

Research on the Causes and Solutions of Domestic Violence in Social Work

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Abstract

With the rapid progress of society, families have also encountered a series of challenges, among which violence within the family is the primary cause of family breakdown. In the current society of our country, the phenomenon of domestic violence is becoming increasingly severe, which has seriously affected people's normal life and social order stability, and even threatened the long-term stability of the country. Due to the increasingly prominent psychological and behavioral problems caused by violent behavior, domestic violence in China has undoubtedly become a major "malignant tumor" that hinders social development. How to effectively manage domestic violence has become one of the urgent problems to be solved. Therefore, this study delves into the current situation of domestic violence from the perspective of social work, analyzes the underlying reasons, and proposes corresponding solutions. Combat domestic violence comprehensively through professional social work methods such as case studies, group collaboration, and community work.

Keywords

Social work; Domestic violence; Case studies; Solution.

1. The Proposal and Classification of Domestic Violence Issues

Domestic violence is an important and complex issue in the field of social work. Domestic violence refers to physical, emotional, or abusive behavior, control, or economic exploitation that occurs in family relationships. This behavior not only causes physical and psychological trauma to the victim, but also has a negative impact on the entire family and community. According to the differences in the targets of domestic violence, it can be divided into violence against wives, violence against husbands, violence against underage children, and violence against parents by adult family members. Among them, domestic violence against women is the main manifestation. According to data released by the National Women and Children's Rights Protection Service Platform in 2021, a total of 133000 domestic violence reports, consultations, and requests for help were received nationwide in 2018, with 86.7% of women and 9.5% of children being victims of violence. Nearly 60% of households in 30 cities across the country experience different forms of domestic violence, with physical violence being the most common form. According to a survey report by the China Women's Rights and Family Development Research Center, the incidence of domestic violence in China is about 25%. The survey also shows that about 80% of minors and about 60% of adults admit to experiencing at least one form of violence in the family. Not only that, many scholars believe that domestic violence incidents cannot be resolved solely through mediation among family members. In this case, professional institutions such as government organizations, women's federations, and law

enforcement agencies need to intervene to find the root causes of domestic violence from multiple perspectives such as family ethics and legal intervention, and propose solutions and suggestions for various types of domestic violence.

China has conducted in-depth research on addressing issues related to domestic violence and achieved impressive results, but the social forces and intervention methods provided by the outside world still need to be strengthened. Social work is a social discipline that upholds altruistic values, is based on scientific knowledge, and uses scientific methods to help disadvantaged groups in need and solve their corresponding life problems. Social work provides a new perspective for solving domestic violence problems. The following is Alan Kemp, an American expert on domestic violence, who has classified common domestic violence from multiple dimensions and provided reference for social work methods, as shown in the table:

Table 1. Classification of Domestic Violence

Violence targets	Abuse/neglect can be physical or non physical			
	Physical Attack	Sexual assault	Emotional Attack	Unable to meet basic needs
Children	Disciplinary or physical attacks	Child sexual abuse	Psychological attacks or child psychological abuse	Child neglect
Spouse	Marital violence	Spousal rape	Psychological attack or abuse	
The old	Physical abuse of elderly people	Rape or elderly sexual abuse	Psychological attack or abuse by the elderly	Negligence of the elderly

2. Reasons for the Existence of Domestic Violence

2.1. Structural factors

Firstly, social structure and institutional factors have a significant impact on the issue of domestic violence. For example, gender inequality and family power structures, such as male dominance and control over women, as well as traditional gender role portrayal, can all lead to the risk of domestic violence. Since the beginning of this century, the increasing number of domestic violence incidents in the Chinese community has sparked widespread social attention and discussion, such as the shocking "Tin Shui Wai Incident" in Hong Kong and the "Li Yang Domestic Violence Case" in the field of public figures. In this context, this article attempts to reveal the different roles played by men and women in the family through an analysis of Western scholars' research on domestic violence. The violence committed by men against women is a product of patriarchal culture and historical context. This stereotypical concept and society's stereotype of male 'strong' and female 'weak' seem to provide a rationalized explanation for domestic violence.

