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SPRb1161

Social Work and Intimate Partner Violence

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Introduction to Intimate Partner Violence

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Intimate partner violence is now recognized as a serious human rights abuse and increasingly as an important public health problem with severe consequences for women's or men's physical, mental and sexual health.





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Therefore, a comprehensive understanding of intimate partner violence is an essential aspect of good-quality social work practice. This is an accessible introduction to the complexities of social work practice with abused women, as well as men.

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What is intimate partner violence (IPV)?

Domestic violence (DV), also called intimate partner violence (IPV), is a serious health care and social problem that impacts every segment of the population.



Definition of Domestic violence
sexual violence - **physical** violence - **emotional** violence



Domestic violence: Rapid changes in understanding the phenomenon





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The term "intimate partner violence" describes physical violence, sexual violence, and psychological harm by a current or former partner or spouse.

Durevall & Lindskog (2015).





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Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is any intentional act causing injury or trauma to another person.

Physical abuse is usually recurrent and usually escalates both in frequency and severity.





- Pushing, shoving, biting, slapping, hitting, punching, or kicking the victim.
- Holding, tying down, or restraining the victim.
- Inflicting bruises, welts, lacerations, punctures, fractures, burns, scratches.
- Strangling the victim.
- Pulling the victim's hair or dragging the victim by the victim's hair or body parts.
- Assaulting the victim with a weapon.





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Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse in violent relationships is often the most difficult aspect of abuse for victims to discuss. It may include any form of forced sex or sexual degradation:

Sexual abuse is sexual behavior or a sexual act forced upon a woman or man without their consent.





- Trying to make or making the victim perform sexual acts against her will.
- Pursuing sexual activity when the victim is not fully conscious, or is not asked, or is afraid to say no.
- Physically hurting the victim during sex or assaulting her genitals, including the use of objects or weapons intra-vaginally, orally, or anally.
- Criticizing the victim and calling her sexually degrading names





Emotional/Psychological Abuse

Psychological abuse, often called **emotional abuse**, is a form of abuse, characterized by a person subjecting or exposing another person to behavior that may result in psychological trauma, including anxiety, chronic depression, or post-traumatic stress disorder.





- Threats of harm.
- Physical and social isolation.
- Extreme jealousy and possessiveness.
- Deprivation of resources to meet basic needs.
- Intimidation, degradation, and humiliation.
- Name calling and constant criticizing, insulting, and belittling the victim.
- False accusations, blaming the victim for everything.
- Ignoring, dismissing, or ridiculing the victim's needs.
- Lying, breaking promises, and destroying the victim's trust.
- Driving fast and recklessly to frighten and intimidate the victim.
- Leaving the victim in a dangerous place.
- Refusing to help when the victim is sick or injured.





Economic abuse

Economic abuse is a form of abuse when one intimate partner has control over the other partner's access to economic resources, which diminishes the victim's capacity to support themselves and forces them to depend on the perpetrator financially.





Economic or financial abuse includes:

- Controlling the finances.
- Withholding money or credit cards.
- Giving an allowance.
- Making the victim account for every penny spent.
- Stealing or taking money from the abused
- Exploiting the victim's assets for personal gain.
- Withholding basic necessities (food, clothes, medications, shelter).
- Preventing the victim from working or choosing their own career.
- Sabotaging the partner's job (making them miss work, calling constantly or repeatedly showing up on the jobsite)



