Chapter 10
Adult Perpetrators

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Abuser Characteristics

- The literature characterizes individual batterers as problematic individuals displaying:
  - Poor impulse control
  - Aggression
  - Fear of intimacy
  - Emotional dependence
  - Fear of abandonment
  - Impaired ego functioning
Abuser Characteristics

- Gender and age
  - Most offenders of IPV are men who perpetrate against women.
  - Most IPV abuse offenders are age 30 or older.
  - Abuse offenders in a dating relationship tend to be younger; about one-half of the offenders are between the ages of 18 and 29 years of age.
Controlling Behaviors

- The perpetrator often seeks control over the victim’s time, dress, and behavior.
- Controlling behaviors show contempt and a general lack of respect for the partner.
- Insulting behavior and put-downs are techniques used to attack the confidence of the victim and to ensure future dominance.
- The use of derogatory language in addressing one’s partner may start as the intimates develop a familiarity with each other.
Fear and intimidation is achieved through violence or the perception of impending violence.

Victims of repetitive abuse recall a particular “look” from the offender that serves as a warning signal of an explosion that is about to occur.

A raised fist or hand in a threatening gesture serves the same purpose.

Firearm use or display in or around the house or at pets is a severe form of intimidation.
Adults who perpetrate intimate partner violence often abuse the victim’s pet(s) as a means to control and intimidate the survivor.
Manipulation

- Abusers have been characterized as the masters of manipulation.
- After an abusive attack, it is not unusual for the offender to beg for forgiveness.
- The unrealistic demand for proof of love or loyalty is characteristic of abusive dating relationships.
- Coercion into sexual relations as a condition of a continued relationship can be extremely dangerous for the victim during a dating relationship.
Excessive Rule-Making

- When a partner makes rules that the other must follow, it signifies an unequal relationship based on dominance.

- A penalty or punishment is attached to the failure to fulfill expectations.

- Taking back a gift or present because “you are not a good girl” indicates an anticipation of rule following by the abuser.

- Implies that some form of punishment will result for unfulfilled expectations.
**Isolation**

- Demands for constant attention to the exclusion of friends and family are a form of isolating the victim.

- It becomes a form of isolation when the abuser insists on being the sole focus of the victim’s life.

- Demands that the victim must not work or denial of transportation to leave the home are extreme forms.

- Economic and physical isolation occurs when the victim is cut off from resources or protection from abuse.

- Control tactics include:
  - Removing the phone when the batterer goes to work
  - Disabling or destroying motor vehicles to limit the victim’s mobility
  - Closely monitoring the odometer reading on motor vehicles
  - Locking the thermostat in the winter (as a form of torture)
Styles of Violence

- The majority of domestic violence offenders have a prior criminal history for nonviolent and violent offenses against males as well as females.

- Two violent styles used by men against women have been identified:
  - Tyrannical offender
  - Exploder offender

- Both styles use violence as a response to intolerable emotions of anxiety or anger, and are unable to understand the impact of the violence on their partner.
**Tyrannical Offender Characteristics**

- Knows what he is doing and intends to frighten, intimidate, and punish his partner
- Sees his violence as a justified or understandable response to frustration and anger
- Tends to minimize his violence by admitting to having committed verbal abuse
- Describes his partner as being submissive and careful around him
Exploder Offender Characteristics

- Uses the violence to get distance from his partner and to silence her
- Usually acknowledges that he has used violence but blames his partner for provoking him
Sociopathic Batterer

- Is the type of offender who is likely to have a diagnosable personality disorder or a problem with substance abuse
- Threatens to kill or commit more violence
- A tendency to make sexual demands after committing the violence
- Is not apologetic and sometimes uses religious beliefs to justify the violence
Antisocial Batterer

- Is an individual with a diagnosable mental illness or personality disorder, or a substance abuse problem

- The most dangerous group of offenders

- Is more likely to have a criminal record
Role of Alcohol and Drug Use

- There is a significant relationship between excessive drinking/drug use and IPV.
- The association is contributory rather than causal.
- Substance abuse increases the risk of IPV occurring.
- Substance abuse increases the severity of injury to the victim.
Role of Animal Cruelty

- The threat of violence against a pet is a strong predictor of IPV.

- Batterers who also abuse their pet use more forms of violence and demonstrate greater use of controlling behaviors.

- Pet abuse has been shown to influence the decision of abused women to seek safety.

- Abusers harm pets to punish the victim for leaving or to coerce them to return.
Police Officers Who Batter

- Research indicates higher incident rates of IPV among law enforcement professionals.

- The documentation of incidents varies dramatically by departments.

- Physical and psychological domination is a component of the policing job, which may create occupational stress for the individual while off duty.

- Officers may experience emotional exhaustion and burnout rising to the level of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD).
Military Offenders

- IPV committed by military personnel is challenging due to the problem of jurisdiction.

- Many families live outside of military installations, and any family or IPV incident that occurs off the military installation is under the jurisdiction of local civilian authorities.

- Military-related victims fail to report for reasons similar to those of other victims of IPV.

- Service members must move every three years, isolating the victim, who is unable to build a support system from friends and family.
Abusive Men

- The majority of IPV perpetrators are men
- Abusers often have low self-esteem and are overly dependent on the victim
- Most are extremely jealous and possessive
- The abuser blames others for his actions and denies or minimizes the effects of his violence on his victim(s)

- Abusers often present a very different posture in public than they do in the privacy of their own homes
- Three types of violent men:
  - *Family-only offenders* — These perpetrators in may have a history of exposure to aggression in their family of origin.
  - *Dysphoric or borderline offenders* — These men are believed to have had a history of child abuse and parental rejection.
  - *Generally violent or antisocial offenders* — The batterers in this category are the most aggressive.
Abusive Women

- Women perpetrate violence in intimate partner relationships at rates equal to or greater than those of men.

- Only a few studies exist on the characteristics of women who are violent toward an intimate partner.

- Recent studies indicate women who use force in their intimate partner relationships are victims of violence who respond through self-defense and retaliatory use of force.
Offenders Against Older Adults

- Abuse of older adults is complex.
- Elder abuse is a reportable condition in all 50 states and the definition varies from state to state.
- When the offender is a family member, it is considered domestic or family abuse.
- If the perpetrator is the spouse or live-in partner of the victim, it is called intimate partner abuse.