In addition, social structural issues such as economic difficulties, poverty, and poor living conditions may also increase the risk of domestic violence. The instability of society and economy, as well as the increase in poverty and unemployment rates, can bring pressure and uncertainty to families, leading to tension and anxiety among family members. Economic distress often leads to an increase in conflicts and arguments among family members, thereby increasing the likelihood of domestic violence. According to statistics, 90% of domestic violence incidents in China are dominated by men in the family economy, while nearly 75% of women are highly dependent on men economically. Due to the lack of independent economic sources, women without income often develop a strong dependence on their husbands. In the early stages of being subjected to domestic violence by their husbands, they often choose to silently endure for fear of losing their homes, financial resources, and the inability to raise children after

divorce. If this practice continues for a long time, it will only promote male dominance and arrogance, causing the problem of domestic violence to persist and continue to worsen.

2.2. Psychological factors

The individual psychological factors of the perpetrator may lead to the occurrence of domestic violence. Among them, mental illness and emotional problems are the main culprits that make domestic violence more and more common. Emotional issues such as pressure, resentment, and setbacks that individuals face may trigger intense family conflicts, ultimately leading to violent behavior. This may be related to the perpetrator's negative childhood experiences, as the abuse, neglect, and violence experienced by individuals during childhood may lead to psychological trauma and the formation of patterns of negative behavior, thereby affecting their behavior in the family. According to a survey by "Half Sky Home" in Tianjin, 54.6% of children in violent families experience a decline in academic performance, 20% of children do not love going home, and 12.8% of children have distorted personalities and engage in illegal and criminal behavior. From this, it can be seen that bad childhood experiences are more likely to make children become perpetrators of violence when they grow up.

The psychological factors of the victim may also exacerbate the occurrence of domestic violence incidents. On the one hand, victims of domestic violence have a mentality of "family shame cannot be exposed", which makes domestic violence highly covert; On the other hand, some victims of violence are embarrassed and unwilling to seek help from society due to family factors such as parents and children. Even if we hope that relevant departments can intervene, we only want to persuade the perpetrators through oral education, rather than hoping that they will be punished by law. However, such painless measures often further exacerbate family conflicts.

2.3. Social factors

The social driving factor behind domestic violence is the concept of tolerance in society. Therefore, domestic violence often occurs on a family basis. Because family is a part of private life, it is usually not within the public domain recognized by culture. Many people hold a tacit attitude towards domestic violence. When a domestic violence incident occurs, if neighbors are indifferent to it or if the social neighborhood committee does not report it to the relevant department, the judicial department may consider the family dispute to be illegal. Although there are penalties for domestic violence, the specific definition of domestic violence is still unclear, and law enforcement personnel in cases may intervene. Even in public places, few people would stop violence. Or in public places, when there is a physical conflict between a man and a woman, as long as the man claims to be hitting his wife, in most cases no one will intervene because most people believe that this is only a private matter in the marital relationship.

Obviously, most people hold a tacit and receptive view towards domestic violence, which may further exacerbate the perpetrator's behavior. The laws and regulations in China regarding the punishment of domestic violence are not perfect, and the deficiencies in the current legal system have led to ineffective punishment of domestic violence. In fact, China is not "unable to rely on". Due to the unclear, principled, and poorly operable laws such as the Anti Domestic Violence Law, the Civil Code, the Criminal Law, the Law on the Protection of Minors, and the Law on the Protection of Women's Rights and Interests, these factors have all become the reasons for the growth of domestic violence.

The intervention level of relevant departments in domestic violence is insufficient, and the staff lacks professionalism. For the complex issue of domestic violence, some organizations may not have sufficient understanding of its severity and impact, or lack sufficient training and guidance on how to handle domestic violence cases, coupled with a lack of legal system and other institutional support, making it quite difficult to carry out work.

