

More to the Story: How the Economic Effects of Domestic Violence Can Lead to Dangerous Custody Outcomes

Beyond the Bench Conference 2019





Overview

- The Costs of Domestic Violence
- The Nature and Consequences of Economic Abuse
- How the Economic Implications of Domestic Violence Lead to Dangerous Custody Outcomes
- Addressing Economic Abuse in Custody Cases
- Breakout Activity
- Wrap-up

The Costs of Domestic Violence



#1

reason survivors don't leave and/or return to an abusive situation is financial insecurity



\$104k

is the average cost associated with being a female survivor of domestic violence



99%

of survivors experience financial abuse as part of the domestic violence

Experiencing domestic violence is financially devastating for most people. Survivors can only secure long -term safety for themselves and their children if they can afford to leave, rebuild and heal.

Economic Abuse

What is economic abuse?

- Tactics that control a survivor's ability to **acquire , use , and maintain** economic resources.
- Method of control meant to create **total financial dependence** .
- It's all about **control** .

What does economic abuse look like?

- Interfering with resource acquisition
- Controlling access to resources
- Exploiting resources

What are the effects of economic abuse?

- Resource depletion
- Decreased employability over time
- Coerced / fraudulent debt
- Damaged credit
- Financial naiveté

Why does economic abuse matter?

- It has devastating effects on a survivor's financial well-being.
- It's incredibly pervasive: 99% of survivors have experienced it in some form.
- It's widely misunderstood: A 2014 study revealed that 78% of Americans did not know that economic abuse is a form of domestic violence.
- It's goes unaddressed: Economic abuse is not recognized as domestic violence under state or federal law.
- It has dangerous implications for custody determinations.

Economic Abuse and Custody

The Problem

90%

of service providers
report that their
clients experience
litigation abuse

54%

is the rate at which the
abusive parent is granted
custody in California

80%

of mothers with children
experiencing
homelessness have
previously experienced
domestic violence

Addressing Economic Abuse in Custody Cases

Approaches & Tools

- Identify and combat litigation abuse in the courtroom
- Consider economic abuse in custody determinations
- Request / order financial relief for survivors

Breakout Activity

Wrap - up

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