

Family Violence



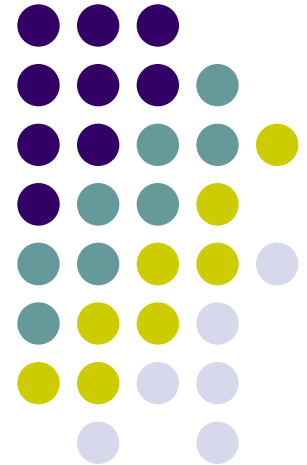
SWRK 4023: Working with Families and Children

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Unit-II: Family Violence

OUTLINE



- Family Violence – Definitions
- Family Violence – Forms
- Types of Family Violence
- Who is the target of violence?
- Causes of Family Violence – Feminist Explanations, Society-in-Transition Explanations, Socio-cultural Explanations, Experiential
- Social Work with Families - Family Assessment
- Combatting Family Violence

Family Violence: Definitions



- **Family Violence** is defined as an act by a member of a family or household against another member that is **intended** to result in physical harm, bodily **injury**, **assault**, or a **threat** that reasonably places the member in **fear of imminent** physical harm.
- **Abuse** is defined as physical injury that results in substantial harm or genuine threat; sexual contact, intercourse, or conduct; or compelling or encouraging the child to engage in sexual conduct.
- By definition and for the purposes of family violence reports, ‘**family**’ includes individuals related by consanguinity (blood) or affinity, marriage or former marriage, biological parents of the same child, foster children, foster parents, and members or former members of the same household (including roommates).
- Nowadays, family violence also includes violence in “**Dating Relationships**” which means a relationship between individuals who have or have had a continuing relationship of a romantic or intimate nature.

[Source: <https://www.dps.texas.gov/crimereports/08/citCh5.pdf>]

Family Violence: Definitions



- While **Domestic violence** is ... commonly **defined** broadly to include "all acts of physical, sexual, psychological or economic **violence**" that may be committed by a **family** member or intimate partner.
- **Family violence** is a broader term, often used to include child abuse, elder abuse, and other **violent** acts **between family members**.
- **Family violence** is considered to be any form of **abuse**, **mistreatment** or **neglect** that a child or adult experiences from a family member, or from someone with whom they have an intimate relationship.

Family Violence: Forms



Family violence also refers to:

- willfully or knowingly placing or attempting to place a family member in **fear of hurt**
- **causing harm/hurt** to a family member by an act which he or she ought to know would cause and result in hurt
- **wrongful confining or restraining** a family member against their will
- causing **continual harassment with intent to cause anguish** to a family member, including verbal abuse, psychological or emotional abuse.

Types of Family Violence



The following acts are considered to be acts of family violence:

Physical Abuse

- Physical acts such as punching, kicking, pushing, choking, slapping, bruising or hitting with objects
- Denial of food or water, sleep, shelter or medicine
- Unwanted sexual behavior such as forcing sexual activity on the family member, including one's spouse

Psychological abuse

- Insulting or humiliating a person
- Intimidating a person by screaming, making threats, harassment or destroying property
- Emotional blackmail or using emotions to manipulate a person
- Demeaning a person in front of others or in public places
- Monitoring and controlling a person's activities and relationships
- Persistent hostility, including ignoring or blatantly rejecting a person
- Confining a person within the home or stopping a person from going somewhere

CATEGORIES OF FAMILY VIOLENCE:

Who is the Target of Violence?



- **Child Maltreatment or Child Abuse** includes any **non-accidental injury** to a child by an adult and, [may be] categorized as physical, sexual, and/or emotional abuse as well as neglectful acts (Massey-Stokes & Lanning, 2004).
- **Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)**, sometimes referred to as **domestic violence (DV)**, is any act of commission or omission against an intimate partner using a complex pattern of physical, sexual, psychological, and/or economic behaviors devised and **carried out to control and abuse** a partner (Healey, Smith, & O'Sullivan, 1998)

CATEGORIES OF FAMILY VIOLENCE:

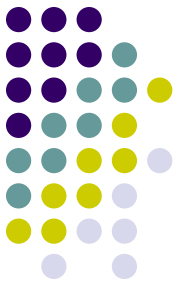
Who is the Target of Violence?



