MECHANISMS AND DYNAMIC OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

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Abstract: The most common synonyms for term family are: love, support, understanding, warmness, etc. The family should present the place of the most protected living where each its member gets everything what he/she needs for undisturbed psychological and physical growth. However, sometimes it isn’t like that and the family present the place of violence, harassment and neglecting. Unfortunately, domestic violence is as old as the human being. Special mechanisms and tactics of harassment are built through history. They succeeded to make the domestic violence hidden and away from detailed sociopsychological researches and practical interventions for so long.

The aim of this work is to inspire experts’ attention to more often phenomenon of domestic violence, and the need for more detailed analysis of mechanisms which determine appearance and maintenance of violence, and all this with intention to find out the most adequate solution in prevention of this social problem.

Key words: domestic violence, techniques of harassment, mechanisms of harassment, phases of victimization.

INTRODUCTION

The family is surrounding in which all its members should get everything what they need for undisturbed growth and development. In that way it should present the place of the most protected living and the synonym for love, support, understanding, and reciprocal acceptance all its members. However, sometimes it is the place of violence, harassment and neglecting which stops personal and professional growth and which provokes the feeling of fear, sorrow, hopelessness and general disappointment of all members.

Domestic violence don’t know anything about ethnic, economic, educational or any other family disposition, so it appears in all classes of society. In addition to these general social roots, domestic violence also presents one of the oldest forms of the violation of human rights and freedoms through man’s history, which managed to stay unnoticed by serious psychological and sociological researches for so long. The more important interest of researchers for studying of domestic violence occurred in the mid 1990s of last century, when people in the world started to use first SOS phones for victims of violence, they established first safe houses, and generally more serious activate many non-government organizations with purpose to protect family from violence. When we talk about statistical information about frequency of domestic violence, some researches show that some forms of violent behavior between family members are present in every third family (1). When we consider the fact that many situations of domestic violence can cause death, these results of researches are really alarming, so we have every right to say that the problem of domestic violence should have full attention in specialized literature and in psychological practice.

The article has educational character and it analyzes strategies and techniques of domestic violence, which have the aim to demonstrate their force and power, and all this with purpose to maintain control over another person. The aim of the work is theoretical presentation of the way how the circle of harassment is functioning, what undoubtedly can help to better understanding of domestic violence and it can also help to easier disposition of adequate steps in the prevention of this problem.

CONCEPTION OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

In the literature of domestic violence are often alternately used terms like: harassment, neglecting, etc.
There is no consent about absolutely precise meaning of these terms and their usage. Some authors point out that the difference between conceptions violence and harassment can be seen first at the fact that harassment means more systematic harmful behavior which has the aim to gain control and power over some person, while the violence presents temperamental, uncontrolled reaction which doesn’t have to include the background of control and power (2). The thing which is in common to both terms is connotation of aggression towards another person, although it is more expressed with term “violence”. However, the term violence is used more often today with the fact that this term very often means systematic control and power over another person, too.

Domestic violence presents the pattern of different behaviors when compulsion, frightening, worthlessness, undervaluation, control are used directly or by threat to hurt another person psychically, physically, economically or socially. Domestic violence is committed inside homes, relatives or partner relationships, and it isn’t matter do persons live together or don’t. In the last few years a lot of effort was put on the international and state level with the aim of disposition institutional frame which is important for understanding of conception of domestic violence. According to Law of protection from domestic violence (Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina), domestic violence presents causation of physical, psychic or sexual pain or suffering and/or economic harm to another family member (3). In fact domestic violence refers to all behaviors which cause or try to cause bodily harm, when threatening with murder is present, when a person is forced to take part in sex acts, when a person has limited freedom of movement or communication with the third person, when there is verbal abuse humiliation or any other ways of insolent, careless and very unpleasant or harmful behavior towards another family member.

