

Male-Experienced IPV & Associated Trauma

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Intro

Learning Objectives

- Increase knowledge about IPV and violence experienced by men
- Examine potential outcomes associated with IPV trauma
- Understand unique barriers encountered by men seeking help
- Look at some potential next steps forward

Learning objectives

Limitations in Research

- Limited studies examining male-victim IPV
- Available research rarely includes Indigenous persons
- Many studies are based in other countries, or in very specific sub-areas of the US
- The full scope of the problem is difficult to ascertain

Limitations in Research

- Systematic Review of articles from 1998 through 2019 found:
 - Only 31 studies that looked at IPV and opioid use
 - 26 examined IPV among people with opioid use
 - Only 1 looked at IPV victimization in males, while 1 included both females/males
 - IPV victimization rates ranged from 6% to 94%, with varying definitions

Bullet points are taken from Current Epidemiology Reports (2019)

Limitations in Research

- A 2023 literature review noted:
 - “Globally, IPV has been recognized as a gendered issue, disproportionately affecting women. Therefore, much of what is currently known about IPV comes from samples of women and, in particular, cisgender heterosexual women in relationships with men. Although there is general consensus that men are also victims of IPV...relatively few studies have explored IPV against men... Because of a limited focus on men’s experiences, how men define or conceptualize violence continues to be poorly understood...”

Trauma, Violence, & Abuse – April 2023

Male-Experienced IPV

Male-Experienced IPV

- 1 in 4 have experienced physical abuse (slapped, pushed, shoved, etc.)
- 1 in 7 have experienced *severe* physical abuse (struck with a fist or hard object, kicked, slammed against something, choked, burned, etc.)
- 48.8% of men experienced psychologically aggressive behavior (being kept track of, insulted/humiliated, felt threatened by a partner)
- 4 in 10 have experienced coercive control (isolation, blackmail, threats, economic control)

Data taken from a 2018 National Crime Victims' Rights Week fact sheet published by the US Office for Victims of Crime.

Male-Experienced IPV

- 47% will be victims of psychological aggression
- 28% will experience physical violence
- 7% will be victims of contact sexual violence
- 41% of AI/AN men will experience some form of IPV

Data taken from a 2018 National Crime Victims' Rights Week fact sheet published by the US Office for Victims of Crime.

Male-Experienced IPV

- 1 in 19 men have been stalked to the extent they felt very fearful or believed they or someone close to them would be harmed or killed
- 46.7% reported being stalked by female perpetrators
- 13.4% of male high school students report physical or sexual abuse by a dating partner
- Estimated 1.6 million men have reported being raped
- 50% of men report at least one form of sexual aggression victimization
- 43.4% report minor sexual aggression (verbal coercion), 28% severe (threats or force)

Data taken from a 2018 National Crime Victims' Rights Week fact sheet published by the US Office for Victims of Crime.

Last two points taken from: 2014, Archives of Sexual Behavior

Male-Experienced IPV

- 1 in 3 men experience contact sexual violence, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner
- 56% of those experienced these or other forms of violence before age 25
- Nearly 1 in 4 men have experienced contact sexual violence
- 82% of men reporting sexual coercion and 53% reporting unwanted sexual contact noted only female perpetrators
- 97% of men who experienced rape, physical violence, or stalking by an intimate partner had only female perpetrators

Data pulled from 2020 CDC Factsheet about Intimate Partner Violence, Sexual Violence, and Stalking Among Men

AI/AN Populations

- 83% of adults have experienced some form of violence
- Men & Women
 - 81.6% compared to 84.3% (overall)
 - 73% compared to 66.4% (psychological aggression)
 - 43.2% compared to 55.5% (physical violence)
- Lifetime victimization rate for AI/AN adults compared to white counterparts is 1.2x for women and 1.3x for men

Data are taken from a National Institute of Justice fact sheet in 2016.

Results reveal that Alaska Native and American Indian men also experience high rates of violence, but it is characterized differently.

AI/AN Populations

- AI/AN men experience high rates of lifetime violence
 - Sexual violence – 27.5%
 - Physical violence by a partner – 43.2%
 - Stalking – 18.6%
 - Psychological aggression by a partner – 73%

Data were pulled from a 2016 report in the National Institute of Justice Journal.

