

Intimate Partner Violence

What is IPV?

(Murray & Graves, 2013) (Johnson, 2006)

IPV is any form of physical, sexual, emotional, verbal, psychological and/or financial abuse between two partners in a current or former intimate relationship. Above all, IPV is characterized by the use of violent behaviors contextualized within a debilitating **pattern of power and control** dynamics with a distinct perpetrator and a distinct victim.



Also known as:

- Domestic Violence
- Dating Violence
- Battering
- Spousal Abuse
- Wife Abuse
- Intimate Partner Abuse

IPV by the Numbers

(National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey; Black et al., 2011) (Hamby et al., 2011)



1 in 3
women



1 in 4
men

have been victims of physical violence by an intimate partner within their lifetime



1 in 15
children

are exposed to intimate partner violence each year



20
people

per minute are physically abused by an intimate partner in the United States

Statistics for Clinicians

(World Health Organization, 2013) (Coker et al., 2000)

Physical, mental, and sexual and reproductive health effects have been linked with intimate partner violence including...

- Unintended pregnancy
- Miscarriage/stillbirth
- Intrauterine hemorrhage
- Nutritional deficiency
- Abdominal pain
- Gastrointestinal problems
- Neurological disorders

- Post-traumatic stress disorder
- Cardiovascular diseases
- Chronic pain
- Disability
- Anxiety
- Hypertension
- Cancer



Victims of domestic violence are also at higher risk for developing addictions to alcohol, tobacco, or drugs

Intimate Partner Violence

Clinical Assessment Strategies

(Johnson, 2006) (Bograd & Mederos, 1999) (Knapp, 2001) (Murray & Graves, 2013)

Assess the Type of Violence Present

It can be difficult to assess the nature of the violence present in the current or former intimate relationship.

Intimate Partner Violence

characterized by a **pervasive pattern of power and control** dynamics where a distinct perpetrator utilizes various forms of violence to maintain power and control of their partner

OR

Situational Couple Violence

occurs in the context of relationship stressors and poor conflict management skills where distinct power and control dynamics are **NOT** present

Clinicians should refer to the

Duluth Model – Power & Control Wheel

for a comprehensive diagram of controlling behaviors typically present in IPV.



Individual and/or Couples Therapy: Safety comes first!

If a couple presents for couples therapy, it's important to **assess partners individually** for the presence of IPV in the beginning of counseling, as failure to complete separate assessments may result in increased safety risks for the victim.

As a general guideline in couples counseling, **assume all clients are at risk** for IPV until it is clear IPV is not present.

Discuss the **limits of confidentiality** when IPV is disclosed in your informed consent discussion, either by a perpetrator or victim, as disclosures of IPV may impact clients in probation situations and clients with children who have witnessed violence.

In cases where minors (18 years or younger) have witnessed domestic violence, reporting to the Department of Social Services is **required**.

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Informal Assessment

(Murray & Graves, 2013) (Yawn et al., 1992)

Sample questions assessing power and control dynamics:

How would you say you and your partner treat each other?
Are you afraid of your partner? If so, why?
What happens when you and your partner fight or disagree?
Has your partner ever threatened and/or abused your children?
Has your partner ever forced you to have sex when you didn't want to?
Has your partner ever prevented you from leaving the house, seeking friends, getting a job, or continuing your education?

Observations of client's non-verbal behaviors:

Nervousness
Poor eye contact
Not speaking without asking partner's permission

Sample questions assessing severity of violence:

Describe the worst incident of violence that has occurred in your relationship.
What happened before, during and after the incident?
Have you ever feared for your life during your relationship?
How does a violent incident in your relationship usually end?
Would you say the violence between you and your partner is equal or not?

Mini, mental-status exams:

Depression
(including feelings of isolation, poor coping skills or suicide attempts)
Panic Attacks
Anxiety Symptoms
Substance Use
Post-traumatic Stress Symptoms

Sample questions assessing risk of intimate partner homicide:

Has your partner threatened to kill you, him/herself or anyone else?
Has your partner used and/or threatened to use a weapon against you?
Has your partner ever strangled you?
Has your partner ever stalked you?
Is your partner controlling, jealous, or possessive?

Formal Assessments

Composite Abuse Scale (Hegarty, Bush & Shehan, 2005)

Danger Assessment (Campbell, 2005)

Intimate Justice Scale (Jory, 2004)

Revised Conflict Tactics Scale (Straus et al., 1996)

Spousal Assault Risk Assessment (Kropp & Hart, 2000)

Severity of Violence Against Women Scale (Marshall, 1992)

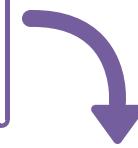


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Treatment Recommendations

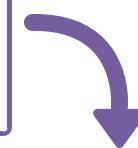
(Kress et al., 2008) (Chang et al., 2006) (D'Ardenne & Balakrishna, 2001) (Gorde et al., 2004) (McLeod et al., 2010) (Elliot et al., 2005)

Develop a **safety plan** including practical considerations such as workplace issues, childcare, transportation concerns, technology safety, legal resources, financial preparation, and abuse documentation.



Create a **safe, supportive and non-judgmental therapeutic environment** by supporting, recognizing and validating the victim's strengths and resources, including his/her ability to seek help.

Avoid language that conveys **judgmental connotations** such as victim blaming and pathologizing language that further stigmatizes the client.



Promote concepts such as empowerment, self-esteem, abusive relationship education, positive coping skills, emotional expression, practical needs, building social supports and connection to supportive programs.

Other **evidence-based interventions** for victims include the following:

Dialectical Behavior Therapy (Iverson et al., 2009)

Narrative Therapy (Brosi & Rolling, 2010)

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (Johnson & Zlotnick, 2009)

Solution-focused Therapy (Lee, 2007)

Local Resources

Guilford County Family Justice Center

201 S Greene St,
Greensboro, NC 27401
(336) 641-7233

Family Service of the Piedmont

315 E Washington St,
Greensboro, NC 27401
(336) 387-6161
24hr Crisis Hotline: (336) 273-7273

National Resources

National Domestic Violence Hotline

24hr Crisis Hotline: 1-800-799-7233
<http://www.thehotline.org/>

National Coalition Against Domestic Violence

<https://ncadv.org/National>

Resource Center on Domestic Violence

<https://www.nrcdv.org/dvrn/>