THE CAUSES OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

The first interpretations of causes of domestic violence were connected with comprehension that abusers are mentally ill persons who behave according to their conditions of health. It was considered that violent behavior towards another family member is the result of psychopathological conditions of person who violence does and violence suffers (for example sadism, masochism). For example, according to theories of “masochism of women”, some women because of their own masochistic wishes choose violent husbands. These persons were treated with medicaments, but it didn’t result with reduction of violence and it was somehow expected because the psychological researches showed that the part of these structures of persons in the population, which consists of abusers and victims, is equal with the part of the population which doesn’t consist of persons included in domestic violence (4). According to the second comprehension violence was considered as result of a fight between partners which was caused by both sides equally. The solution of this problem has been seen in consultation of a pair, although this approach gave poor results. The main reason for this was neglecting of patriarchal society dimension — unequal distribution of power between man and woman, and that caused the fact that victims of violence by abusers didn’t have the freedom to say what really happened to them and how they felt, and because of this the result of consultation and solution of the problem in this way was reduced (4). The third attempt to explain causes of domestic violence resulted with creation of so called “theory of rage”. The theory of rage explains the violence with abuser’s anger and loss of control during the conflict situations. The aim of every intervention during the work with abusers is to teach the person how to control rage and to express anger in adequate way. A lack of this understanding is in the fact that rage and anger can’t be adjusted with aggression and aggressive behavior of abuser when we talk about domestic violence, and in the fact that these abusers can control their anger in the situations when they aren’t bodily or in any other way in a dominant position (5, 6).

According to theory of power and control the main cause why domestic violence appears is in the non-metric distribution of power and control between family members, when one of family members wants to create and keep the feeling of power and control over the reactions of other member. To achieve this aim he/she uses many strategies. According to this theory mechanisms which abusers use in the partnership can be recognized (5).

MECHANISMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE (the wheel of power and control)

The wheel of power and control describes mechanisms of domestic violence and shows different patterns of behavior in the relation of harassment (2). This kind of behavior starts with humiliating comments, rude jokes, isolation, then economic exploitation, to the hitting, kicking, sexual abuse, strangling, crippling and killing of the victim. The wheel of violence in its core shows the aim of every violent behavior, and that is demonstration of power and control. Practically the central circle has the answer for question “why” does abuser decide to use violence. According to this we can
conclude that the root of violence isn’t in psychopathology but in social construction of unequal position of partnership members. Strategies/tactics (emotional, economic, sexual harassment, manipulation with children, threats, using of male’s privilege, frightening, isolation) which abuser uses to achieve the aim present collection of actions which can be used individually or in combination of individual tactics. Practically this circle has the answer for question “how” is the violence realized or how the abusers does the violence. This doesn’t mean that all of them are used at the same time or that every abuser uses all mentioned tactics. Selection, way of use, intensity and frequency depend on the valuation of abuser which tactic or their combination will bring the aim he/she wants. Selection of harassment tactics depends on the fact that abuser knows his/her victim very well, so the tactics can be adopted to victim’s characteristics and its more vulnerable sides (5).

External circle of the wheel marks actions which show the type of violence which abuser uses. When we say “domestic violence” we usually think about physical violence. However, the abusers uses physical violence only when all other mentioned strategies don’t give him/her what he/she wants, or when with usage of these strategies he/she wants to gain the aim easier. Emotional violence can have its subtler methods than physical violence, but this doesn’t mean that this is less destructive for victim. Many victims of domestic violence say that emotional scars heal harder than broken bones. The greatest problem when we talk about emotional and sexual harassment is in the fact that these kinds of harassment often stay hidden because of division of the sex roles in the family.

**THE FORMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

When we talk about domestic violence it is important to isolate two types of behavior (7):

a) Passive violence — is the result from the system which includes authoritarian family relationships

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*Figure 1. Mechanisms of domestic violence (the wheel of power and control)*
and then about committers of violence we can’t talk like about initiators of violence in the classical sense because they don’t get into realization of violence active and directly. They accept the role given by the system, and they build the family atmosphere with no agreement, talking or creative decision for marriage and parental relations. According to this there are three big categories of passive domestic violence:

1. Degradation of physical person’s statute — it includes violence against the health and it includes for example: low importance of birth and pregnancy if the female is exposed to violence.

2. Degradation of psychological victim’s position, and it includes four subgroups:
   - emotional violence — imperative of beauty, press of partners’ relations, imperative of care for others, prohibitions, threats to the victim or a person close to her/him, insulting, underestimate, ridicule, inconsiderate, blackmails, control of movement, isolation, etc. In fact emotional violence presents all behaviors which cause danger from provocation of emotional pain for some person.
   - sexual violence — kidnapping and trade with people, forced sex act, sexual agitation, sexual abuse, incest, rape. In fact, sexual violence is every sexual act committed against the will of other person.
   - motivational violence: inhibition of family member in bringing of important decisions, prohibition in behavior, ritual humiliation, etc.
   - cognitive violence: prohibition of education and stimulus of illiteracy,

3. Degradation of economic victim’s position — reduction and taking away of financial resources, unpaid alimony and other forms which leave the victim without resources for living, prohibition to find a job, etc.

b) active violence — in this group we have all forms of behavior which are directed against person’s bodily integrity and they include all forms of physical violence like: slapping, kicking, hitting, usage of weapon, pulling of a hair, in fact all actions which cause danger from less and/or harder bodily injuries.