AI/AN Populations

- Native Men
 - 1 in 4 expressed concern for their safety
 - 1 in 5 were physically injured
 - 1 in 10 missed work or school
 - 1 in 6 who need services cannot access them

A 2016 article from the National Institute of Justice.

Impact of IPV Trauma

Impact of IPV Trauma

- In a meta-analysis of 58 studies on IPV, only 30% included males/females and only 7% were male-focused
- PTSD is a significant outcome of IPV, with psychological violence being a key predictor
- PTSD in IPV victims resulted in depression, sleep disturbance, substance use, and suicidal ideation
- IPV was also connected to anxiety, psychological distress, and physical health impacts

2014 article from European Journal of Psychotraumatology.

Impact of IPV Trauma

- IPV can also have physical health impacts, though there is a lack of data:
 - Self-reports of “poor” health
 - Heavy alcohol use, “therapeutic” drug use, and recreational drug use
 - Chronic disease
 - Increased rates of smoking, drinking, and substance use

2008, Journal of General Internal Medicine

Final bullet point is 2009, Annals of Family Medicine

Impact of IPV Trauma

- A 2023 study found:
 - That male victims of IPV reported high rates of difficulty sleeping, fair to poor mental health, and disability
 - Men who were slapped/pushed/shoved did NOT have higher prevalence of health conditions than non-victims
 - Men experiencing stalking, severe physical violence, and sexual violence also had higher prevalence for the examined health conditions
 - Poly-victimization (experiencing multiple forms of IPV) showed a linear trend with increasing prevalence of health conditions accompanying more forms of violence

Journal of Interpersonal Violence - Jan 2023

Impact of IPV Trauma

- Same study:
 - For female IPV victims, sexual violence was associated with the largest number of health conditions
 - For male IPV victims, it was stalking followed by severe physical violence
 - Slapping/pushing/shoving by an intimate partner was associated with increased prevalence of one health condition in female victims and none in male victims
 - “These findings shed light on important differences in the potential health impact of IPV victimization for women and men...”

Impact of IPV Trauma

- Children
 - IPV victims were more likely to have experienced/witnessed IPV as children
 - IPV experience/observation as children was connected to later victimization and negative mental health outcomes
 - Preschoolers of male victims display affective problems, oppositional defiant problems, and pervasive developmental problems
 - School-age children of male victims display affective problems, anxiety, ADHD, conduct problems, oppositional defiant problems, and somatization

Bullet Points 1 & 2: 2014 article from European Journal of Psychotraumatology.

Points 3 & 4 are from 2014, Archives of Sexual Behavior

Impact of IPV Trauma

- 2009, US Dept of Justice Study on workplace IPV
 - Nearly 20% of employees experienced IPV in the workplace
 - Those currently experiencing IPV displayed depression, lower self-esteem, reduced economic self-sufficiency, and increased family-work conflict
 - Those with IPV in their lifetime expressed depression, lower self-esteem, and increased job insecurity
 - Income and economic self-sufficiency are tied to likelihood of abuse and ability to escape abusive situations

Barriers to Help Seeking

Barriers for reporting and help-seeking
Some similar to women/children, some different

Emotional

- Fear
 - Men are less likely to fear their abuser, but are commonly afraid of not being believed, or of being accused of perpetration themselves
- A 2023 journal article noted:
 - “[...] [a study] noted that while physical violence was often used by female partners, it was rarely perceived as a tactic effective for controlling the man. Rather, most men described feeling in control of their female partners’ physical aggression... Thus, on the whole, men seldom interpreted their female partners’ physical violence as serious, intimidating, frightening, or posing a genuine threat.”

Point 1: 2019, *Psychology of Men & Masculinities*; Additional data pulled from 2008, *Violence & Victims* and 2009, *Journal of Family Violence*

Point 2: *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse* – April 2023

Emotional

- Shame
 - “...men who report abuse from an intimate partner are viewed as cowards. Extremely embarrassed by this predicament, male victims are afraid of being laughed at or scorned. Due to embarrassment, male victims do not approach professional services.”

