

Mothering and Guiding Children: Are there Differences for Women Experiencing Intimate Violence?

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Influences on Parenting

- Belsky's model of the Determinants of Parenting (1984):
 - 3 sources of influence
 - i. Parent's personal history and psychological resources/functioning
 - ii. Child's characteristics of individuality
 - iii. Contextual sources of supports & stresses
- A deficit in one area may be buffered by a strength in another

Mothering in the Context of Intimate Violence

- Abused women experience distress, anxiety, fear and depression which can in turn affect their emotional availability (Cascardi & O'Leary, 1992)

- Abused women acknowledge that the violence in their lives negatively impacts their parenting and mothering roles (Levendosky et al. 2000)
- Psychological abuse may be the most likely to negatively affect women's parenting (Levendosky & Graham-Bermann, 2000)

Other Research

- No difference in women's parenting behaviour between abused and comparison women (Holden and Ritchie, 1991)
- Intimate partner violence does not necessarily negatively affect parenting (Casanueva et al., 2008).

- Women experiencing intimate violence have also been found to be nurturing and care for their children in diverse and caring ways (Ford-Gilboe et al., 2001)
- Women exposed to intimate violence may compensate in interactions with their children by being very attentive and sensitive (Levendosky et al., 2003).

Parenting and Guiding Children

- Ample research to support the importance of nurturance and positive interactions with children (linked to prosocial development, school readiness, and psychosocial development)
- Inappropriate and harsh discipline and low nurturance relate to facets of negative developmental outcomes, including child abuse and neglect

(summarized by Locke & Prinz, 2002)

Research Question

- Do women who experience intimate violence interact with their children and manage their behaviour differently than women who do not experience intimate violence?

“The Healing Journey” Project

- Tri-provincial study of abused women over time who have variously experienced assistance through shelters, counseling programs, and other services and resources
- Funded by SSHRC CURA and includes both academic and community partners at every step

Four General Areas of Measurement

- 1) Women's general well being and functioning
- 2) Incidence of revictimization
- 3) Women's health needs and issues
- 4) Women's experience of parenting and their observations on their children's well being

Inclusion Criteria: Healing Journey

- Women who have experienced violence, abuse from their partners (AB, SK, MB)
- Last incident of experienced violence no earlier than January 2000
- Not in crisis, last violent incident at least 3 months ago
- Able to be interviewed for approx. 2 hrs.
- Available over a 3.5 year period for interviews
2x year

National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth (NLSCY)

- Long-term study of Canadian children that follows their development and well-being from birth to early adulthood
- Began in 1994 and is jointly conducted by Statistics Canada and Human Resources and Social Development Canada (HRSDC)
- Designed to collect information about factors influencing a child's social, emotional and behavioural development and to monitor the impact of these factors on the child's development over time.
- Covers a range of topics including the health of children, information on their physical development, learning and behaviour and social environment

Measurement of Parenting Practices

1. Positive Interaction Sub-scale

- Adapted from Strayhorn & Weidman (1998) Parenting Practices Scale
- Measures frequency of mothers positive actions with her child:
 - spending time laughing
 - praising
 - focusing attention when talking/playing
 - playing sports/games
 - doing special things
- Cronbach's alpha 0.808

Measurement of Parenting Practices (cont'd)

2. Rational Parenting Scale

(Aversive and Non-aversive Behaviour)

- Measures mothers' aversive (negative) and non-aversive (teaching, encouraging) responses to misbehaviour:
 - Calmly discuss problem with child
 - Describe alternate acceptable behaviours
 - Raise voice/scold/yell (reverse score)
 - Use physical punishment (reverse score)
- Higher score reflects use of more non-aversive techniques
- Cronbach's alpha 0.569

Data Sets

- Data from Cycle 3 of National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth (1998-99) Provinces of AB, SK, MB; mothers (PMK), non-violent homes, child between ages of 2-10 years (n=3884).
- Data from Wave 2 of Tri-Provincial (AB, SK, MB) *Healing Journey* Longitudinal Study; mothers who had experienced intimate violence, had a child between ages of 2-10 years (n=322)

Sample

Demographics

N=3884

- Age Ranges

15-24 years 236 (6.1%)

25-29 years 716 (18.4%)

30-34 years 1267 (32.6%)

35-39 years 1100 (28.3%)

40+ years 563 (14.5%)

- **Highest Level of Education - Mothers**

Less than high school	482 (12.4%)
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High school diploma	788 (20.3%)
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Some post-secondary	1051 (27.1%)
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Post-secondary complete	1547 (39.8%)
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- **Age of Child**

Range 2 – 11 years

Mean 5.64 years

- **Gender of Child**

Female	1889 (48.6%)
Male	1994 (51.4%)

Findings

Positive Parenting Scale (PPS)

(frequency of mothers positive actions with child)

Analysis of Co-Variance (ANCOVA)

Mean Score PPS (0-20)

Abused Mothers 14.46

Not Abused Mothers 13.82 (p=.000)

- Age of child affected PPS (p=.000)

*The younger the child the higher the PPS score

- Mothers' Education and Age did not affect PPS score

Findings continued

Rational Parenting Scale (RPS)

(Measures mothers' aversive (negative) and non-aversive or rational responses to misbehaviour)

Analysis of Co-Variance (ANCOVA)

Mean Score RPS (0-16)

Abused Mothers 11.32

Not Abused Mothers 8.98 ($p=.000$)

- Age of child and age of mother affected RPS ($p=.001$)

*The younger the child, mother the higher the RPS

- Mothers' Education level did not affect RPS score

Discussion

- These findings support those of Ford-Gilboe et al. (2001) that women experiencing intimate violence have been found to be nurturing and caring with their children
- Although experiencing intimate violence has numerous detrimental outcomes for women, it does not necessarily negatively affect parenting (Casanueva et al., 2008).
- These findings support those by Levendosky et al. (2003) that women exposed to intimate violence may compensate in interactions with their children by being very attentive and sensitive.

- Age of child affected the parenting scores indicates an increased awareness of the needs of younger children
- Age of mother affected the score of Rational Parenting Scale but not Positive Parenting Scale; younger mothers more likely to use teaching and encouraging types of responses with their children

Limitations

- CURA data collected in 2006 and NLSCY data collected in 1998: time difference
- Many other variables not examined such as ethnicity, number of other children, social support, & SES
- Future analysis will be conducted on data collected at closer time periods for the two samples and to include additional variables.

Conclusions

- It should not be assumed that women who have experienced IV will in turn exhibit less positive parenting responses with their children.
- Women experiencing intimate violence can still provide supportive, nurturing, and teaching environments for their children.

Comments or Questions?

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