**DYNAMIC OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

Complementary with the wheel of power and control is schematic presentation of the Circle of domestic violence which shows four phases in the process of violence (8).

In the first phase of partner’s relationship communication between husband and wife is in a relatively pleasant atmosphere without more important disorders in communication. The violent ways of behavior aren’t characteristic for this phase. For the second phase it is characteristic creating of atmosphere with tension and increase of tension which appears in everyday situations, and in this situation the violent partner demands or forbids some needs of the victim. The creating of tension brings the beginning of violent behavior and that provokes the feeling of shock, disbelief, pain and hurt by the victim. Immediately after violent behavior there is a phase of regret, in this phase the abuser shows regret and sorrow, and he/she usually makes a promise that violence won’t happen ever again. The phase of regret leans on the phase of honeymoon in which the relationship between husband and wife functions without fights and violent behavior. In this phase the abuser tries to fulfill all the victim’s wishes, to gain the feeling of confidence, and after that the power and control. This condition is necessary for continuance of violent behavior.

It is important to mention that abuser doesn’t take the authentic responsibility for the violence, and the abuser explains the violent behavior as causative — consequent action, and that there was a reason for appearance of violent behavior which is out of abuser himself/herself (alcoholism, inability to control rage, etc.). During the time, period of each phase is shorter and the circle of violence is faster, so the period of honeymoon becomes shorter and phases with violence are longer. After years, when a feeling of complete power and control appears, performer of the violence doesn’t “regret” anymore for what he/she did, and the phase of honeymoon disappears. The phase of honeymoon exists until the moment when the abuser estimates that the person could leave that relationship and look for help from other persons.

One of the logical questions here is the question of reasons, why the victim stays in relationship of harassment. One of the most common reasons why people
stay in this relationship is the faith that something will be changed, and they get this faith in the phase of honeymoon when there is no harassment’s patterns of behavior. However, as we mentioned before, the fact that there is no violence in this phase is just temporary and it always ends with new violent behavior. The next reason why the victim stays in the violent relationship is the condition of isolation. The abuser first isolates the victim from the social environment, so in the situations of violence the victim doesn’t have enough qualitative social network where he/she can look for help. Further, there are many barriers which the victim because of lower resources can’t get over to leave the violent behavior. Some of these barriers are: threats to take the children, unpaid alimony, agitation and insults at work, threats to hurt the victim’s friends or family, spying, etc. However, one of the most common reasons of staying in violent relationship is economic dependence of the victim, when the victim can’t support herself/himself and the other family members. But beside all these mentioned the most important thing for leaving from relationship of harassment is perception of social environment as reliable and supportive. The victim leaves relationship of harassment only when she/he gains enough confidence in the community where she/he belongs, when she/he believes that she/he’ll get enough care and support from that community (5, 8).

PHASES OF VICTIM’S VICTIMIZATION

Specialized literature recognizes three phases of victimization which have different relationship of communication between the victim and the abuser (8). In the first phase of victimization the person doesn’t recognize that she/he is the victim of violence and she/he tries to satisfy all demands which abuser has and to correct all patterns of behavior which the other side resent. This relationship is usually caused by established roles in which one side always verifies personal responsibility in the process of communication. In this phase of victimization the victim usually doesn’t look for help because she/he doesn’t notice that there is a problem and she/he tries to solve the problem by herself/himself. In the second phase of victimization the victim recognized the pattern of harassment and decides to look for help. She/he usually looks for help from close persons who she/he can trust. It depends on the reaction of these people will the victim retreat herself/himself if she/he doesn’t gain the feeling of confidence and support, or will the victim continue with the process of separation and new life. For these phases are also characteristic attempts of physical separation from the abuser and finding of safe space for life. If the victim in this phase doesn’t get support from the community, then starts the third phase of harassment. In this phase the victim retreats and tries to rationalize abuser’s behavior. The abuser is usually aware of rejection and isolation of his victim, so he/she changes dominant tactics of harassment. For example, in the first phase of victimization emotional harassment includes e.g. affirmation of bodily appearance of the victim (e.g. why did you dress up like that, for who ), and now the bodily appearance is emphasized again but with purpose to destroy even the last atom of self-respect (e.g. why did you dress up like that, you don’t need that, you aren’t attractive anyway). The farthest condition of harassment in this phase can result with Syndrome of victim-beating, which includes thoughts, feelings and behavior of the person who are exposed to domestic violence. Because there are years of accumulation of pain, humiliation, physical injuries and other types of harassment, the victim changes herself/himself and usually destroys the basic moral values, and that can result with physical attack or even killing of abuser at the and (8).