Quote pulled from a 2010 article in *International Journal of Criminal Justice Sciences*

Social

- Men as Perpetrators
 - "...if males are victims of DV, then it is due to the self-defense of women being abused."
 - "The biggest challenge these men face is that people don't believe them... We've gone through a lot of work to get to where women are believed, but now the pendulum has swung to the point that men are assumed to be the aggressor."

In addition, there are barriers associated with social perception. One of the major ones is the idea of men as perpetrators. These are excerpts from a few different articles: *Insert quotes*

Quote pulled from 2010, *International Journal of Criminal Justice Sciences*

Second point (second quote) take from *Los Angeles Times* article about the opening of the Texas men's shelter.

Social

- Male-Victim Abuse is Less Serious
 - “Men’s violence against intimate female partners is considered more serious than women’s violence against male partners.”
 - Both men and women judge male-on-female violence as significantly more severe
 - The above effect is even larger for male observers
 - An Israeli study found that, in hypothetical scenarios, neighbors were most likely to intervene/assist in cases with a female victim of IPV, while scenarios with a male victim had the lowest behavioral response

Another social perception issue is that the abuse experienced by men is less serious or severe. While it is true that women are more likely to be physically injured as a result of IPV, that doesn’t mean it isn’t damaging. Here are a few additional excerpts on this topic.

First quote pulled from 2010, *International Journal of Criminal Justice Sciences*

Second data point from 2019, *Psychology of Men & Masculinities*

Third point is from 2023, *Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment & Trauma*

Social

- Denial of the Problem
 - “Despite evidence indicating that within some contexts IPV is perpetrated equally by men and women...societal narratives typically portray male perpetrators and female victims and regard female-perpetrated IPV as less serious and as occurring less frequently. The evidence of the prevalence of male victimization has been the subject of an ongoing and largely unresolved debate.”

First quote pulled from the 2019, *Psychology of Men & Masculinities*

Screening

- Survey of ~1,000 men across 16 general practices in England saw only 13% of men being asked if they were a victim of IPV
- 2021 – ER visits in the US
 - 17.2% of IPV-related visits were by male victims
 - Men experienced many more injuries due to cutting and lacerations than women (28.1% and 46.9% vs 3.5% and 13%)
 - Men were over 2x more likely to be hospitalized due to their injuries

Point 1: 2014, *Aggression and Violent Behavior* (only abstract and non-primary source available)

Point 2: 2021, *Aggressive Behavior* (only abstract and non-primary source available)

Law Enforcement

- 47% of male victims were threatened with arrest, 35% were ignored, 21% were arrested instead of the female perpetrator:
 - “This is due to the disbelief that a woman could not have been the perpetrator of this type of crime and the male must be intimidating the woman to the point that the woman is attacking in self-defense.”
 - “I was not only not listened to, I was threatened with arrest if I continued to make these allegations, because women just do not do those sorts of things.” (male victim on police interaction)

Points 1 & 2: A study cited by 2010, *International Journal of Criminal Justice Sciences*

Point 3: 2019, *Psychology of Men & Masculinities*

Law Enforcement

- Law Enforcement
 - In cases where the female partner is identified as the primary aggressor, only 41.5% of police asked the victim if they wanted the partner arrested
 - In 21%, the police refused to arrest the partner
 - In 38.7% the police said there was nothing they could do and left
 - In 25.4% of qualitative accounts, male victims indicated police did nothing and ignored or dismissed them
 - “They determined she was the aggressor, but said since I was a man it was silly to arrest her.”

2011, *Journal of Family Violence*

Court System

- Judges were 13x more likely to grant a TRO requested by a female
- Men are significantly less likely to seek a TRO
 - Less fear of physical retaliation
 - Perception their petition is more likely to be denied
- Male victims are often threatened with being accused as the perpetrator
- Courts have a different response to male vs female protection, with men often not being afforded the same protections or assistance

Points 1 & 2: 2009, *Journal of Family Violence*

Points 3 & 4: 2010, *International Journal of Criminal Justice Sciences*

Court System

- “Evidence suggests male underreporting is related to a lack of trust in police and fear of losing their relationships with their children. There is evidence that some female perpetrators capitalize on secondary abuse by threatening to report their victims as perpetrators of violence. This tactic relies on the inherent assumptions by many social service and justice workers that women are usually victims of violence and has been described as legal and administrative abuse. This type of abuse, in which legitimate services, such as family courts, are mobilized against the victim’s interests, was common enough in a small Australian study to be identified as a distinct category of abuse.”

