

San Francisco SafeStart Results: Making a Difference in the Lives of Young Children Exposed to Domestic Violence

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Introduction

- Children's exposure to violence (CEV) in San Francisco
- Characteristics of families served by SafeStart
- Client outcomes
- Tier II Update



CEV in San Francisco

- 2003 Domestic Violence Response Unit data show that 919 children are exposed to violence each year.
- Due to several factors, we believe the number of children exposed is much higher.
- We estimate that almost 10,000 children are exposed to domestic violence each year in San Francisco alone.



SAFESTART RESULTS

Family Characteristics



SafeStart Parent Demographics

- The SafeStart client database includes information on 207 families and 398 children from six different service providers.
- Gender: 94% of presenting caregivers are female
- Race/Ethnicity:
 - 36% Hispanic or Latino
 - 26% Asian
 - 24% African American
 - 14% Other (Pacific Islander, Ethiopian, Caucasian, Mixed Heritage)
- Language: Just 42% of parents/guardians indicate that English is their primary language



SafeStart Child Characteristics

- ❑ On average, there are about 2 children per family
- ❑ 64% of children served are age 6 or under
- ❑ 55% are male, 43% are female
- ❑ 81% were directly exposed to violence (saw or heard a violent event)
- ❑ 51% were exposed to “other” types of violence (community violence, in utero, emotional abuse, verbal threats, etc.)

