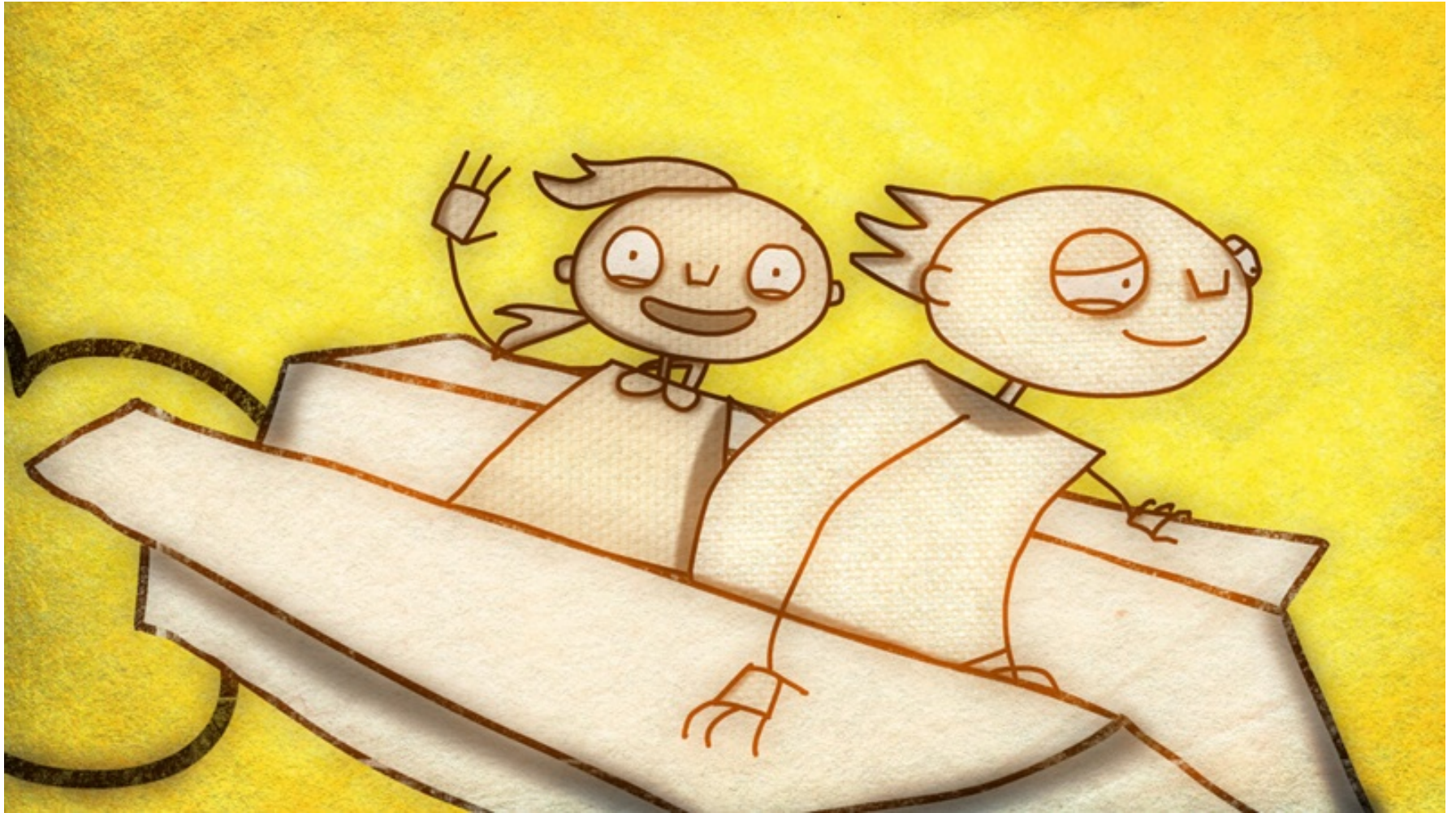


'Domestic Abuse and Mothering - rebuilding primary relationships to promote recovery'

Kirstie Farmer, National Cedar Coordinator
Orlaith McAree, National Cedar Coordinator



Welcome!