PREVENTIVE MEASURES OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

In this work it is explained the mechanism of domestic violence, the causes of domestic violence, the forms of domestic violence, and its main purpose is to raise the awareness of experts in different profession to write about domestic violence, as preventive measure in prevention of this problem. Prevention, especially the primary one, should be in almost all social activities connected with family functioning. That has to include activities of long term process which give the most adequate results. It is important to know that there aren’t quick solutions when we want to solve this problem, but our fight needs to have a long and continual work.

When we talk about primary prevention it is important to pay attention on the next things: elimination of standards which legitimize violence in society, e.g. showing of violence in the public media, to decrease social isolation, to decrease the cycle of violent behavior by learning of alternative forms of behavior in relation to violence as learned control of children, etc. In the plan of secondary prevention it is necessary to develop methods which can discover risky behavior, to educate health workers about detection of domestic violence by “screening” methods, and to develop strategies of intervention to reduce unwanted results (8). The early system of health care still can’t answer to all needs in giving services in the area of domestic violence, and this especially relates to services of early detection and identification. This area includes completely new approach in giving services which includes additional education of medical stuff
and formation of specialized cadres, understandable protocols and procedures, which are orientated towards integrated approach to this problem which includes strong intersectional collaboration.

A lot of conventions and declarations are signed until today with purpose to fight against domestic violence. The most important are: Universal declaration about human rights (1948), UN-Conference about elimination of all kinds of women discrimination (1979), UN Declaration about elimination of violence against women (1993), Peking’s Declaration and Platform for action (1995), and as one of special innovative approach with purpose to reduce domestic violence there is Austrian model of intervention in cases of domestic violence. Measures of protection in cases of domestic violence in the FB&H are regulated by Law of protection from domestic violence FB&H. The purpose of all protection measures described by this Law is to stop and reduce domestic violence, to remove consequences of violence which has been done, and to do effective measures in re-education of abuser, and discovering of circumstances which suit and stimulate new violation. The types of protection measures which the court in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina can sentence are regulated in the Annex 9. of this Law: removing from a flat, house or any other place for living and prohibition to come back in a flat, house or any other place for living; prohibition to come near the victim of violence; give protection to the person who suffers the violence, obligation of psychosocial treatment and obligation of medical treatment from addiction (3, 9, 10).

CONCLUSION

Although we have many documents which guarantee family protection from domestic violence and equal rights and freedoms of all family members, the fight for their application is still happening. More active social and political efforts are necessary if we want to prevent this problem, from interpretation of domestic violence as public-health problem which is concern of whole society, and to solve this problem the whole community has to be involved with all existing written acts which regulate reduction and fight with this problem, to more important educational and schooling campaigns directed to all ages.

REFERENCES


Sažetak

MEHANIZMI I DINAMIKA PORODIČNOG NASILJA

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Najčešći sinonimi za termin porodica su: ljubav, podrška, razumevanje, toplina i sl. Porodica treba da predstavlja mesto najsigurnijeg življenja u kojoj svaki njen član dobija sve što je potrebno za nesmetan psihološki i fizički rast. Međutim, ponekad to nije tako i porodica predstavlja sredinu nasilja, zlostavljanja i zanemarivanja. Na žalost, nasilje u porodici je staro koliko je star i sam čovek. Kroz istoriju su izgrađeni posebni mehanizmi i taktike zlostavljanja koji su nasilje u porodici uspeli učiniti nevidljivim tako dugo i samim tim povećati bol i patnju onih koji su njemu izloženi.

Cilj ovog rada je da podstakne pažnju stručnjaka na pojavu nasilja u porodici, kao i potrebu za detaljnijom analizom mehanizama koji određuju nastup i održavanje nasilja, a sve u nameri pronalaska najadekvatnijeg rešenja u prevenciji ovog društvenog problema.

Ključne reči: nasilje u porodici, tehnike zlostavljanja, mehanizmi zlostavljanja, faze viktimizacije.
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