A Policy for Domestic Violence

‘It is estimated that approximately 3 million incidents of domestic violence are reported each year in the United States’ (Feinstein, 1933). Recent studies show that about one in every four women will experience domestic violence in her lifetime (Tjaden, 2000). You may think that women and children are the major victims of domestic abuse but statistics have determined that about 20% of men have experienced domestic abuse since the age of 16, and in most cases their reports are disregarded or treated as ‘second-class victims’ as they are not taken into consideration because of the widely underestimated figures of male abuse. As can be seen by the statistics, something must be done to stop domestic abuse. Therefore the government should implement a three-part policy to deal with domestic abuse for three major reasons. One part of the policy would provide educational programs for women and children to be able to recognize domestic abuse, how to deal with it and prevent it from happening again. Another part of the policy would provide shelters for those who have been through domestic abuse because this would encourage people that have been domestically abused to talk about it and this would likely help with their safety and self-esteem. The third part of the policy would be compulsory anger management classes for men as this would help them understand what abuse is, how it affects the people around them and how to control their anger.

To reduce the number of domestic violence cases for the following years the first part of the three-step policy would be to provide shelter for abused women and children. By establishing this policy eight shelters for victims of abuse would be set up around Kuwait, having at least one shelter within 15km. Providing shelters will reduce the number of domestic violence cases as well as encourage victims to come forward with any experiences they have had with abuse rather than running away with fear or remaining trapped and abused constantly. According to Catherine A. Simmons, author of “Men’s Use of Controlling
Behaviors: A Comparison of Reports by Women in a Domestic Violence Shelter and Women in a Domestic Violence Offender Program” less than half of the women in the offender program reported physical abuse, whereas the women in the domestic violence shelters had experienced a much more significant amount of abuse which concludes to the women in shelters being able to find refuge and safety in these shelters being able to come forward with their problem as opposed to the women in the offender’s program that chose to stay and use violence against their partner as a form of protection (Simmons, 2008). This study gives evidence that women in domestic shelters are significantly less likely to fight back, which would worsen the abusive situation, and more likely to come forward with their case because of the safe environment of the shelters. By providing shelters within a reasonable distance from potential victims, abused women and children would be able to gain access to find refuge with no problems. This would encourage them to come forward with their case with ease, knowing that they will be at a safe place where they will not be judged and their cases remaining discreet.

Another method and part of the policy is to have compulsory anger management classes for men to teach them about abuse and how to prevent it, which would help them from becoming abusive in the future. By establishing this policy, the government would set up several institutions around the area, requiring the men to attend at least once a month. Robert J. Fetsch, author of ‘The RETHINK Parenting and Anger Management Program: A Follow-Up Validation Study” revised and tested the impact of anger management programs for parents. After the programs were carried out, the studies were evaluated and showed that parenting skills were increased and the sessions were successful in reducing their anger levels significantly using their ‘overall anger expression levels’ and the parents themselves also stated that their rationale, attitudes and behaviors greatly improved (Fetsch, 2008). Developing mandatory classes for men, who are the most likely to become abusers would
help prevent them from abusing others and be able to control their anger, as the research carried out by Fetsch showed parents anger control levels greatly improved as well as other critical skills being developed. In fact, statistics acquired by Spielberger showed an impressive 80% reduction in anger or types of aggression using the STAXI State Anger subscale (1996). These statistics will be an indicator of how effective these anger management classes will be in changing how men control their anger and therefore, will be a productive way and worthy investment to prevent domestic violence in the future.