3. Methods of Social Work Intervention in Domestic Violence

Generally speaking, the main ways for social work to intervene in domestic violence include prevention, early intervention, emergency response, recovery and reconstruction, and cooperation. Social work, as a helping activity specialized in providing social services and solving social problems, can provide comprehensive support and protection for victims of violence, help victims break free from violent environments, rebuild healthy family relationships, and promote social harmony and equality. This article lists the following three specific solutions:

3.1. Case work intervention

During the assistance process of case work, the case worker maintains a face-to-face or one-on-one professional relationship with the case owner, utilizing professional knowledge, theories, methods, and techniques to help the recipient solve problems.

3.1.1. In dealing with domestic violence issues, work can start with the victim first

Firstly, social workers should establish professional relationships with victims of violence, using a sincere and compassionate attitude to make them feel respected and supported through both verbal and nonverbal means, thereby reducing their anxiety and fear. While calming the emotions of victims of violence, it is important to actively guide them to understand the causes of domestic violence and help them establish correct cognitive thinking. Social workers can assist victims of violence in clarifying their family and personal difficulties, and enhance their ability to face difficulties. Secondly, the capacity of victims of domestic violence should also be strengthened. On the one hand, case workers can provide education and training on domestic violence, rights, and resources for victims, helping them understand their choices and providing them with avenues for development; On the other hand, providing legal aid to victims helps them understand their rights and legal protection measures, enabling them to apply legal knowledge for self-protection.

3.1.2. For perpetrators of domestic violence, it is also necessary for case workers to intervene

Firstly, it is necessary to make abusers understand that domestic violence is an unacceptable behavior for any reason. Case workers can engage in psychological counseling and treatment with abusers to help them understand and handle their violent behavior. This can include exploring past experiences and potential psychological issues, as well as providing training on alternative behavior and conflict resolution techniques. Secondly, case workers need to explain their legal responsibilities and possible consequences to the perpetrators, such as being arrested, tried, and sentenced, which helps to raise their awareness and make them realize that their actions are harmful and unacceptable. There are also a few cases where the behavior is relatively bad, and case workers can persuade the perpetrator to participate in rehabilitation plans, such as anger management courses and domestic violence rehabilitation plans. These plans can provide education, support, and other necessary resources to help perpetrators understand and change their violent behavior.

3.2. Group work intervention

The American Commission on Social Work Education has expressed Murphy's view that group work is one of the methods of social work, which enhances people's social function through purposeful group experience. According to the classification of groups by the American Association of Group Work Professionals, combined with the situation of domestic violence incidents, group work can intervene in both victims and perpetrators.

3.2.1. For victims of violence, a victim support group can be established

It is composed of people with similar problems and experiences, and members can exchange ideas and feelings, and assist each other in solving problems. The characteristics of the support group are: emphasizing experience sharing, knowledge and skills, trying coping strategies, and dealing with negative emotions. The specific operation is: (1) Determine the goals and tasks. Social workers and group members should have clear goals and allocate the tasks and responsibilities of group members reasonably in order to carry out assistance work more efficiently. (2) Recruit and select team members. Recruit interested and suitable members to participate in support groups, including social workers, mental health professionals, volunteers, etc. Ensure that each member has appropriate training and professional background to provide effective support and consultation. (3) Provide knowledge and education. Provide knowledge and education on domestic violence to support group members, including understanding the forms, impacts, and consequences of domestic violence. (4) Conduct support and mutual assistance activities. Support group members can engage in support and mutual assistance activities, such as listening to and understanding the experiences and feelings of victims, sharing experiences and strategies, and providing comfort and encouragement. These assistance methods are beneficial for victims of violence to have more motivation to face and deal with their own difficulties. (5) Provide follow-up support and referral services. After resolving the current issue, the support team should provide continuous support and provide appropriate referral services based on the needs of the victim, such as psychological counseling, legal aid, medical services, etc.