2019, *Psychology of Men & Masculinities*

Language

- Male victims often don't identify with the language often used in the context of IPV, such as "domestic" or "family" violence
- 2016 study from Portugal found that 76% of male victims did not seek help
 - Most common reason was "I did not notice that I was a victim"
- Some data suggest men are more responsive to nongendered synonyms that do not have social connotations (i.e. "boundary crossings" instead of "abuse")

Along with these other barriers, there is one that is, arguably, even more fundamental: language. For example, a 2019 study found that: *Insert quotes*

Points are pulled from 2019, *Psychology of Men & Masculinities*

Language

- “...society in general does not endorse the idea that men can be victims of female perpetrated violence...dominant social beliefs and expectations about men as potential victims may influence how men themselves view their victimization.”
- “Some researchers have even questioned the use of the term ‘intimate partner violence’ with men, claiming that its significant gendered connotation may impact perceived masculinity. Some evidence suggests that when women perpetrate violence against men, it is not always perceived as abusive by men.”

Trauma, Violence, & Abuse – April 2023

Services

- As of October, 2017, there were only 2 male-only shelters in the US
- Publically funded shelters are required to provide services to men, but many have limited capacity/funding to do so
- Many shelters and programs use gendered language that gives an impression of limited access
- Kodiak's primary resource for IPV is the Kodiak **Women's** Resource & Crisis Center

Now that we have covered some of the internal, societal, and legal barriers, what happens when a male victim seeks help.

As of Oct, 2017 there were only two

Recall the discussion we had previously about the difficulty many men can have in being able to identify and label what they are experiencing due to issues with language? The gendered names of many agencies also act as a barrier. For example: The Kodiak Women's Resource & Crisis Center

The KWRCC website indicates they "prohibit the denial of services to individuals on the basis of" numerous factors, including sex. We work closely with their team for public education/outreach, and they have indicated that all of their services are open to men. They try to provide safe housing at their onsite shelter, but if not they will coordinate with local hotels, the Salvation Army, or other locations to provide them with safe and secure housing while connecting them to other services. They also indicated that their hotline receives many calls from men experiencing issues with their partners, and they work to provide the same level and quality of outreach for those individuals as they do for women. That said, their name has not kept up with the expansion of services, and that can prove to be a barrier for men seeking help.

Services

- DV Agencies
 - 43.7% sought help, only 44.8% said it was somewhat/very helpful
 - 49.9% of agencies indicated they “only help women”
 - 44.1% of men said agencies were not helpful at all, and 95.3% of those said they were given the impression that the agency was biased against men
 - 40.2% of men contacting agencies were accused of being the batterer
 - 15.2% were mocked by staff members for their situation

The next few slides all highlight the same study published in 2012, but I wanted to highlight several things from this report. I should note, this is based on self-reporting by male victims of their experiences accessing various resources when seeking help. First up: *Insert slide*

2012, *Journal of Family Violence*

Services

- DV Hotlines
 - 23.4% of men called, only 31.4% said it was somewhat/very helpful
 - 63.9% of hotlines responded “we only help women”
 - 32.2% of hotlines accused the caller of being the batterer
 - 16.4% of callers were mocked by hotline staff for their situation

2012, *Journal of Family Violence*

Services

- DV Online Resources
 - 42.9% of online resources responded “we only help women”
 - 18.9% of online resources accused the man of being the batterer
 - 25% of men using online resources were provided contact information that ended up being for a batterer’s intervention or anger management program

2012, *Journal of Family Violence*

Services

- Quotes from Male Victims:
 - “They didn’t really listen to what I said. They assumed that all abusers are men and said that I must accept that I was the abuser. They ridiculed me for not leaving my wife, ignoring the issues about what I would need to do to protect my 6 children and care for them” (DV Agency)
 - “They offered to listen if I wanted to recount what had happened, but indicated that no support services were available” (DV Hotline)
 - “I was mostly just doing research after the occurrence to find out what I should do. I found mostly female help sites and was turned down by several so I gave up.” (Online Resource)

2012, *Journal of Family Violence*

Tip of the Iceberg

- There are many other barriers and factors that we don't have time to cover, including:
 - Sociocultural concepts of masculinity (e.g. "victimization has been 'deeply coded as a female experience'"; "Male IPV victimization seems incongruent with masculine gender norms...")
 - Religious beliefs (e.g. marriage is sacred, divorce is a sin)
 - Media portrayals (e.g. minimizing male victims when reporting statistics)
 - Population specific issues (e.g. bringing shame to a community, racism, stereotyping, prejudice/bigotry, etc.)