- **Elder abuse**, also referred to as mistreatment of older adults (Lithwick, Beaulieu, Gravel, & Straka, 2000) and elder mistreatment (Loue, 2001), is “any knowing, intentional, or **negligent act by a caregiver** or any other person that causes harm or a serious risk of harm to a **vulnerable adult**” (National Center on Elder Abuse, n.d.) occurring to individuals 60 years of age and over. These acts can occur in persons’ **homes or in institutional settings**.
- Elder abuse includes at least seven common types: physical, emotional or psychological, sexual, financial or other material exploitation, abandonment, neglect, and self-neglect (Jogerst et al., 2003)

Causes of Family Violence:

Feminist Explanations



- **Feminist theories** are gender-based explanations to domestic violence. Human civilisation is predominantly **patriarchal**, making a woman's role subordinate to that of a man.
- According to Carden, the feminist theory “conceptualizes domestic violence at the macro or sociopolitical level of how men are acculturated into roles of power and women are urged to adopt social roles of passivity.”

Causes of Family Violence:

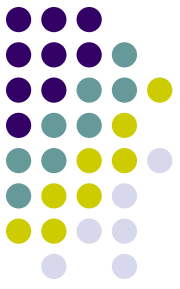
Society-in-Transition Explanations



- **Socio-economic-technological changes** in society alters people's perceptions and ways of doing things. If traditions are challenged, this may **cause strain** in the individual and in relationships. *(For example, **a woman who goes out to work, leaving the unemployed husband home** to look after the children and the home, changes the status quo **This can lead to discomfort in the relationship**. Increased urbanization, migration of both men and women, **diminishing influence of extended families**, and loss of control of adults over the younger generation are only a few examples of trends likely to trigger domestic violence and influence the strategies to curb it.)*

Causes of Family Violence:

Socio-cultural Explanations



- **Culture of Violence:** acceptability of violence is deep-rooted. Moreover, women who have suffered from violence perceive that they are at fault for their husband's violence and experience **shame and guilt**.
- **Imbalance in power relations:** Conflicts between men and women have been associated with some **men's tendency to feel threatened** due to **increased autonomy of women**; **men's power is eroded** as women become more emancipated.

Causes of Family Violence:

Socio-cultural Explanations



- **Educational Advancement of women:** The more women advance educationally, the higher their chances of economic advancement. This is perceived as a threat by some men, who then respond with violence.
- **Cohabitation:** In case of separation or death of the male Partner who is often found to be cohabiting with others in an extended family, the woman is deprived of the property they jointly accumulated by the parents or relatives of the deceased. This is largely because relationships based on cohabitation are not recognised culturally or legally.

Causes of Family Violence:

Socio-cultural Explanations



- **Socio-cultural Explanations:** Conflicts between men and women have been associated with some **men's tendency to feel threatened** due to **increased autonomy of women; men's power is eroded** as women become more emancipated.
- Other causes include the uneven distribution of power in marriage, the impact of polygyny, the sanctioning of male extramarital sex, the power of the extended family over the married couple, and payment of bride price (Robson, 1993; cited in Bowman, 2003)

Causes of Family Violence:

Experiential



- Men who were socially more stressed, accepted violence as an appropriate tactic to resolve conflict, had childhood experiences of witnessing inter-parental violence, and drank alcohol tended to perpetrate more violence against their wives
- **Violation of traditional gender roles by women** drives their husbands or other family members mad and is perceived as a cause of marital violence



Family Assessment

Family as a System



- Focus is on the family as client, and the **family is viewed as an interacting system** in which the whole is more than the sum of its parts.
- It simultaneously focuses on individual members and the family as whole at the same time. The **interactions between family members become the target** for change interventions.

Ecological Theory

Family as a component of society



- The family is seen as one of many institutions in society, along with health, education, religious, or financial institutions. The family as a whole interacts with other institutions to receive, exchange, or give services and communicate.

Social Work with Families



- Social work with families from a **family health perspective** is based on an **integration** of the biopsychosocial and ecological perspectives, systems theory, social constructionist theory, and postmodernism (Pardeck & Yuen, 1997).
- It **emphasizes** the importance of focusing on **clients' total well-being** (physical, psychological, mental, spiritual, financial, social, and cultural), allows clients to interpret their own levels of health, and stresses the importance of understanding clients as they influence and are influenced by their families (systems theory) and society (ecological theory).
- The importance of the **social construction theory** and **postmodern perspective** is their emphasis on the **ability of individuals to interpret their own reality** and on the **celebration of diversity**.