3.2.2. For perpetrators, psychological treatment teams can be established

This type of group has a high demand for the professional abilities of workers, mainly focusing on helping members change bad behavior and treating physiological, psychological, and social trauma. The characteristic of this group is that it focuses on the processes of correction, treatment, personality reconstruction, etc. Therefore, it is also seen as a process of re education. The specific operation is as follows: (1) Evaluation and screening: Conduct a group assessment on the perpetrators, understand the nature and extent of their problems, select suitable perpetrators to participate in psychological treatment groups, and ensure that they can adapt to the group environment and benefit from it. (2) Develop treatment goals: Work with the perpetrator to establish clear treatment goals, such as recognizing and managing anger, changing impulsive behavior, and improving conflict resolution skills. This can provide direction and focus for the group's work. (3) Implement psychotherapy techniques: Apply psychotherapy techniques in groups, such as behavioral cognitive therapy, solution oriented therapy, etc. Through these technologies, perpetrators can recognize and change harmful behavior patterns, and cultivate positive conflict resolution and communication skills. (4) Group interaction and support. In group interactions, encourage perpetrators to share their personal experiences and difficulties in order to gain support, understanding, and advice from other members. This interaction can promote the perpetrator to realize that they are not isolated, while providing vigilance and wise feedback. (5) Reeducation. Provide opportunities for perpetrators to relearn correct social norms and values, promote effective family communication, and prevent the recurrence of violent behavior.

3.3. Community work intervention

Community work intervention mainly relies on the community, making full use of resources inside and outside the community, and intervening in the occurrence and harm caused by domestic violence through the cooperation of multiple institutions within the community. Specific strategies can be adopted as follows:

3.3.1. Police social cooperation

When the police receive a report of domestic violence, they can contact community service agencies to jointly develop and implement intervention plans. We can refer to the Australian police community's joint intervention in domestic violence to establish the 'Police Community Domestic Violence Support Project'. This project works directly with the police through the deployment of social workers, providing comprehensive intervention and support to jointly handle domestic violence incidents. Social workers are responsible for providing emergency assistance, resettlement and shelter, establishing contact with victims, providing psychological counseling and legal aid and other services. The advantage of this cooperation model lies in the ability to integrate police and social work resources and professional knowledge, forming more comprehensive and coordinated domestic violence intervention measures. At present, China has formulated the "Anti Domestic Violence Law", which clarifies the law enforcement responsibilities and measures of the police in domestic violence and protects the rights and interests of victims. By implementing laws and formulating protective measures, police can better protect the safety of victims of violence and take appropriate punishment for perpetrators.

3.3.2. Creating community shelters

As an important part of combating domestic violence, community shelters can provide temporary shelter for victims of domestic violence. Community shelters have necessary safety facilities and protective measures, and also provide legal aid, psychological support, vocational training and other services to help victims rebuild their lives and reduce the occurrence of domestic violence. At the same time, they also collaborate with the community to strengthen publicity, education, and awareness raising to promote social support and attention to the issue of domestic violence. Almost every country has similar organizations aimed at helping women, elderly people, or children who are victims of domestic violence, such as the Sakhi program in India, the Safe Horizon organization in the United States, and the first women's shelter established in Wuhan, Hubei, China in 1995.

3.3.3. Building social network support

Such social support can be divided into two categories: formal and informal. Informal network support is composed of family members, friends, relatives, religious beliefs, and community organizations. When victims suffer from domestic violence, they usually seek help from relatives, friends, or neighbors first. This informal network support is not only easy to win the trust of victims, but also a key resource for them to seek assistance. Formal social support networks typically include medical services, legal aid, psychological counseling, etc. The obvious advantage lies in the victim's access to a wider range of information and support resources. For example, after the occurrence of domestic violence, supporting networks and resource centers can promote close collaboration between police, social welfare institutions, women and children protection institutions, and achieve resource sharing; A professional medical team can provide high-quality medical services to victims in a timely manner; Judicial institutions can provide legal protection for victims of violence and safeguard the legitimate rights and interests of victims.

4. Conclusion

Although China's social work has achieved some results in intervening in the issue of domestic violence, it still faces many challenges. Domestic violence often involves complex relationships between family members, and social workers need to consider the stability and harmony of the family while protecting the victims. Insufficient resources and social awareness are also problems in the field of social work in China.

Domestic violence is not only a family issue, but also a social issue. This requires all social workers to work together, combine theory with practice, keep up with the pace of the times, and continuously innovate and progress. I believe that as long as we persist in applying scientific social work methods, we will be able to have a social environment free from domestic violence.

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