Learning Objectives

By the end of the session delegates will be able to:

- Define domestic abuse as sexual, physical mental/emotional abuse (as termed by the Scottish Government)
- Appreciate the impact of domestic abuse on women and children and the mother/child relationship
- Understand how the promotion of 'loving relationships' within families in the context of domestic abuse can be problematic
- Recognise the importance of the primary carer in promoting recovery

The Violence Model of Domestic Abuse

- Incidents (or police calls)
- Physical
- Domestic
- Gender-blind

A NEW PARADIGM

Challenging the myths of domestic abuse:

- Evan Stark (*Coercive Control*, 2007)
- Michael Johnson (*A Typology of Domestic Violence: Intimate Terrorism, Violent Resistance, and Situational Couple Violence*, 2008)

A NEW PARADIGM

Domestic abuse:

- A pattern of controlling behaviour
- Much more than physical violence
- Rooted in power and control
- Fear as central
- Children are not 'witness to' domestic abuse but experience it
- Gender matters

What Domestic Abuse is and Isn't

- **Situational Couple Violence**
 - *Perpetrated in equal numbers by men and women*
 - *Single argument where one or both partners lash out*
- **Intimate Terrorism**
 - *Perpetrated overwhelmingly by men*
 - *Continuous control of survivor's life*
- **Violence Resistance.**
 - *Perpetrated overwhelmingly by women*
 - *Result of domestic violence (Michael Johnson)*

Coercive Control

A strategic course of conduct in which violence, sexual coercion, intimidation, isolation and control are used to dominate and exploit a partner and deprive her of basic rights and resources.

- Evan Stark

Differences between Violence Model and Lived Experience

Violence Model

- Episode/Incident
- ‘Repeater’/
‘Recidivist’
- Injury-focused
- Risk-Based
Assessment

Lived Experience

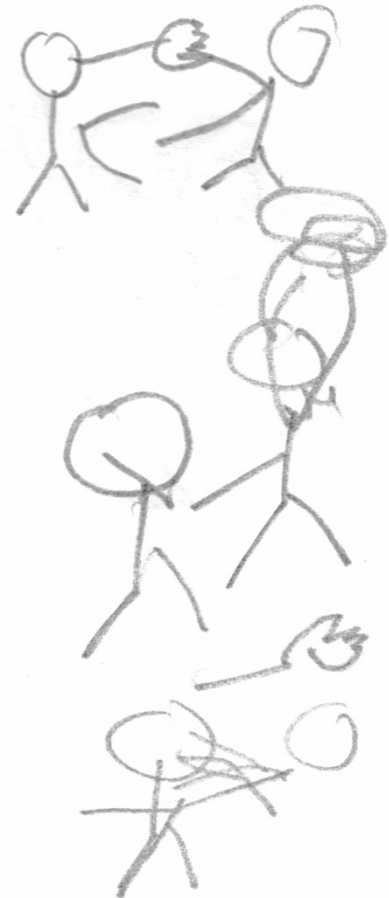
- ‘Continuous’
- Cumulative effect
- ‘Persistent’
- ‘Violence is not the
worst part’
- Entrapment

Domestic abuse - keywords



Defining Domestic Abuse

Domestic Abuse (as gender-based) can be perpetrated by partners or ex-partners and can include physical abuse (assault and physical attack involving a range of behaviour), sexual abuse (acts which degrade and humiliate and are perpetrated against their will, including rape) and mental and emotional abuse (such as threats, verbal abuse, racial abuse, withholding money and other types of controlling behaviour such as isolation from family and friends).



Examples of Domestic Abuse

Physical

Shaking, smacking, punching, kicking, presence of finger or bite marks, starving, tying up, stabbing, suffocation, throwing things, using objects as weapons, female genital mutilation, 'honour violence'. Physical effects are often in areas of the body that are covered and hidden (ie breasts and abdomen).

Sexual

Forced sex, forced prostitution, ignoring religious prohibitions about sex, refusal to practise safe sex, sexual insults, sexually transmitted diseases, preventing breastfeeding.

Psychological

Intimidation, insulting, isolating a woman from friends and family, criticising, denying the abuse, treating her as an inferior, threatening to harm children or take them away, forced marriage.

Financial

Not letting a woman work, undermining efforts to find work or study, refusing to give money, asking for an explanation of how every penny is spent, making her beg for money, gambling, not paying bills.