Assessment of Families

Assessment of Families has to be undertaken in relation to their –

- ❖ physical health
- ❖ emotional health
- ❖ mental health
- ❖ spirituality
- ❖ financial status
- ❖ social relationships, and
- ❖ cultural issues



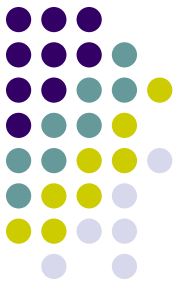
What can social workers do?

- Social workers are committed to help **vulnerable populations**, which include the victims of family violence. ...
- Social workers are [expected] to **report suspected abuse and neglect** of children and elderly adults.
- By their professional code of ethics, they are **responsible for being knowledgeable on various aspects of family violence**, thus enabling them to help victims and their abusers.
- **Need for multidisciplinary nature or multi-agency intervention:** Social workers are joined by dozens of other kinds of professionals in their efforts to prevent and intervene in family violence for the enhanced wellbeing of all.

Family as the Client



- The family is first, and individuals are second.
- The family is seen as the sum of individual family members.
- The focus is concentrated on each individual as he or she affects the family as a whole.



Combatting Family Violence

Opportunities for Victims of Domestic Abuse

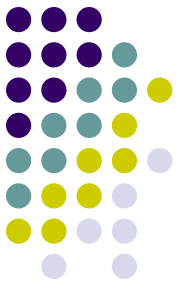


Strengths-based Perspective: Victims can use strengths to overcome abuse.

Examples of these strengths and opportunities are:

- **Resilience and Willpower**
- **Mediation**
- **Family**
- **Informal Social Networks**
- **Formal Networks**

Efforts to Combat Family Violence



- Legislative and Policy Measures
- Awareness and Empowerment Programmes
 - provide **education**, **counseling**, and **legal** education
 - **Economic independence**: skills training, income generation services
 - **Relief measures** (*including interim relief during the pendency of a case in court*) & **health services**
 - **lobbying** for women's empowerment

Obstacles in Addressing Family Violence



Obstacles that hinder the fight against family violence are numerous. These include:

- **Viewing family as the safest place to live**
- **Secrecy** surrounding family issues
- **inadequate institutional capacity** to monitor, evaluate, document, and analyse family violence–related gender issues and trends;
- **cultural practices and beliefs** that put females at a disadvantage (*stronghold of personal laws based on traditions which are often exploitative*);

Obstacles in Addressing Family Violence



- **insufficient laws** (*not recognising marital rape as a form of violence*) & **inadequate implementation** of the law;
- tendency for most people to associate gender with women;
- **societal resistance** to gender issues.
- Financial and human resource constraints
- Focus on redressal instead of prevention

Combating Family Violence



- **Holistic** and multi-sectoral response
- **Tougher laws**: making sure that perpetrators of violence are not let loose and that the victims of violence get redress.
- Violence should be **fought from all corners of society** by involving the abused, family members, neighbours, and the community, including traditional and religious leaders, law enforcement and protection officers, and policy makers.
- Launching **educational and awareness** programmes
- Focussing on **prevention** rather than redress

Combating Family Violence



- **Combating the culture of violence**: initiating interventions aimed at **challenging such views at cognitive and behavioral levels** besides employing measures aimed at direct empowerment of women through
- Making more and more people **talk** about violence since this develops awareness of the consequences of violence
- Sometimes it is more effective for men to talk to other men about violence, women to other women, and peers to peers
- education, employment, and improvement of service provision.

Combating Family Violence



- Integrating family violence related issues in the **curriculum** at all levels of the education system
- **Schoolchildren need to be aware** of the causes, symptoms, and risks of abuse, as well as the traits of abusers so that they are better equipped to prevent violence.
- **Establishing Women's Crisis Hotline Centers**
- **Shelter Facilities**
- Involvement of **NGOs and Civil Society groups** in close cooperation with the police, judiciary and other governmental agencies

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THANKS