Point 1: 2019 – *Psychology of Men & Masculinities*, 2009 – *Journal of Family Violence*, & 2023 – *Trauma, Violence, and Abuse*

Point 2: See HelpGuide article

Point 3: See Andrew Pain TedxTalk (YouTube) as well as the 2019 BBC article and 2018 Office for National Statistics report he references

Point 4: See 2023 – *Trauma, Violence, and Abuse*; New York State OPDV – *Learn More About Domestic Violence*; National Domestic Violence Hotline – *Myths Around Men Experiencing Abuse*

Moving Forward

Changing Landscape

- More and more discussions about this topic are occurring
- More research is being done on male-experienced IPV
- More services are broadening their approach
- More providers are recognizing the seriousness and scale of this issue

Changing Landscape

- New York State Office for the Prevention of Domestic Violence (2020)
 - “Women’s attempts to dominate men are much more likely to fail”
 - “Norms for female behavior work against women becoming abusers”
 - “We don’t see heterosexual men whose self-esteem is destroyed by abuse, who give up school and career progress, who are forced into unwanted sex, or who flee for their lives. People intervene in abuse more than they used to, and if those men were out there, someone would have noticed.”

Changing Landscape

- New York State Office for the Prevention of Domestic Violence (2023)
 - “Domestic violence can happen to anyone. It looks different in every relationship and no one experiences it in the same way.”
 - “Men often aren’t engaged in this conversation at the level that women are but they should be, and it’s really important for us to understand how gender-based violence also impacts men and masculinity, and how do we get to that root? Because if we don’t have those conversations, we’re never going to end gender-based violence.” – Executive Director of the OPDV

First quote is from NYS OPDV’s page *About Domestic Violence*, second quote is from a Spectrum News article about DV awareness month outreach in October 2023

Outreach & Engagement

- Historically underrepresented in outreach & engagement efforts
- Formal and informal methods of engaging with IPV victims

Note the barriers discussed previously in the context of outreach and engagement. Men are often portrayed as perpetrators, potential perpetrators, or bystanders who aren't doing enough to help women, with very few widespread examples examining the seriousness of male victimization.

There are formal and informal methods of engaging with IPV victims.

Outreach & Engagement

- Adult male mentors are critical for adolescent and younger boys for both violence prevention *and* for processing and overcoming trauma
- Integrate the idea that respect is an aspect of culture for everyone, not just for men

Point 1: *Journal of Internal Medicine*, 2008

Point 2: *Building DV Health Care Responses in Indian Country: A Promising Practices Report*, 2010

Outreach & Engagement

- Facilitate space for men to process trauma in a healthy, positive manner
 - Men working with men allows for many of the stigma and barriers to be bypassed
 - Provide spaces for paternal figures (father, grandfather, uncle, older brother, etc.) to interact with adolescent and younger boys and discuss the importance of respect and healthy boundaries
- Work with male advocates to address feelings of shame and to provide their perspective about the importance of culture on well-being
- Provide opportunities for mentorship in non-traditional, informal settings

Next Steps

- Medical/BH Practices
 - Screening tools validated to work with non-female populations
 - Gender-neutral screening practices
 - Provider education
- Legal System
 - First Responder training
 - Greater advocacy

Next Steps

- Public
 - Improve awareness of the issue
 - Work to reduce stigma
 - Actively counter harmful messaging
- Services
 - Language improvement
 - Male-friendly, if not focused, services
 - Staff training

Summary

- Male-experienced IPV is real and more prevalent than we think
- Trauma has lifelong effects, both for victims and those connected
- Men experiencing IPV face numerous internal and external barriers when seeking help
- It can be addressed, if we are willing to have the conversation

Contact Information

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Questions

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