



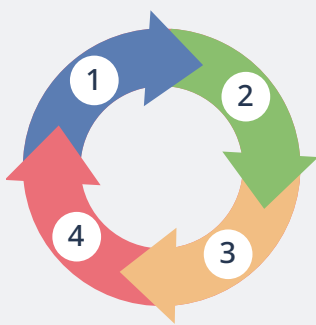
INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE



Intimate partner violence (IPV) includes physical and sexual violence, psychological abuse, and/or stalking by a current or former partner. In the United States, as many as one in four women and one in nine men experience IPV. This violence causes diminished mental and physical health, decreases quality of life, and can lead to intergenerational trauma.

The cycle of violence

Controlling behavior may be subtle at first, then progress and become increasingly abusive. Reconciliation and periods of calm may make IPV invisible to others, while making it hard for the survivor to recognize and accept in the early stages.



1. Tensions build

The abuser creates tension and the survivor's stress builds.

2. Incident

The abuser lashes out through physical, verbal, psychological, or sexual abuse tactics to dominate the survivor.

3. Reconciliation

The abuser makes excuses or attempts to apologize for the incident. Gaslighting is common, aka, "Nothing happened."

4. Calm

Things seem peaceful, maybe even better than before. But often, this doesn't last long before the cycle starts over.

Screening and recognition

Intimate partner violence affects people of all cultures, communities, genders, and sexual orientations. Screening for IPV should be routine in all health facilities and client populations.

Build trusting relationships. A non-judgemental environment may help clients to disclose IPV when they are ready.

Recognize signs of possible domestic abuse:

- Unexplained injuries or bruises
- Low self-esteem
- Anxiety, depression
- Suicidal ideation
- Alcohol and/or other substance use
- Unusual or dominating presence of partner during medical visits
- Reluctance to make decisions without partner
- Signs of financial control by partner
- Pregnancy complications such as preterm birth or placental abruption

Tips for supporting clients who experience IPV

Be prepared

- Be familiar with local resources.
- Have protocols in place for referral when requested.
- Learn about IPV and how to maintain client safety while offering support.

Follow the client's lead

- Listen without judgment.
- Ask what client needs.
- Understand that ending the relationship may not be a safe option for the client.

Leaving the relationship is often the most dangerous time for those experiencing IPV.

Know the reporting requirements in your state

- Most states do NOT mandate reporting of domestic violence against an adult victim.
- Nonconsensual reporting can INCREASE risk for clients experiencing IPV.
- Always put client safety first.

Help create a safety plan

Safety planning may include:

- Preparing a 'go bag' with personal documents and money in case of need to leave quickly
- Identifying who they will contact
- Identifying where they will go
- Planning how they will signal for help if partner is present or preventing them from leaving