

Defining Interpersonal Violence



What is Interpersonal Violence?

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), **violence** involves the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, mal-development, or deprivation. This definition encompasses interpersonal, self-directed, and collective violence.

Interpersonal violence may be physical, sexual, or psychological, and it may involve deprivation and neglect. Acts of interpersonal violence can be further divided into family or partner violence and community violence. Here's a closer look at both.

Family or partner violence refers to violence within the family or between intimate partners. It includes child maltreatment, dating and intimate partner violence (IPV), and elder maltreatment.

Child Maltreatment:

All forms of physical and emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect, and exploitation that results in actual or potential harm to the child's health, development or dignity. There are four main types of abuse: neglect, physical abuse, psychological abuse, and sexual abuse.

Dating and Intimate Partner Violence (IPV):

Abuse or aggression that occurs in a romantic relationship. Intimate partner refers to both current and former spouses and dating partners. IPV can include physical violence, sexual violence, stalking, and psychological aggression. IPV can vary in how often it happens and how severe it is.

Elder Maltreatment:

Elder abuse is a single or repeated act, or lack of appropriate action, occurring within any relationship where there is an expectation of trust, which causes harm or distress to an older person. This type of violence constitutes a violation of human rights and includes physical, sexual, psychological and emotional abuse; financial and material abuse; abandonment; neglect; and serious loss of dignity and respect.

Community violence occurs among individuals who are not related by family ties but who may know each other. It includes youth violence, bullying, assault, rape or sexual assault by acquaintances or strangers, and violence that occurs in institutional settings such as schools, workplaces, and prisons.

Consequences of Interpersonal Violence

The consequences of experiencing interpersonal violence are pervasive and enduring. Exposure to violence increases the risks of injuries, infectious diseases, mental health problems, reproductive health problems, and noncommunicable diseases. Whether they are physical or psychological, violence-associated injuries commonly go unrecognized and range from self-limiting to severe.

Interpersonal violence does not discriminate; it occurs in every culture, country, age group and socio-economic level. Reach out to the EAP or visit EAP4YOU.com to learn more and find support.