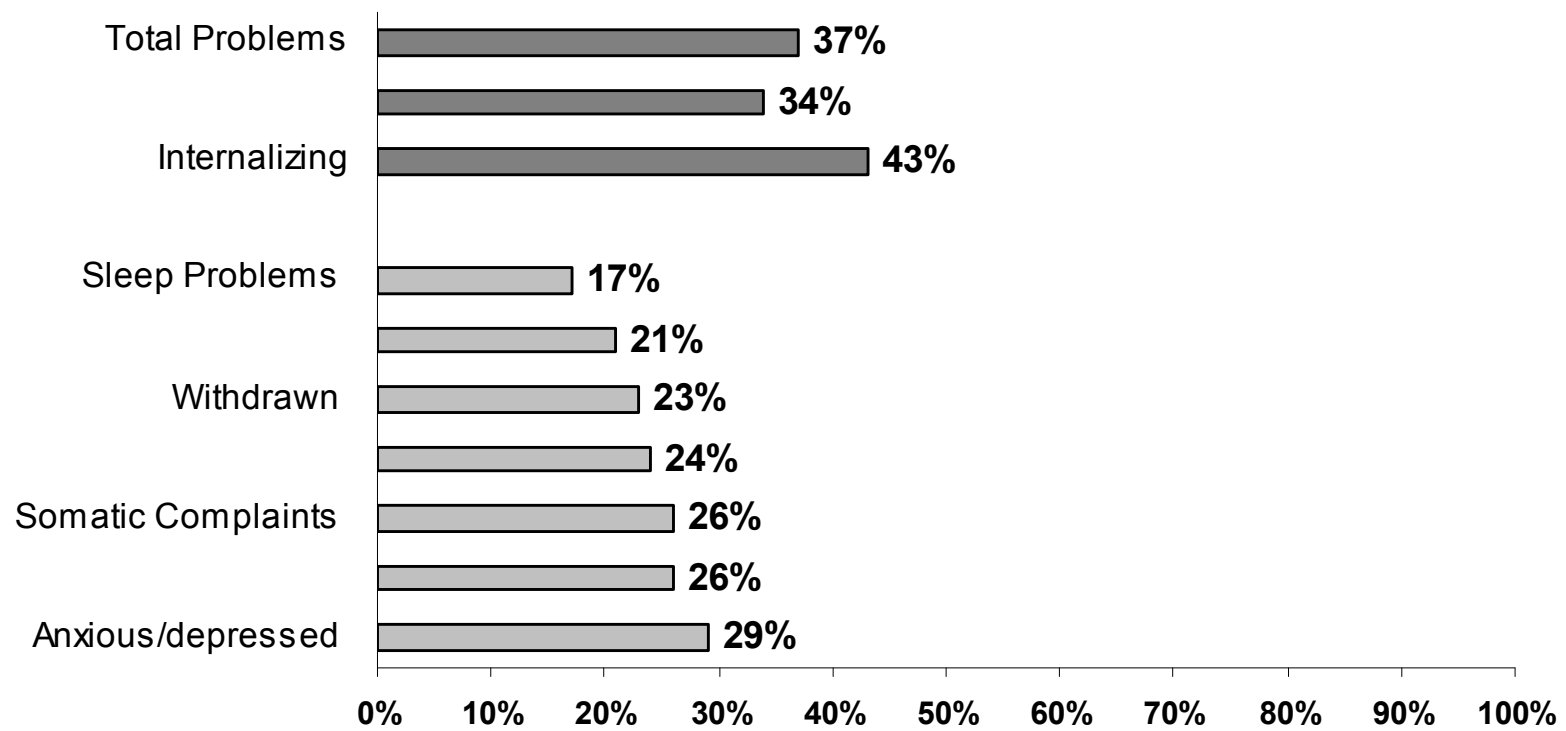


Children Receiving SafeStart Services

- ❑ Children are most often exposed to violence in their home
- ❑ The father is most often the perpetrator
- ❑ Nearly 60% of the children have been exposed to many incidents of violence over time (chronic exposure)
- ❑ Nearly one quarter are exposed in more than one location (home, school, neighborhood)



Proportion of Children in Clinical or Borderline range on CBCL Scales at Intake (n=96)





Family Involvement with Other Agencies

- 65% report prior police involvement
- 40% report that someone in their family has received mental health services
- 29% report that CPS has been involved
- 15% report the perpetrator is on probation



Seeking SafeStart Services

- Families with male children are more likely to seek services sooner.
- If a weapon is involved in the violent incident, families are more likely to seek services sooner.
- If the client is married, they are more likely to seek services sooner



SAFESTART RESULTS

Client Outcomes



Client Satisfaction

- Most respondents agree...
 - They were able get all the services they thought they needed.
 - Staff were sensitive to cultural background.
 - They understand the risks of exposing young children to violence
 - They were treated with respect by FRC staff.
 - Services were available at convenient locations



Reducing the Impact of CEV

- Child Goals (case management log)
 - 98% of completed goals were completed “as expected” or “more favorably than expected”
- Family Goals (case management log)
 - 100% of completed goals were completed “as expected” or “more favorably than expected”



Reducing the Impact of CEV

- Family progress since last assessment:
 - 61% “Somewhat Better” or “Much Better”
- Family’s overall environment since last assessment
 - 57% “About the Same”
 - 16% “Somewhat Better”
 - 13% “Much Better”



Reducing the Impact of CEV

- At the end of services, 90% of mothers report their kids feel safer
- 94% of mothers report they feel safer



Next Steps

- Comparison of CBCLs at T1 and T2 for children receiving behavioral health services
- Analysis of referral database
- Tier II



Tier II Update

- The purpose of this research is to understand the factors which are present in the removal of San Francisco children from their family, with a focus on the
 - *What are the factors cited in child welfare case records when child welfare services are rendered and in dependency court records when petitions for detention are granted?*



Tier II Update

- There are three proposed research activities:
 - The **first research activity** is to review child welfare case files. The research will include a review a sample of child welfare case records from San Francisco's Human Services Agency.
 - Records will be reviewed to assess the impact of the presence of DV and CEDV on the case decision-making process (i.e., the provision of child welfare services and the decision to pursue removal of the child from his/her family).



Tier II Update

- The **second research activity** is to review dependency court case files. The research will include review of San Francisco Unified Family Court case files to determine whether or not the department's petition for detention in such cases is granted.
- Records will be reviewed to assess the impact of the presence of DV and CEDV on the court's decision-making process related to the removal of the child from the home.



Tier II Update

- The **third research activity** is to collect information from domestic violence victims upon their arrival and intake at San Francisco domestic violence shelters and advocacy agencies.
- Domestic violence victims have information about their own circumstances and experience with child welfare workers that may not ever be recorded in either a child welfare or dependency court case file.
- A survey will be conducted to capture DV victims' perspectives on child welfare systems and services.



Tier II Update

- ETR will to return to the police department for a review of all cases occurring between June 23, 2003 and June 30, 2005 to:
 - Evaluate the impact of police training designed to ensure police officer compliance with reformed policies and procedures.
 - Produce an uninterrupted time series that will rigorously support inferences about the effectiveness of police training and practice reform.
 - Provide a more reliable CEDV prevalence projection for San Francisco that includes the analysis of seasonal variance.