

Unit 10: Intimate Partner Violence



Time Required: 2.5 hours

Resources Needed

- OVC *Victim Impact: Listen and Learn* DVD (clip: Intimate Partner Violence/Rebel)
- *Participant Workbook*
- TV and DVD player
- Chalkboard or tear sheets
- Index cards

Prior to the Session

- Consider gathering local and state statistics and/or newspaper or magazine articles for the discussion about intimate partner violence trends.
- Research your state's statutes related to intimate partner violence; be prepared to provide information to participants about these statutes.
- On separate index cards, write down the healthy and unhealthy statements and behaviors listed in Activity E at the end of this unit.

Objectives

- Define **intimate partner violence**.
- Describe current trends for intimate partner violence.
- Provide examples of intimate partner violence.
- Explain the impact of intimate partner violence on victims.
- Discuss thoughts and feelings about being held accountable for intimate partner violence.



Facilitator Tip

- Avoid justifications of any type of violence, physical or nonphysical.
- Be prepared for participants to try to focus on why the victim stays in the relationship or what the victim does to create the violence. Keep the focus on the impact of intimate partner violence on the victim.
- Participants may rationalize that they grew up "okay" in an abusive household.



What Is Intimate Partner Violence?

Intimate partner violence, historically called “domestic violence,” describes physical, sexual, or psychological harm by a current or former intimate partner or spouse. This type of violence can occur in heterosexual or same-sex relationships.

This type of violence involves a pattern of coercive (controlling) behaviors people use against their intimate partners. These behaviors may include physical, sexual, emotional/psychological, and financial abuse. Partners may be married or unmarried; heterosexual, gay, or lesbian; or living together, separated, or dating.

It may begin with threats, acts of violence witnessed by another person (such as punching a fist through a wall), and/or damage to objects or pets. Intimate partner violence may escalate to physical behaviors such as restraining, pushing, slapping, and pinching. It may escalate further to include punching, kicking, biting, sexual assault, tripping, and throwing. Finally, the violence may become life threatening and cause serious injury or death.



Have participants read the “Words To Know” aloud.

Delivery options include reading the words aloud yourself, writing the words on a chalkboard or tear sheet, selecting participants to read the words aloud, or dividing participants into small groups or pairs and having them discuss the terms among themselves. For all options, survey participants to ensure they understand the terms before moving on.



Words To Know

Battering: Repeated physical abuse.

Coercive: Forcing a person to do something against his or her will.

Control: Having emotional or physical power over someone.

Cycle of violence: A pattern of intimate partner violence consisting of three phases: the tension-building phase, the acute battering incident, and the calm, loving, apologetic, “it will never happen again” phase.

Denial: Refusing to admit thoughts or behaviors to oneself or to others.

Escalation: An increase in either threats or level of violence.

Intimate: Emotional or physical relationship usually involving affectionate, romantic, or passionate feelings.

Intimidation: The act of making others do what one wants through fear.

Psychological: Related to the mind or the will (in this context, an example might be using mind games to control others).

Obstacle: A barrier that prevents something from occurring.

Stalking: A course of conduct directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to feel fear or substantial emotional distress. Stalking can include assaults, threats, vandalism, burglary, and following, as well as making unwanted contact and sending cards and gifts.

Tactic: A method or plan for accomplishing a goal.



In the News: Intimate Partner Violence Trends

This section offers recent statistics about intimate partner violence. If you gathered local and state statistics, integrate them into your discussion on intimate partner violence trends. If you found relevant newspaper or magazine articles, read them aloud or assign participants into groups of three to discuss and then present the information to the larger group.

When discussing intimate partner violence trends—

- Select participants to read the intimate partner violence trends aloud.
- Use local news articles, reviewing them carefully to avoid overly complex issues. Make sure the articles do not identify offenders in your facility or victims in your community.
- Ask participants how these trends make them feel.
- Come up with additional questions, if desired.