Emotional

Swearing, undermining confidence, making racist remarks, making a woman feel unattractive, calling her stupid or useless, eroding her independence

Mikey and Jools Stay Safe



How Abusive Men Parent



- Authoritarianism
- Low involvement, neglect and irresponsibility
- Undermining of the mother
- Self-centredness
- Manipulativeness
- Ability to perform under observation

Roles children may assume

- Protector
- Mediator
- Appeaser
- Secret keeper
- Young Carer
- Mirror behaviour of abuser
- Be used in the abuse

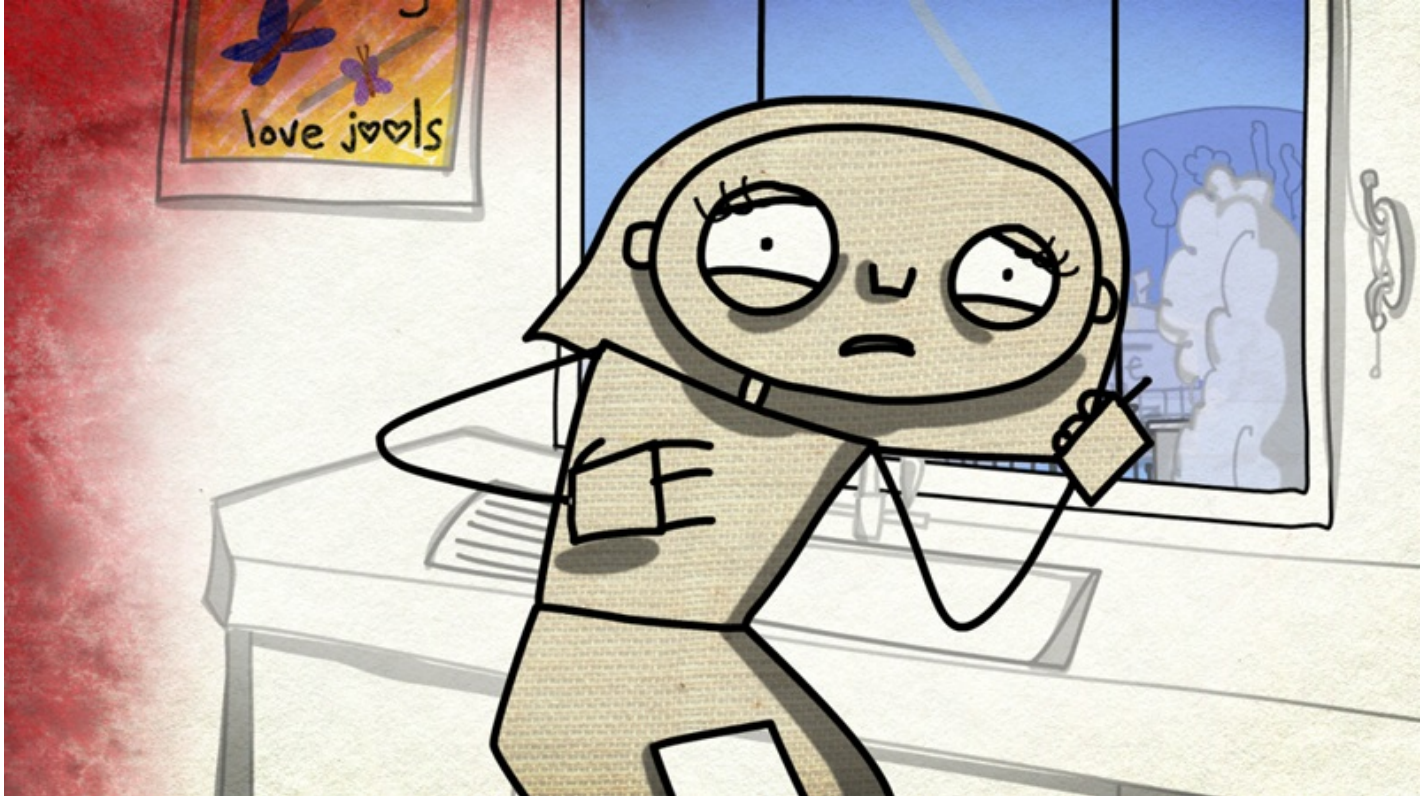


Impact on Mothering

- Role as mother is undermined
- Damage to attachment relationship
- Parenting capacity may be diminished
- Belief that she is an inadequate parent
- Loss of respect of some or all of children
- Changes her parenting style in response to abuser's parenting style
- Fear of children being removed
- Priority is protection of children



Why do women stay?



