
WHY WOMEN HIT THEIR VIOLENT PARTNERS: MOTIVATIONS AND TREATMENT OPTIONS

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WHY WOMEN HIT THEIR VIOLENT PARTNERS: INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE (IPV) DATA

- Global and national findings
- At-risk populations via greatest risk and murder data
- Injury by gender
- Assault data via cohabiting partner findings, arrest data, and college student data

WHY WOMEN HIT THEIR VIOLENT PARTNERS: SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF FEMALE CRIMINAL

- **FALLEN ANGEL:** Female criminal is deviant because she cannot meet standards of “real” women (non-traditional or unadjusted)
- **LIBERATED WOMAN:** Female criminality is attributed to their liberation (2nd wave)
- **MASCULINE WOMAN:** Female criminals are masculine (biology: the others to be feared)
- **DANGEROUS WOMAN:** Women are a dangerous group that needs to be managed (equal opportunity or normalization process)

WHY WOMEN HIT THEIR VIOLENT PARTNERS: INCREASE IN FEMALE ARRESTS

- Up-charging (charging less serious crime as more serious)
- Increase in cases of domestic disputes
- Decrease in tolerance of girls who act out
- Shift from informal to formal processing
- A rise in zero-tolerance and mandatory arrest policies

WHY WOMEN HIT THEIR VIOLENT PARTNERS: OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH

- **CONTROL:** Women express variations of control and physical aggression during bi-directional domestic violence (Howard-Bostic, 2013)
- **EMOTIVE RESPONSES:** Women's emotive responses explain motivations to hit their violent partners (Howard-Bostic, 2014)
- **PATHWAYS:** Socio-cultural pathways are associated with female-perpetrated IPV (Howard-Bostic, 2011)
- **INTERVENTION:** Self-protective and proactive intervention strategies address women's dual victimization and IPV perpetration (Howard-Bostic, 2014)

WHY WOMEN HIT THEIR VIOLENT PARTNERS: CONCEPTUALIZING “CONTROL”

THREE CLASSIFICATIONS OF CONTROL:

1. **COERCIVE CONTROL** - control over partner's conduct
 - retaliation, mirror punishment, isolation, intimidation, and restraint techniques
2. **SITUATIONAL CONTROL** - conflict and control over self/situation
 - control of body, infidelity, child abuse, substance/alcohol use, finances
3. **COERCIVE EMOTIONAL CONTROL** - coercion to regulate partner's emotions
 - psychological trauma, conquest, jealousy, and strained attachment

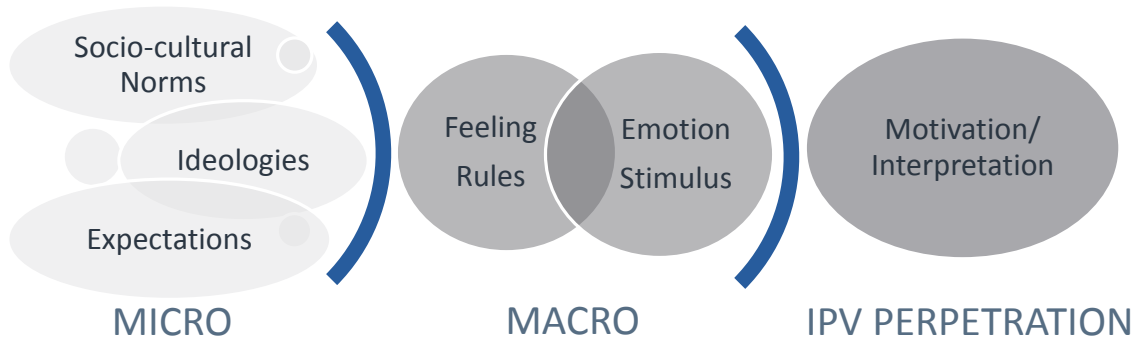
FINDINGS IN HOWARD-BOSTIC (2013):

- Successful performance of control was not similar or common
- Severity of physical violence was implemented mutually or more severely than violence performed by partners who also intended to harm them
- Emotional injury was consistent or reciprocally performed over time

WHY WOMEN HIT THEIR VIOLENT PARTNERS: CAN IPV BE PERFORMED MUTUALLY?

- **PERFORMANCE:** Successful performance of IPV may vary by the context of violence or by a partner's size or personality
- **MOTIVATIONS:** Specific forms of aggression may be performed mutually but it is unlikely that men and women's motivations and aggression will be performed mutually
- **EXECUTING CONTROL:** A partner's intent to control may be comparable while their ability to execute control over the other partner may be limited
- **ASSESSMENT:** Research should carefully assess each partner's previous violent conduct, degree of control performed, emotional responses, and severity of injuries independently before labeling the full violent experience as "mutual violent combat"

WHY WOMEN HIT THEIR VIOLENT PARTNERS: SOCIOLOGY OF EMOTIONS



BEHAVIORAL MODEL OF MICRO AND MACRO-
LEVEL DETERMINANTS OF IPV PERPETRATION

1. MICRO-LEVEL (Individual Interaction)

- Specific words, images, people, and ideas that arise
- Assess and manage interpretation of self
- Explore how perpetrators “show” emotions and assign meaning to violent situations

2. MACRO-LEVEL (Socio-structural External Motivations)

- Pathways influence emotional dynamics in abusive relationships
- Attitudes about criminalization, victimization, community, and family influence IPV perpetration
- Child abuse, cultures of violence, and availability of social support are pathways to IPV

WHY WOMEN HIT THEIR VIOLENT PARTNERS: COST AND IPV TREATMENT

COST:

- The cost of intimate partner violence against women exceeds an estimated \$5.8 billion
- Costs include nearly \$4.1 billion in the direct costs of medical care and mental health care
- Nearly \$1.8 billion in the indirect costs of lost productivity and present value of lifetime earnings
- Intimate partner violence causes U.S. women to lose about \$727 million in wages from their approximately 8 million days of missed work

TREATMENT:

- Ginette Larouche's treatment model and the Duluth model
- Couple Therapy Programs
- Cognitive Behavior Therapy

Costs of Intimate Partner Violence Against Women in the United States, Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Atlanta, Georgia, March 2003

WHY WOMEN HIT THEIR VIOLENT PARTNERS: REACTIVE IPV INTERVENTION

1 Intimidation or
silent abuse

- Healthy environment
- Written prevention plan
- List expectations and causes of abuse
- Intimidation awareness

2 Shame, trust, or
passive behavior

- Healthy perspectives
- Solving problems for future choices
- Dialogue about trust and relationships
- Communications skills

3 Helplessness or
hopelessness

- Identify unwanted behaviors and integrate positive
- Behavioral control activity
- Health plan with activities /opportunities for achievement
- Future awareness workshop Action plan

4 Dependency
and anxiety

- Examine faulty cognition and related emotions
- Solution-focused activity
- Assertiveness training
- Social skills roles play activities

WHY WOMEN HIT THEIR VIOLENT PARTNERS: PROACTIVE IPV INTERVENTION

1 Trauma
and tension

- Cognitive therapy for recovery
- Stress diary
- Physical relaxation role play
- Time and skill planning technique

2 Anger
or jealousy

- Communications workshop on hurt prevention
- Group sessions on compromising and communication
- Conflict resolution training
- Role play on assertive skills to replace aggression
- Active listening workshop

3 Guilt
or confusion

- Counseling about history and current problems
- Treatment to determine role of guilt
- Process-based intervention on hurt feelings
- Mock meetings about reconciliation and apologies
- Verbal and nonverbal challenge solutions

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