The final part of the three-step policy would be to teach children and adults about the consequences and effects of violence by arranging meeting times at least once every eight weeks. These sessions would emphasize the importance of domestic violence and create better awareness especially if you start at a younger age and possibly prevent it with adults and the future society. According to Helen Baker, around the age of 16 is when teenage boys, becoming men, learn and adapt to the methodologies of controlling people (2009) and so if we can teach them about domestic violence before this age, they will learn newer and safer ways to handle situations. By having learning sessions, rather than punishments when violence is committed, the outcome will be more productive and preventable. In order for young people learn what types of behavior are tolerable and which are not our society has done this by familiarizing them with acceptable behavior and discouraging them from unacceptable acts. Research has shown that school suspensions, as an attempt to discourage violence after it has occurred, has had undesired outcomes that include, but are not limited to, a decrease in academic productivity and spirit, an increased number in drop-outs (Arcia, 2006) as well as use in alcohol and drugs, withdrawal from peers and criminal acts and misconducts (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2003). When the number of school suspensions increased, the more likely anti-social behavior would occur in the suspended students as shown by Sheryl Hemphill (2006). According to these findings, punishment
would increase the number of violent cases rather than reduce them which is why a policy to have learning sessions a better way to reduce the number of violence cases by preventing it before it happens, rather than punishment after violence has been acted upon.

Although there have been some research findings of when adolescents reach maturity and develop their own types of behavior it is argued that people are born with qualities that cannot be changed. In ‘X-linked borderline mental retardation with prominent behavioral disturbance’ by H.G Brunner reported on the MAOA (monoamine oxidase) function. Brunner found, through a study of Dutch family with four generations of low-normal IQ levels, that all the male members showed violent and aggressive behavior (1993). This experiment shows consistency through the family’s behavior pattern which implies a genetic factor is what is causing their aggressive behavior and so for this reason it is argued that these sessions would be an inadequate way to spend the government’s finance as it will not help prevent those with dominant behavior.

It may be true that people with aggressive parents and ancestors typically show the same habits, however, this does not mean that they cannot learn to develop skills to prevent their abusive habits or at least reduce them. Analyzing the tests carried out, Mairi Levitt author of “‘It could be just an additional test couldn’t it?’ Genetic testing for susceptibility to aggression and violence” considered other factors in addition that could influence behavior like society and the environment they are in and how they could shape someone with gene-related aggression. Using a study based on how people react to media violence will help illustrate the point on how influential external factors can be. An experiment, carried out by Christopher Ferguson author of ‘Personality, Parental and Media Influences on Aggressive Personality and Violent Crimes in Young Adults’ between media violence exposure and aggression was carried out, and although the overall effects are not clear, there was a 90% decrease in violent behavior (2008). This shows how strong the relationship between
environmental and social factor are with behavior and what kind of an impact having teaching sessions will have on people, even with genetic factors.

Critics also argue that what some people may consider a form of punishment may be considered as abuse to another person, and that the parent has the right to discipline their child. According to Duncan and Miller’s Developmental Theory in ‘Animal Abuse, Family Violence and Child Wellbeing: A Review’ spanking is a way to punish children, especially those with greater needs for it as no other form of punishment will work in teaching them to stop their bad behavior. Therefore, in some cases it is necessary for children to be spanked as a form of learning.

Although some people may use abuse as a form of punishment, there are much greater consequences to using this method of teaching that will lead to a higher number of domestic violence cases in the future. Jan Hunt explains the consequences of using abuse to discipline children in her article ‘Ten Reason Not to Hit Your Kids’ and how it can lead to domestic violence in the future. Hitting children as a form of punishment would mean that they would take this as a learning process which in turn would mean they obtain abusive characteristics and become abusers in the future as this is the all the child knows and may even stop the child from resolving problems in an effective manner (1997). Using more different methodology of teaching a child not to do something will help our future society more in the future which is why it is so important to teach parents the difference between punishment and abuse as well as alternative and more effective ways to teach their children.

In conclusion, because of the dangers mentioned in this article and the importance of domestic violence strong action must be taken soon to help our society. Our objectives are to decrease the number of future violence cases and increase the shelters in our society and awareness level amongst our citizens. Having learning sessions will provide a better understanding of domestic abuse and methodologies to more effective and efficient ways to
teach our future generation, which is especially important for those who currently use spanking as a form of punishment. Despite the beliefs about abuse being a heredity gene we can still create some change towards a better outcome for our future and influence the significantly greater number of individuals that do not possess these characteristics. For these reasons the government must enforce these policies in order to reduce the number of domestic violence cases in the state.
Alphabetize your sources.


Hunt, Jan. "10 Reasons Not to Hit Your Kids."