The Cycle of Violence

Those who have studied intimate partner violence believe that it usually occurs in three stages—referred to as the “cycle of violence.” First, the abuser uses words or threats, perhaps humiliation or ridicule. Next, the abuser explodes at some perceived “mistake” by the other person, and the abuser becomes physically violent. Finally, the abuser “cools off,” asks for forgiveness, and promises that the violence will never occur again. At this point, the victim often gives up on leaving the violent situation or having charges brought against the abuser. Typically, the abuser’s rage begins to build again after the reconciliation, and the violent cycle may be repeated.

The Violence Wheel illustrates the relationship of physical abuse to other forms of abuse. The wheel was developed after victims described common control tactics abusers used. The center of the wheel represents the intention of all violence tactics: to establish power and control. Each spoke of the wheel represents a particular tactic. The rim of the wheel—which gives it strength and holds it together—is physical abuse. The wheel model is important because it demonstrates how intimate partner violence behaviors are cyclical and recurring, rather than linear.



Created by the Domestic Abuse Intervention Project, 206 West Fourth Street, Duluth, MN 55806; phone: 218-722-4134.



Group Discussion

Have participants read aloud the tactics contained within the spokes of the Violence Wheel and then ask them to share their thoughts about the cycle of violence. How do they think the cycle can be interrupted?

Examples of Intimate Partner Violence

The *Participant Workbook* provides definitions of types of intimate partner violence, as well as example scenarios involving the crime; consider asking participants to substitute the names of their family members or friends in the scenarios. You can also share any state-specific statutes you found that are related to intimate partner violence.

Delivery options include taking turns with the participants in reading the scenarios aloud, selecting participants to read the scenarios, and dividing participants into small groups or pairs to discuss the scenarios.

Refer back to “Words To Know” as they appear in the scenarios. Solicit feedback by asking the following questions: “Who was the primary victim?” “Who else may have been harmed by the offender?” “How was the victim harmed?” and “What do you think the victim is experiencing?” Add details to the scenarios. Encourage note taking.



Triad Sessions

Have participants write down their answers to the questions under each type of intimate partner violence. Then, in groups of three, have participants share their responses with one another and offer feedback. Finally, bring the larger group back together to review and discuss participants’ responses.

Reasons Victims Stay

“Why do victims stay?” This is the most common question asked of intimate partner violence victims and is a key point in understanding the impact of intimate partner violence. Many obstacles can prevent a victim from leaving an abusive relationship. Most victims of intimate partner violence repeatedly attempt to leave the relationship, but return when they cannot overcome the obstacles.



Group Discussion

As a group, review the reasons why victims stay. Ask participants if they can think of any other reason why a victim of intimate partner violence might stay.

What Is the Impact of Intimate Partner Violence?

Acts of intimate partner violence create a ripple effect throughout the following areas in victims' lives: financial, physical, emotional, and religious/spiritual.



Chalkboard Exercise

Have participants take turns reading from the areas of impact lists in their workbooks. Solicit additional examples from the group.

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>Financial</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lost wages • Medical bills • _____ | <p>Physical</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pregnancy-related problems • Sexually transmitted diseases • Chronic pain • Dehydration • Eating disorders • Drug/alcohol dependence • Malnutrition • Repeated self-injury • Self-neglect • Sexual problems |
| <p>Emotional</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fear • Anger • Insecurity • Sadness • Guilt • Shame • Embarrassment • Depression • Loss of confidence • Anxiety • Emotional overreactions • Emotional numbness | <p>Religious/Spiritual</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questioning the goodness of others • Questioning faith • "Why would my 'higher power' let this happen?" • _____ |



Facilitator Note

If participants say they have never committed acts of intimate partner violence, ask them whether they or someone they know was ever a victim of intimate partner violence and what the impact of that crime was.



OVC *Victim Impact: Listen and Learn* DVD

Rebel is a victim of intimate partner violence perpetrated by her ex-husband.