Physical Health

Injury
Exhaustion
Bedwetting
Asthma & Eczema

Mental Health

Anxiety
Self-harm
Withdrawal
Depression
Low self-esteem

The possible effects of domestic abuse on children and young people can include...

Feelings

Guilt
Fear
Anger
Isolation

Losses

Pets
Family
Friends
Possessions

Material Effects

Poverty
Homelessness
Social Exclusion
Disruption to schooling

Possible effects of domestic abuse

The effects of domestic abuse on children tend to vary according to:

- relationship with primary carer
- how old they are
- the levels of violence
- the length of time the abuse has been happening
- whether they are directly abused
- the extent to which they have witnessed the violence
- how much support they are getting from other people

Domestic Abuse and Attachment

- Formed through permission of attachment behaviours by primary care giver
- Inherent motivation: to stay safe and protected
- Allows child to explore their world with security
- Forms foundation of child's view of the world
- Important factor in development of resilience

Domestic Abuse and Attachment

- Capacity to allow attachment behaviours may be limited by experience of DA
- 37.5% of babies affected by DA have secure attachment
- Care giver's state of mind is one of strongest predictors of secure or insecure attachment
- Frightened mothers can be experience as frightening by children

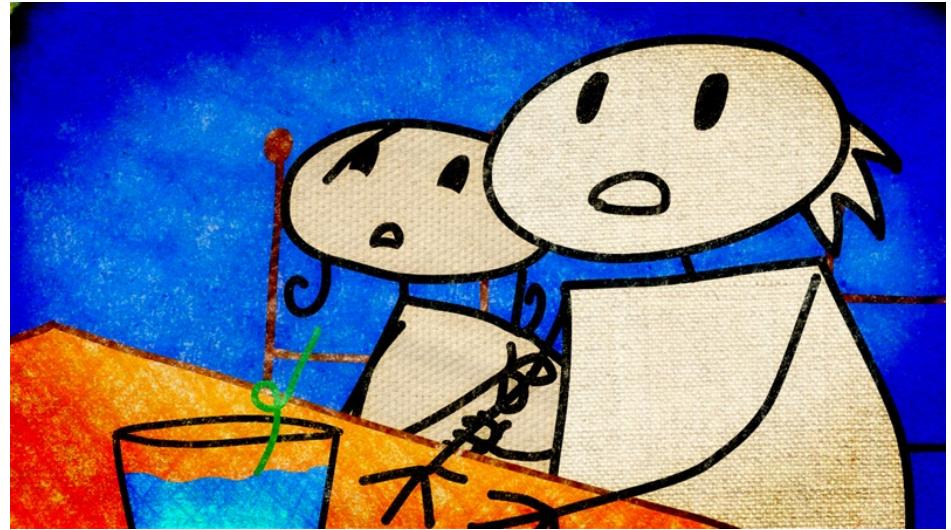
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Case Studies



What is Cedar?

12 week parallel group work programme

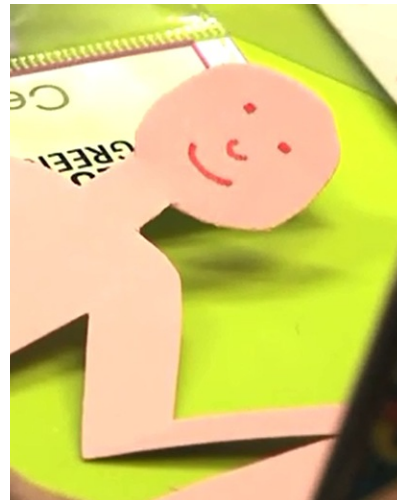
Provides a structured therapeutic curriculum

Validates emotions, provides a safe space to discuss experiences

Fun, creative, nourishing

Supports mothers to support their children

Encourages planning, flexibility, resourcefulness, critical thinking & insight



What makes Cedar unique?

