict lethality they are very effective dangerousness risk factors concerning severe or chronic abuse.
- (10) While this is last perhaps it should be number one. Female initiation is almost universally ignored because many interveners claim it amounts to blaming the victim. Education concerning female offending is important, if for no other reason than a growing number of studies document that the single best predictor for females being abused is their initiation of an abusive event. Often that initiation is coercive behavior or very minor assault, slapping, etc. Assessing the dangers of initiation is not victim blaming. Victim safety should become more important for interveners than defending the Duluth hypothesis.

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