Consider stopping and starting the video to reinforce key points and then initiate a discussion at the end. Possible discussion questions and answers:

- **What was the emotional and physical impact of intimate partner violence on Rebel?**
 - She felt her husband was constantly controlling her.
 - He isolated her from her family, friends, and church.
 - He told her that she, and everything she did, was stupid, which made her constantly try to “fix it.”
 - She had panic attacks when she went home.
 - She is afraid to get into a relationship with any man.
 - She is afraid “it will happen again.”
- **Intimate partner violence is a crime that escalates in severity and frequency of violence. What did Rebel feel was the turning point in the relationship when she knew she had to leave?**
 - Her husband threatened to have her killed.
 - He had isolated her from her family and friends, so she had nowhere to turn.
- **How did intimate partner violence affect Rebel’s relationship with her family and friends?**
 - She was isolated from them by her batterer.
 - Friends and family members were uncomfortable and unsure about discussing the problem with her.

Being Accountable for Your Crimes

Intimate partner violence often comes from a person the victim trusts. The victim’s sense of control and trust has been harmed, leaving her or him feeling very vulnerable. The experience of violence makes it difficult for victims to have healthy relationships with others. In addition, many victims are financially dependent on their abusive partners, and if they leave, sometimes with children, they have little financial support. **Remind participants that no one, regardless of the circumstances, has the right to use violence or abuse to control, intimidate, or harm another person.**



Group Discussion

Have participants read the accountability statements in their workbooks and share their thoughts with the group. Ask participants how these offenders can specifically demonstrate accountability.



Additional Activities



Facilitator Note

If time permits after covering the material in this unit, you may conduct the additional activities listed on the next few pages before debriefing participants. You may also want to schedule a guest victim/survivor speaker.

Activity A – Effects of Emotional and Psychological Abuse

Objective: Participants understand the harmful effects of emotional and psychological abuse.

Refer participants to one of the examples in their workbooks. In small or large groups, have participants read the scenario and the examples of abusive behavior listed below it. Ask participants to identify behaviors that are more difficult to recognize as examples of intimate partner violence.

Activity B – Violence Wheel

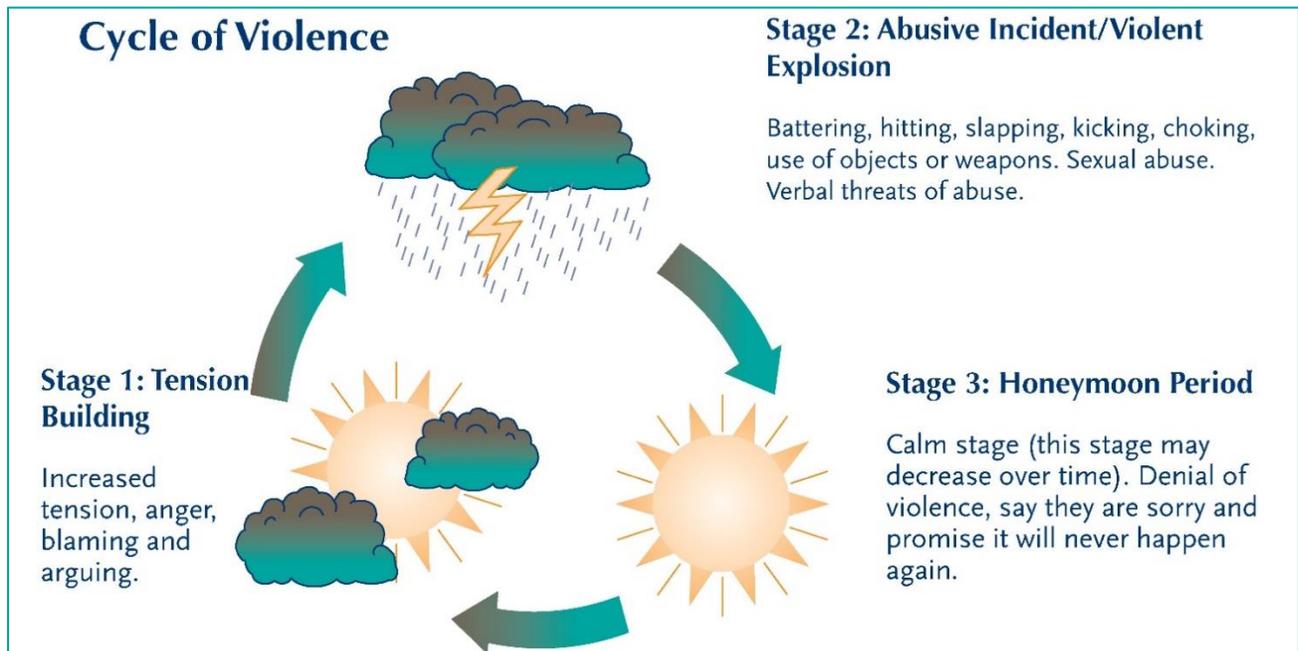
Objective: Participants apply their knowledge about the Violence Wheel.

