Increasing Awareness and Responding to Domestic Violence in the Care of Torture Survivors and their Families

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Learning Objectives

• Define the Fundamentals of Domestic Violence and Describe its Consequences
• Summarize Factors of Domestic Violence in Treating Torture survivors
• Evaluate the Challenges and Solutions of Addressing Domestic Violence in Torture Treatment Programs.

Interpersonal Violence

Includes:
• Violence between family members and intimate partners
• Violence between acquaintances
• Violence between strangers that is not intended to further the aims of any formally defined group or cause.
• Occurs in the home, on the streets and other public settings, in the workplace, and in institutions such as schools, hospitals and residential care facilities

WHO 2004

Domestic Violence (DV)
Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)

A pattern of abusive behavior in a relationship that is used by the perpetrator to gain or maintain power and control over his/her intimate partner.

(U.S. Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women)

Domestic Violence

• A public health issue
• A human rights violation
• Has a global prevalence
• Women are victims of domestic violence in significantly greater proportion than men

For example, in the U.S. 4 in 5 victims who report DV were women (2013).

In the U.K. 45% of women surveyed compared to 26% of men had experienced one incident of interpersonal violence (2004)

• IPV/DV is an ongoing pattern of coercion and control that includes a range of tactics designed to intimidate and harm an intimate partner.

• IPV/DV involves creating an environment of fear and disempowering restrictions that impact psychological, physical, economic, and emotional well-being.

http://www.apiidv.org
DV/IPV

- Occurs in adult and adolescent dating, married, cohabiting or separating relationships
- Occurs among heterosexual and LGBTQI couples
- Can involve a current or former intimate partner
- Is an ongoing pattern of domination and control
- Often includes a combination of actual or threatened physical violence, sexual assault, economic control, psychological abuse, and emotional abuse

**Domains of Abuse:**

- Physical
- Psychological
- Sexual
- Economic
- Emotional

**IPV and Adverse Health Outcomes**

- Physical health conditions result from physical violence, examples include:
  - bruises
  - knife & gunshot wounds
  - broken bones
  - traumatic brain injury
  - back or pelvic pain, headaches & chronic pain

- Other adverse impacts include:
  - cardiovascular
  - gastrointestinal
  - endocrine and immune systems through chronic stress
  - reproductive health

**Global Statistics**

- In 48 WHO population surveys from different countries, 10%-69% of women reported being physically assaulted by a male partner at some point in their lives
- WHO studies show that 40%-70% of female murder victims are killed by husbands or boyfriends.
Countries of Origin and DV

IPV Survey Kigali, Rwanda
- In 2009, WE-ACTx HIV Primary Care Clinic screened 414 women for DV
- 256 (62%) reported a history of domestic violence that included:
  - Forced sex after refusal
  - Withholding money for food and rent
  - Refusal of own HIV care, but use of her ART medications

IPV Survey Ethimbe Refugee Camp, Ethiopia
- In 2011 a community-based cross-sectional study with random sampling conducted interviews focusing on physical violence
- 422 women having an intimate partner participated
- 107 (25.5%) reported physical violence in last 12 months
- 131 (31%) reported physical violence during their lifetime

IPV Survey Erbil, Kurdistan, Iraq
- Between October 2009 and March 2011, a convenience sample of 800 Kurdish women were interviewed by female doctors at two public hospitals
- 45.3% reported IPV in the last 12 months
- 58.6% endorsed an experience of IPV in their lifetime

Promising Practices/Model Programs
National Center on Domestic Violence, Trauma & Mental Health (NCDVTMH) project:
- Structured interviews were conducted during August and September 2013 with representatives from 15 U.S. torture treatment programs
- In addition to information about populations served and trauma-informed and evidence-based practices, informants were asked about the identification and response to domestic violence.

Interview Summary
- 8 programs are part of larger organizations or institutions
- 7 programs are independent organizations
- 15 programs identified as trauma specific serving survivors of torture, war trauma, and associated risks.
- 15 programs identified as trauma-informed, citing attention to cultural and linguistic needs of clients and a welcoming environment as important components of service. Context of client behaviors and requests are also important considerations.
Training

• 7 of the 15 programs stated they have trainings for staff and volunteers on identifying and responding to DV
• Most programs indicated the training was not annual, but in response to a DV incident

Identification

• 1 program stated they specifically asked about domestic violence in the intake
• 14 programs indicated an awareness and sensitivity to DV, but did not directly ask at intake
• 15 programs stated they believed there is a gap in services for domestic violence in the torture survivor community

Response

• 4 programs have developed a system to respond to identified DV
• 11 programs report that DV is handled case by case with consideration of the couple involved and family/community supports
• 7 programs have internal DV specific resources that they refer to

Networks & Resources

• 6 programs indicated they have established a network of collaborative programs
  ➢ 2 programs utilize community workers that receive annual training on DV
• 2 programs stated they are part of a consortium or working group on DV issues
• 15 programs expressed concern about the lack of “cultural safety” in shelters
• 7 programs indicated they have provided training and consultation for DV shelters on a case by case basis

What are the Challenges?

• Funding deficits
• Greater demand than capacity to serve
• Measuring outcomes for evidence-based results
• Creating sustainable systems to respond to diverse needs of clients
• Gaps in care
• Cultural and religious “safety” in DV systems of care

Identified Challenges
Identified Challenges

Torture Treatment Programs
- Funding deficits
- Greater demand than capacity to serve
- Measuring outcomes for evidence-based results
- Creating sustainable systems to respond to diverse needs of clients

Domestic Violence among Torture Impacted Communities
- Silent problem
- Gaps in care
- Cultural safety
- Religious beliefs
- Community attitudes

Problem Solving

Creative Models

*Khmer Health Advocates*
Community Health Workers (CHW) are:
- Trained in trauma-informed care, health assessment, supportive services, and interpretation
- Work on a cross-cultural multidisciplinary team
- Provide in-home services, identify family issues and domestic violence
- Receive DV training and access to culturally sensitive DV consultation

Creative Models

*International Rescue Committee – Tucson*
Refugee Well-being Promotion Program:
- Well-being Promoters are successfully resettled, bilingual women from refugee communities are trained as health educators with basic counseling skills
- Provide in-home visits to share information and model adjustment
- Receive annual training on domestic violence and work with local domestic violence programs
- Work with program’s behavioral health staff

Closing Remarks from your Colleagues

- Know your local and national DV resources.
- Tap into the strengths in each individual and community.
- Listen to others and work together – collaborate.
- Try new strategies.
- Careful documentation
- Share your humanity.
- Care for each other.

“Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced.”

James Baldwin
African-American author
## Resources

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<tr>
<th>National Center on Domestic Violence, Trauma &amp; Mental Health (NCDVTMH)</th>
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<td>Training, support, and consultation to advocates, mental health and substance abuse providers, legal professionals, and policymakers</td>
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<td><a href="http://www.nationalcenterdvtraumamh.org">http://www.nationalcenterdvtraumamh.org</a></td>
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