

## **Amie Post, MA, LCMFT** **Violence in families**



Violence in families is a problem impacting functioning of individuals, families and communities in today's generation and generations to come. Domestic violence is engaged as if it is a monolithic problem directed at the highest risk families with primarily crisis response, depending heavily on law enforcement, prosecution, and crime victim services. Children are perceived as secondary victims and help is directed at processing trauma and developing resilience. There is a high degree of continuity in the services currently provided but there is little way to think about and address the varying responses families have.

Bowen theory provides another way of thinking about the challenges of violence in a family. Interventions designed through this lens can maintain the important function of safety and security while expanding to assist development of family functioning and capacity. Seeing families and the problem of domestic violence on a continuum provides a way of predicting which families are more likely to respond to particular services. This presentation will provide an introduction to one organization's attempt to shift from symptom focus to family capacity and family functioning on a continuum. Two particular areas of this organization will be reviewed as they address the child in the context of family with conflict and violence. The theory of change that Bowen theory posits will be explored and special attention is given to understanding the underlying mechanisms of how change occurs in families and who is most likely to respond to interventions. This author hypothesizes a fundamental shift from focusing on the symptom of violence in the individual to a focus on developing family capacity over time provides a mechanism for change that can be operationalized across contexts with consistency.

**3rd International Conference on Bowen Family Systems Theory**