Have participants complete the “Violence Wheel” worksheet in their workbooks.

Activity C – Cycle of Violence

Objective: Participants understand the impact of the cycle of violence on the victim and his or her children.

Discuss the cycle of violence below and then, in small groups, have participants complete the “Cycle of Violence” worksheet in their workbooks.



With time, the cycle will occur more frequently and the abuse during the violent episodes will become more severe. The cycle stops only if the perpetrator gets counseling and learns alternatives to being violent, if the victim leaves the relationship, or if the victim is killed.

Activity D — Types of Intimate Partner Violence

Objective: Reinforce learning about the types of intimate partner violence.

Assign participants to small groups and ask them to make presentations on the types of intimate partner violence: physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional/psychological abuse, and financial/economic abuse. (Guidelines might include providing the definition of intimate partner violence, specific examples, the impact on the victim and children, and a role play.)

Activity E — Healthy and Unhealthy Behaviors

Objective: Participants understand the harm caused by controlling, abusive behavior.

Pass out the index cards listing healthy and unhealthy statements and behaviors that you prepared before this unit began. Have each participant read a statement or behavior aloud and then decide if it is a “healthy” or “unhealthy” statement. Ask participants to tape the statements or behaviors on a wall underneath a “healthy” or “unhealthy” heading. Once all of the statements are taped to the wall, ask participants how they would feel if someone important to them behaved in an “unhealthy” way with them.

| Healthy Behaviors/Statements | Unhealthy Behaviors/Statements |
|--|---|
| “You’re a good friend.” | Expecting you to be perfect |
| “What’s wrong? You look upset.” | “You’re getting fat, you need to lose weight.” |
| Spending time with other friends | Telling you what you have to wear |
| Communicating | Hitting |
| “I’d like to talk to you about something that is upsetting me.” | Kicking |
| “Where were you? I was worried about you. I’m glad you’re okay.” | “Don’t make me hit you.” |
| “Do you need some money?” | “Stop making me mad.” |
| “You might want to take another look at what you’re wearing.” | “Where were you? You’re supposed to tell me where you are.” |
| “Let’s talk. I don’t understand why you want to get a job.” | “Here’s your bus fare. If I feel like you need more money, I might give you more.” |
| Sharing feelings | “Who were you just talking to on the phone?” |
| “I’m surprised you went to lunch with friends. How was it?” | “You don’t need a job. I want you at home.” |
| “Sure, I’m okay with you going to your sister’s place.” | “I didn’t really mean to hurt you, I was just playing rough.” |
| “You look good. I don’t want someone who looks like a fake model in a magazine.” | “I wouldn’t have to hurt you if you would do what I tell you to do.” |
| “Let’s exercise together—we both need to get healthy.” | “Keep embarrassing me in front of my friends and I’ll keep putting you in check.” |
| “I’m sorry.” | “I like your hair except for when you wear it like that. It makes you look stupid.” |

Recommended Speaker

Have an appropriate speaker address the class on the topic of intimate partner violence. Listening to victim/survivor speakers may be uncomfortable for offenders. Make sure to instruct participants beforehand about appropriate behavior during the speaker's presentation. (See "Implementing the Curriculum" for information about recruiting, selecting, and screening speakers and on how to prepare both speakers and participants for the experience.)