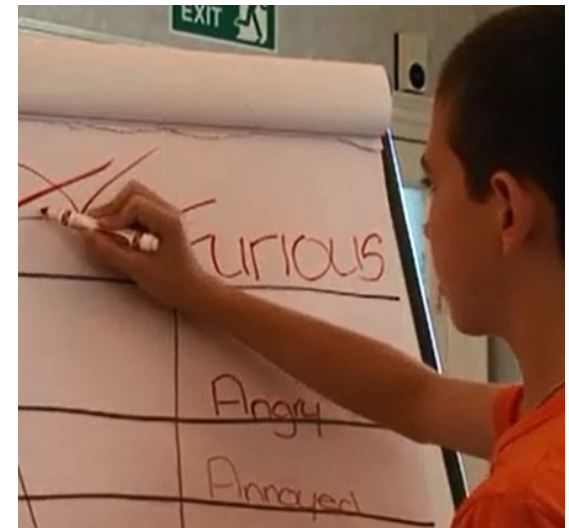
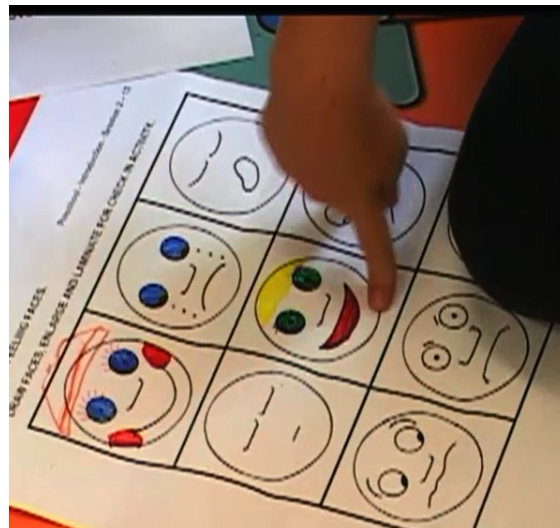
Assessment as engagement

Non-stigmatising strengths based approach

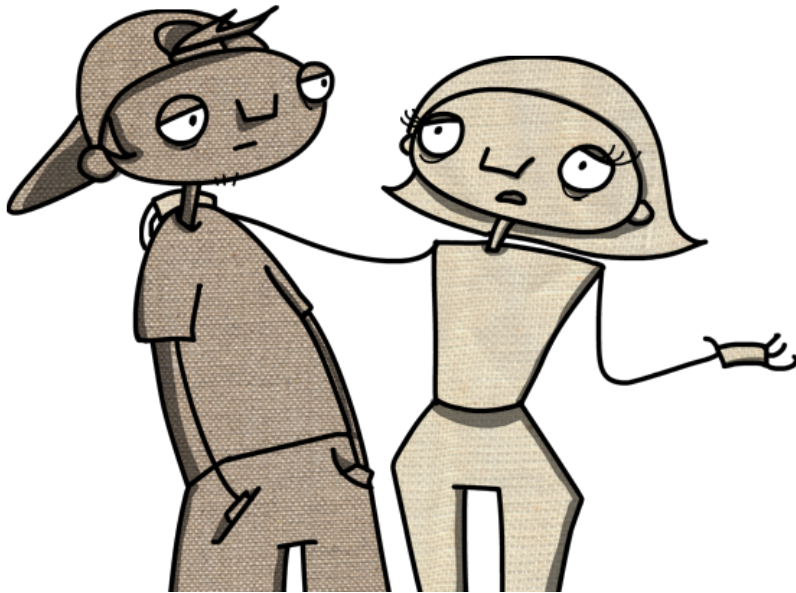
Provides a framework to strengthen mother/child bond

Enhances safety around the child

Delivered by practitioners across a range of agencies



Why Cedar?



- Domestic abuse damages primary relationships
- Mothers are often best form of support and protection to their children
- Promotes recovery as well as safety
- The Cedar programme chimed with our values
- Improves wider agency practice

Strengths based approach

'By reinforcing the positive skills of caregivers, a double benefit is achieved. First the caregiver starts to feel more confident about her own capacity to care. Secondly she becomes more aware of her own skills and this in itself will improve the capacity of her care giving. This is not instruction from without, but rather guidance or facilitation of her existing competence.'

World health Organisation (1997) 'Improving Mother / Child Interaction to Promote Better Psychosocial Development in Children.'
Program on Mental Health, Geneva.

More Information

www.scottishwomensaid.org.uk

www.cedarnetwork.org.uk

<http://www.nationaldomesticviolencehelpline.org.uk>

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