



Child Custody And Domestic Violence: A Chain Of Unintended Consequences

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Reality of Battered Woman & Children	Belief of Uninformed System	Unintended Consequences
The climate of fear and Violence in the home effects the whole family and how they live their life. The batterer is able to terrorize and intimidate family members without laying a hand on them.	Domestic violence is between the parents and doesn't involve the children. Mediators, lawyers and judges assume that if the children have not been struck or beaten, they won't be afraid of their father, and won't suffer under his care.	The fears of battered women and their children are trivialized and dismissed. As the system ignores the pleas of family members, the batterer feels more powerful, and the victim and her children trust the system less and less.
When a battered woman chooses to leave the relationship, it is usually after she has tried numerous measures to keep the family together. The abuse has typically gone on for quite sometime.	Women make up allegations of domestic violence to try to gain advantage in a divorce. Even if it has occurred, domestic violence is a form of divorce "conflict" which will diminish as time passes.	Danger and risk to the woman & children are not taken seriously, and subsequent court orders and directives do not address safety measures. The fact that risk for women is increased after leaving the relationship is ignored.
Most battered women minimize their past abuse, feel it's their fault and tell their stories reluctantly to police officers and advocates.	Women who make up domestic violence allegations hugely exaggerate circumstances in order to win the sympathy of advocates.	Batterers use this belief to blame their victims, to avoid responsibility and the system uses it to discount victims and advocates.
As the family experiences time away from the abuser, and feel safer, they become more secure in telling about abuse that has occurred or is occurring.	The majority of allegations that children make about abuse during a divorce and custody action are false and suggested by the other parent.	Many social workers and law enforcement officers don't do thorough investigations of allegations raised during a divorce or custody battle.
Battered women realize that money is a control issue that may escalate the rage, but are conflicted because they need the child support.	The only issue important in making and enforcing child support orders is the financial one related to wages and garnishment.	Many homicides and felony assaults occur when child support orders are pursued and garnishment established. The safety of the children and their mother needs to be key consideration in these hearings
Battering their child's mother is a parenting decision on the part of the abuser that interferes with the mother's relationship with her child.	Regardless of what a parent has done to the other parent, they still deserve unsupervised contact with their child.	Without treatment, monitoring and accountability, an abuser is likely to turn every encounter surrounding the child as a way to control and harass his former partner.