Discussion/Wrap-Up

Discuss what participants learned in Unit 10: Intimate Partner Violence. Address any questions they may have.

Unit 10 Participant Worksheets

Activity B – Violence Wheel

Refer to the Violence Wheel in your workbooks. Write one or two sentences that demonstrate a specific example of each of the power and control tactics illustrated on the wheel. Also, write about how a victim might feel when the tactic is used.



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Sample

Tactic: Using Isolation

Example: The victim is dropped off at work and picked up every day. She is not allowed to drive herself to work or ride with anyone.

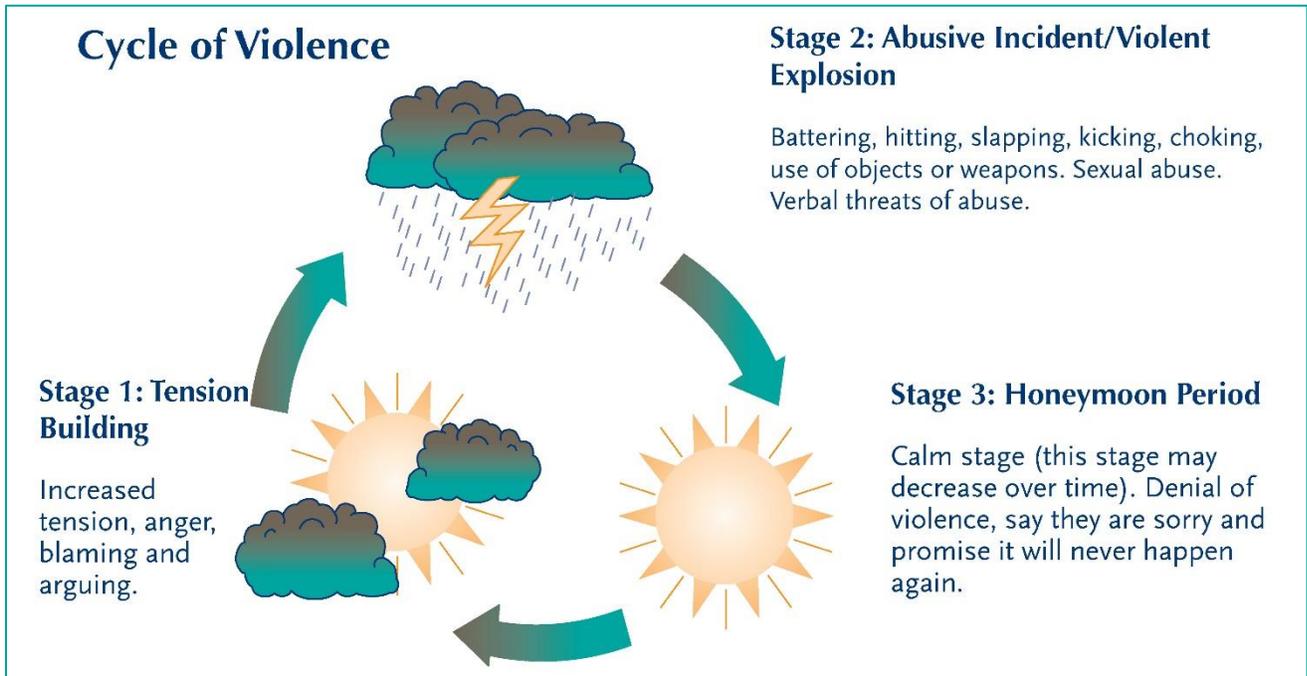
Victim's Feelings: Powerless, alone

Tactic: _____

Example: _____

Victim's Feelings: _____

Activity C – Cycle of Violence



With time, the cycle will occur more frequently and the abuse during the violent episodes will become more severe. The cycle stops only if the perpetrator gets counseling and learns alternatives to being violent, if the victim leaves the relationship, or if the victim is killed.

What are some examples of how the batterer acts during each of the three stages?

What is the victim going through physically and emotionally during each stage?

If any children are present in the home, what are they going through physically and emotionally during each stage?
