

IMPACT OF INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE ON CHILDREN

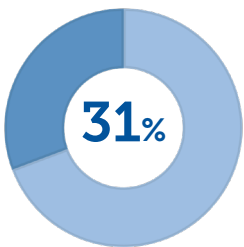
ISSUE BRIEF SUMMARY



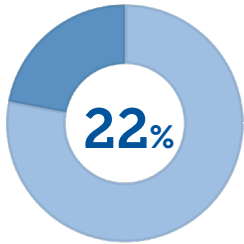
When intimate partner violence (IPV) is perpetrated in a child's home, that child will be affected. The type or degree of influence depends upon a variety of contextual and protective factors. In some cases, the long-term impact can be minimal. However, for far too many children, exposure to IPV can have varied and far-reaching consequences.

No single child will have the same experience, not even those children in the same home witnessing the same event. The impact can depend upon the child's age, gender, community involvement, relationship with the perpetrator and victim, and internal characteristics.

IN VIRGINIA⁶



of **women** reported IPV in their lifetime



of **men** reported IPV in their lifetime

How are children exposed to IPV?

- Seeing the actual incident of violence
- Hearing threats or fighting noises
- "Feeling" the violence through vibrations in walls or floors
- Participating by coercion or force, intervening, being assaulted
- Observing the aftermath: Blood, bruises, torn clothing, broken items

WHAT IS INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE?

Intimate partner violence (IPV) describes physical, sexual, or psychological harm by a current or former partner or spouse. This type of violence can occur among heterosexual or same-sex couples and does not require sexual intimacy. Both males and females can be victims and perpetrators, as well as same-sex partners.¹ While IPV exists in many types of relationships, 4 in 5 victims are female, with the highest rates experienced by females ages 18-34.²

TYPES OF INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

Intimate partner violence occurs in many forms. Examples include:

Emotional and psychological abuse: threatening family members and pets, humiliation and ridicule

Sexual abuse/coercion: sabotage, reproductive coercion, forcing sexual acts

Financial abuse: denying a partner the right to work outside of the home, controlling finances

CHILDREN EXPOSED TO INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

Prevalence: In many incidents of IPV, children are present in the home. In fact, according to the results of the National Survey of Children's Exposure to Violence (NatSCEV), approximately 1 in 15 children were exposed to IPV in the year 2010, with 1 in 4 children exposed to at least one form of family violence in their lifetime.³ Of those who reported exposure to family violence in 2010, 5.7% were exposed to psychological or emotional abuse between adults and 6.6% were exposed to physical IPV, which could include pushing, hitting, slapping, kicking, strangulating or beating.³ In this same survey, 12% of youth report being an eyewitness to the assault of a parent during their lifetime.³

Impact: Children exposed to intimate partner violence have an increased likelihood of being a victim of child abuse themselves. Information from the Fourth National Incidence Study of Child Abuse and Neglect (NIS-4) indicates that 31% of children who witnessed IPV were themselves the victims of abuse, as compared to 5% of children who did not witness IPV.⁴ In addition, children can be impacted by intimate partner violence in a variety of behavioral, emotional, social or cognitive ways. For some children, this may include symptoms of trauma such as flashbacks, hyperarousal or emotional withdrawal.⁵



Intimate Partner Violence & Child Abuse: Overlap and System Tensions

One of the most evident impacts of intimate partner violence on children is the increased likelihood of being a victim of child abuse themselves.

This overlap is important when examining possible linkages between child welfare and domestic violence services. However, it also has contributed to historic tensions between the two systems. Much of this tension arose from differences in attitudes as shaped by the guiding philosophy of each, respective system. The primary focus of the child welfare system is the protection of children and the preservation of families, while the primary focus of domestic violence services is the safety and empowerment of women.⁸ This results in higher rates of children being removed from homes where IPV is identified.⁹ In addition, some domestic violence workers may underreport actual incidents of child abuse in order to protect women from being re-victimized by having their children taken away.⁹

RISK FACTORS & PROTECTIVE FACTORS

The impact of intimate partner violence on children in the home is dependent upon individual protective factors such as age, developmental stage, gender or caregiver and community support, as well as the number of risk factors such as child abuse and neglect, caregiver alcohol and drug abuse, economic insecurity and community violence.

Using a framework focused on understanding risk and protective factors can help to inform programs and interventions aimed at helping children exposed to intimate partner violence. These programs may focus on alleviating parental stress or providing education about healthy parenting and the impact of IPV on children.

SYSTEM COLLABORATION

Collaboration between child welfare, domestic violence service providers and juvenile courts has been found to improve service provision such as child welfare screening and assessment and multidisciplinary approaches to case planning.⁷

In response to tensions between child welfare and domestic violence systems, the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges published "Effective Intervention in Domestic Violence and Child Maltreatment Cases: Guidelines for Policy and Practice" (the Greenbook). The Greenbook articulated a series of recommendations focused on increasing collaboration, opportunities for cross-training and capacity to serve the needs of this population.

Since the publication of this report in 1999, efforts have been undertaken in Virginia and throughout the country to address the disconnect occurring between the systems that serve the needs of the children and families impacted by IPV. Domestic violence programs utilize safety plans and advocacy services for children in their programs. Efforts are also underway to incorporate domestic violence into child welfare trainings and policies.

Additional information about collaborative efforts taking place at the local and national level can be found in the full length brief.

Visit fact.virginia.gov/ibtoolkit for the full **Impact of Exposure to Intimate Partner Violence on Children in the Home** brief.

ENDNOTES

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Intimate Partner Violence: Definitions. Retrieved July 7, 2014, from <http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/intimatepartnerviolence/definitions.html>.
- Catalano, S. (2012). Intimate Partner Violence, 1993-2010. Bureau of Justice Statistics: Special Report. Retrieved June 4, 2014, from <http://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/ipv9310.pdf>.
- Hamby, S., Finkelhor, D., Turner, H., & Ormrod, R. (2011). Children's exposure to intimate partner violence and other family violence. *Juvenile Justice Bulletin*. Retrieved May 19, 2014, from <http://www.unh.edu/ccrc/pdf/jvq/NatSCEV-Children%27s%20Exposure-Family%20Violence%20final.pdf>.
- Sedlak, A.J., Mettenburg, J., Basena, M., Petta, I., McPherson, K., Greene, A., and Li, S. (2010). *Fourth National Incidence Study of Child Abuse and Neglect (NIS-4): Report to Congress*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families. Retrieved May 19, 2014, from <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/research/project/national-incidence-study-of-child-abuse-and-neglect-nis-4-2004-2009>.
- Evans, S.E., Davies, C., & DiLillo, D. (2008). Exposure to domestic violence: A meta-analysis of child and adolescent outcomes 13(2), 131-140.
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2012). The national intimate partner and sexual violence survey (NISVS): Detailed state tables. Retrieved online July 9, 2014, from http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/nisvs/state_tables.html.
- Duren, B., Hazen, A. L., Coben, J.H., Wang, K., & Griffith, J.D. (2009). Collaboration between child welfare agencies and domestic violence service providers: Relationship with child welfare policies and practices for addressing domestic violence. *Children and Youth Services Review* 31(5), 497-505.
- Moles, K. (2008). Bridging the divide between child welfare and domestic violence services: Deconstructing the change process. *Children and Youth Services Review* 30(6), 674-688.
- Postmus, J.L. & Merritt, D.H. (2010). When child abuse overlaps with domestic violence: The factors that influence child protection workers' beliefs. *Children and Youth Services Review* 32(3), 309-317.
-