

Preventing Intimate Partner Violence

What is intimate partner violence?

Intimate partner violence (IPV) is abuse or aggression that occurs in a romantic relationship. “Intimate partner” refers to both current and former spouses and dating partners. IPV can vary in how often it happens and how severe it is. It can range from one episode of violence that could have lasting impact to chronic and severe episodes over multiple years.

IPV can include any of the following types of behavior:¹

- **Physical violence** is when a person hurts or tries to hurt a partner by hitting, kicking, or using another type of physical force.
- **Sexual violence** is forcing or attempting to force a partner to take part in a sex act, sexual touching, or a non-physical sexual event (e.g., sexting) when the partner does not or cannot consent.
- **Stalking** is a pattern of repeated, unwanted attention and contact by a partner that causes fear or concern for one’s own safety or the safety of someone close to the victim.
- **Psychological aggression** is the use of verbal and non-verbal communication with the intent to harm another partner mentally or emotionally and/or to exert control over another partner.

IPV is connected to other forms of violence and is related to serious health issues and economic consequences. However, IPV and other forms of violence can be prevented.

How big is the problem?

IPV is common. It affects millions of people in the United States each year. Data from CDC’s National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS) indicate:²

- About 1 in 4 women and nearly 1 in 10 men have experienced contact sexual violence, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner during their lifetime and reported some form of IPV-related impact.
- Over 43 million women and 38 million men have experienced psychological aggression by an intimate partner in their lifetime.

IPV starts early and continues throughout the lifespan. When IPV occurs in adolescence, it is called teen dating violence (TDV). TDV affects millions of U.S. teens each year. About 11 million women and 5 million men who reported experiencing contact sexual violence, physical violence, or stalking by an intimate partner in their lifetime said that they first experienced these forms of violence before the age of 18.² While violence impacts all people in the U.S., some individuals and communities experience inequities in risk for violence due to the social and structural conditions in which they live, work and play. Youth from groups that have been marginalized, such as sexual and gender minority youth, are at greater risk of experiencing sexual and physical dating violence.^{3,4}



What are the consequences?

IPV is a significant public health issue that has many individual and societal costs. About 35% of female IPV survivors and more than 11% of male IPV survivors experience some form of physical injury related to IPV.⁵ IPV can also result in death. Data from U.S. crime reports suggest that about 1 in 5 homicide victims are killed by an intimate partner. The reports also found that over half of female homicide victims in the U.S. are killed by a current or former male intimate partner.⁶ There are also many other negative health outcomes associated with IPV. These include a range of conditions affecting the heart, digestive, reproductive, muscles and bones, and nervous system, many of which are chronic.⁵ Survivors can experience mental health problems such as depression and posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) symptoms. They are at higher risk for engaging in behaviors such as smoking, binge drinking, and sexual risk behaviors.⁷ People from groups that have been marginalized, such as people from racial and ethnic minority groups, are at higher risk for worse consequences.⁸

Although the personal consequences of IPV are devastating, there are also many costs to society. The lifetime economic cost associated with medical services for IPV-related injuries, lost productivity from paid work, criminal justice, and other costs was \$3.6 trillion. The cost of IPV over a victim's lifetime was \$103,767 for women and \$23,414 for men.⁹

How can we prevent intimate partner violence?

Promoting healthy, respectful, and nonviolent relationships and communities can help reduce the occurrence of IPV. It also can prevent the harmful and long-lasting effects of IPV on individuals, families, and communities. CDC developed a resource *Preventing Intimate Partner Violence Across the Lifespan: A Technical Package of Programs, Policies, and Practices* to help communities use the best available evidence to prevent intimate partner violence. This resource can be used as a tool in efforts to impact individual behaviors as well as family, community, and society factors that influence risk and protective factors for intimate partner violence.⁷



Teach safe and healthy relationship skills

- Social-emotional learning programs for youth
- Healthy relationship programs for couples



Engage influential adults and peers

- Men and boys as allies in prevention
- Bystander empowerment and education
- Family-based programs



Disrupt the developmental pathways toward partner violence

- Early childhood home visitation
- Preschool enrichment with family engagement
- Parenting skill and family relationship programs
- Treatment for at-risk children, youth, and families



Create protective environments

- Improve school climate and safety
- Improve organizational policies and workplace climate
- Modify the physical and social environments of neighborhoods



Strengthen economic supports for families

- Strengthen household financial security
- Strengthen work-family supports



Support survivors to increase safety and lessen harms

- Victim-centered services
- Housing programs
- First responder and civil legal protections
- Patient-centered approaches
- Treatment and support for survivors of IPV, including teen dating violence

Preventing Intimate Partner Violence Across the Lifespan:

A Technical Package of Programs, Policies, and Practices

A **technical package** is a collection of strategies based on the best available evidence to prevent or reduce public health problems. The **strategy** lays out the direction and actions to prevent intimate partner violence. The **approach** includes the specific ways to advance the strategy through programs, policies and practices. The **evidence** for each of the approaches in preventing intimate partner violence and associated risk factors is also included.

References

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