

## Health Care and Domestic Violence Training

### **Director's Note**

Police, prosecutors and the threat of jail time have been society's main weapons against domestic violence since the 1980s. Yet only a small percentage of abuse victims ever make a 911 call or have any contact with criminal justice. They suffer quietly, away from help.

Even the most isolated abuse victim will likely be treated at some point by a doctor, nurse or other health care provider. It may be for injuries directly sustained at the hands of a batterer. It may be for treatment for less direct symptoms, physical or psychological. Even if her visit is for treatment that's completely unrelated -- contact of any kind represents an opportunity for getting help to people who need it.

"Power and Control," explores (all too briefly) some dimensions of the health response to domestic violence. Much of Kim's story has to do with suffering physical, psychological and familial consequences of abuse. The psychological impact of the constant abuse puts Kim in the hospital before she leaves Josh. And another bout of hospitalization plays another fateful part in how Kim's relationship with Josh unfolds.

Our 20 minute film on domestic violence and health care offers a more detailed look at how health care providers can best prevent and treat domestic violence.

We filmed at Mercy Medical Center in Baltimore, MD, gaining unusual access to doctors, nurses and patients in the ER, mother baby, pre-op and other units. We profile Colleen Moore, coordinator of Mercy's family violence program and also interview Jacquelyn Campbell of Johns Hopkins, perhaps the leading expert on the health impact of domestic violence.

It was Campbell's recommendation that first led us to film at Mercy.

I hope that the films and the online resources at this site can play a role in medical and nursing education at all levels. Please feel free to contact me with any questions or suggestions.

Peter Cohn  
Director/Producer  
Hillcrest Films

## **What the film is about**

We open with brief comments from our three main subjects: Jacquelyn Campbell of Johns Hopkins, and Colleen Moore and Debra Holbrook of Mercy Medical Center. They establish that it wasn't until the mid-1980s, that the medical establishment began to acknowledge the impact of domestic violence on women's health.

We follow Moore into the hospital as her workday begins. She explains that she got into this field because it's work as a "practical feminist." Her role is to help the hospital treat and document domestic violence injuries and to connect victims who need help with outside services.

Campbell then offers a brief account of how a conference led by the surgeon general in 1985 first recognized domestic violence as a health problem. There is a tragically wide range of injuries and illnesses caused by battering.

We then look at the ER. Nurses ask Mercy's required screening questions of each patient. Dr. Stephen Schenkel, chair of the ER dept., stresses the importance of follow up. Campbell underscores the importance of how screening questions are asked.

In Ob/Gyn, Dr. Robert Atlas, chair, points out that one in eight women will be abused during pregnancy. Moore notes that abuse actually increases during pregnancy. She also says that Ob/Gyn department accounts for most of her case referrals.

Debra Holbrook then describes the Sexual Assault Forensic Examination Unit. Mercy has recently expanded the program to include domestic violence and is working closely with the Baltimore police to allow for forensic examination of injury victims. The hospital's alternative light source technology has been a tremendous step forward in detecting strangulation.

We then follow Moore as she goes out to a community meeting -- in this case, the Baltimore Domestic Violence Fatality Review Board. Moore emphasizes that outreach is a major part of her job and a key to making sure that health care is included in a coordinated community response to family violence.

## **DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND HEALTH CARE: CHAPTER SUMMARIES**

Chapter DVD start times are in parenthesis.

### **Introduction** (00:00)

### **Colleen Moore: The Coordinator** (1:06)

Colleen Moore coordinates the Family Violence Response Program at Mercy Medical Center, Baltimore, MD. The program helps the hospital respond effectively to patients who are victims of domestic violence and also links patients with services they need in the community

### **Jacquelyn Campbell: The Expert** (2:24)

Interview with Jacquelyn Campbell, of Johns Hopkins University, on the health impact of domestic violence.

### **In the ER** (3:40)

Domestic violence response in the ER. All patients are asked three questions related to personal safety.

Doctors and nurses in action.

Dr. Stephen Schenkel, ER Chair, emphasizes how important it is to have follow up in place --- a screening policy isn't enough.

A discussion of how screening should be effectively conducted.

Confidentiality is essential.

### **Obstetrics and Gynecology** (10:19)

Interview with Dr. Robert Atlas, Ob/Gyn chair. One in eight women face abuse during pregnancy, and the risk of abuse increases while a woman is pregnant.

Added comments by Moore, Campbell.

### **Sexual Assault Forensics** (12:56)

Interview with Debra Holbrooke, head of the Sexual Assault Forensic Examination unit. Using an alternative light source to identify strangulation.

### **Community Outreach** (15:19)

Moore travels to and attends a meeting of the Baltimore Domestic Violence Fatality Review Board. Her work in the community emphasizes that the health care system is an important part of a coordinated community response.

### **Taking Action** (16:47)

Suggestions for health care providers that want to start up a domestic violence program. Campbell talks about the costs of not taking action.

Moore mentions specific steps doctors can take: focusing on better documentation, putting literature in visible, accessible places, and partnering with outside DV groups.

### **EXTRA FEATURES**

Interviews and their length in minutes in parenthesis.

### **Colleen Moore** (2:30)

Best practices in screening for domestic abuse.

### **Debra Holbrook** (5:00)

On the work of the Sexual Assault Forensics Examination unit at Mercy.

### **Jacquelyn Campbell** (5:48)

Discussion of the health impact of domestic violence.