

# Dan's Talking Points Memo



COUN 231 • H. Dan Smith, EdD, MFT  
Wilcoxon, Remley, Gladding, & Huber; Chapter 5  
(for discussion on October 8, 2009)

1. Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) is distinguished from criminal acts that may occur between strangers, such as assault, battery, or other similar crimes by its more hidden nature. (Johnson, p. 123)
2. Although IPV and child abuse may be occurring in the home, there is a strong distinction where mandates are concerned. Children have no choice but to be there and are subject to mandates when abuse is suspected. With partners, the problem is more difficult because they *presumably* have a choice about the treatment they wish to tolerate. (p. 124).
3. As noted in the text, the perpetrators of IPV, continues to predominantly be the male partner in a male-female couple. The incidence of reciprocal or female perpetration is on the rise.
4. Note the "other variables" contributing to IPV as cited by Danis & Lockhart and Gerlock (p. 125), which include unemployment, poverty, stress, suicidal ideation, and homelessness. This seems like a very incomplete list which SHOULD include mental health problems, substance use/abuse, among others. Add your suspicions to the list.
5. The authors were wise to indicate that MFTs and the clients all have cultural and value heritages that affect their viewpoints on IPV. (p. 125)
6. Discuss the "intergenerational" rationale for the perpetuation of IPV. (p. 125)
7. Please note the author's run-up to "while therapists are accepting of people's values and behaviors, we're not to be accepting of IPV." What do you think of this from a therapist's standpoint? (middle of p. 126)
8. I can see the authors noted that problems may develop when a therapist has an unresolved history of victimization. We probably need to discuss this. (p. 125)
9. Notice how at the bottom of p. 127 and on to p. 128, the authors are beginning to make their case for therapists asserting that victimized partners must leave the relationship. Note the inset on p. 128 that underscores this position. Where are you on this? Is IPV a special case that demands we have a different set of values for this particular interactional problem?
10. Beauchamp and Childress, et al., note that when battered women go to a shelter for help they have a greater possibility of recovery from feelings of helpless and hopelessness. Agree/disagree? (p. 128)

11. Would you agree that by not encouraging the victimized partner to leave that you are violating the principle of *nonmaleficence*, that is "to do no harm"? (p. 128)
12. What about the principle of *justice*, where "clients with equal needs not be discriminated against" by the therapist. (p. 128)
13. The issue of *fidelity* is interesting, noting that a battered woman may misinterpret efforts to form a therapeutic alliance with the batterer as problematic and not in line with the principle of *fidelity* which we embrace. I can see where this could be a likely misunderstanding. (p. 129)
14. Notice the discussion of how the client-victim's subjective reality is marred by persistent abuse, such to the point that she (or he) begins to "rationalize" their abuse and the behavior of their abuser. This is a worry to me when doing this kind of work. (p. 130)
15. All of p. 130 is compelling. What are these abusers like? What drives them to be who they are and do what they do? What about that statement that one who is victim to persistent abuse "experiences terror which traumatically infantilizes her" (Symonds)?
16. Bottom of p. 130. Please note reintroduction of the term *triangulation*; this example is a strong one.
17. There is an outstanding quote on the simplistic view of "helping the victim" as family therapy (inset) on p. 131.
18. Note on mid-p. 131 it is stated that most approaches to "best practice in intervention" seem to emphasize the separation of the battering couple for a period of time, followed by various therapeutic interventions, including psychoeducational.
19. Does the therapist have an obligation to prescribe "the ideal of a good life" for a victim? Good question on bottom of p. 131. What to you think?
20. On p. 132, the authors further make their case for action, even though there may be consequences for the therapist. This is a very sticky matter. We need to talk!
21. The authors say it clearly on p. 133; "It seems ethically justifiable to encourage a partner in a violent intimate relationship to leave that relationship if the victim is judged to have limited psychological competence because of the severity of the circumstances."
22. Huston (inset, p. 133) approaches this from a *materialistic* stance, noting that victims have a stage development process of recovery from victimization. What say you?
23. What do you think of the four clinical positions put forth by Willbach (p. 134) on family therapy with these families, including the one where family therapy is contraindicated unless the violent member is able to contract for nonviolence?
24. I have always liked the quote by Mathias on p. 135; "violence signals a breakdown in the very bedrock of family life, a family's willingness to take responsibility for the safety of its members."

25. What about the stance of Bograd on p. 135, that "therapists must take an unapologetically value-laden stand" on the matter of violence? Lots of stuff here on where to put blame and/or responsibility for violent behaviors.
26. What do you think about contracting for nonviolence? Bograd (p. 136) suggests that "abusive men require strong external pressures as motivation to seek treatment, and the threat by their partner to leave is the most effective pressure.
27. Stith (p. 136) suggests that "family therapy" as we view it is probably not the best treatment for these families, but rather multicouple therapy following a brief separation. Actually, this is seen by many as the best approach, one which provides the most safety to families. Can you visualize yourself doing this kind of work? There is certainly a calling for this.
28. Funny, but the chapter never mentions violence in same-sexed couples. Is this a problem? If one extends their thesis, it would imply that lesbian couples are rather non-violent (even docile), but gay men in couples could be extremely violent by a factor of 2 (if my math is right). What do you think?