Contagion, Social Influence and Intimate Partner Violence

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Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)

- IPV involves abuse from current or previous romantic partners.
  - Mostly affects women as victims and men as perpetrators, globally
  - IPV Prevalence differs by nation, ranging from 15% to 70%

- Globally, IPV is most likely to occur:
  - In the context of marriage, though those separated and divorced report higher rates of IPV than those married.
  - In rural, less educated and adolescent girls; linked with girl child marriage.
  - From controlling and emotionally abusive male partners

Socially vulnerable women and girls are more likely to be affected by IPV, often in the context of marriage.

*WHO Multi-country Study on Women’s Health and Domestic Violence Against Women (2005)*
Framework for Understanding IPV – Social Ecological Model

Society and Community Factors
- Social Inequities
- Gender Inequities
- Community Violence & Instability
- Social Norms on-
  - Gender Equity, Gender Roles
  - IPV

Family-Level Factors
- Family Violence
- Gender Inequities
- Social Norms on-
  - Gender Equity, Gender Roles
  - IPV

Individual and Relationship Factors
- Behavior, Biology, State
- Gender Inequities
- Social Norms on-
  - Gender Equity, Gender Roles
  - IPV

Social inequities * Gender inequities * Context/History of Violence * Social Norms
How is the Contagion of IPV Transmitted?

- Intergenerationally
  - From elder to younger
  - From victim to perpetrator

- From community into homes
  - From peer and community influence/norms of acceptability of IPV to male IPV perpetration

- Through mutation of form, by ecological level
  - From community or societal violence to IPV
  - From social and gender inequity to IPV
Effective IPV Interventions: Focus on Men and Boys

• **Stepping Stones** -
  – gender equity and community gender role norms;
  – young males in S. Africa [Jewkes et al., 2007]

• **MEN Count** -
  – gender equity, employment support;
  – US Black men [Raj et al., 2011]

• **Batterer’s Intervention; Legal Sanctions** -
  – gender equity and legal & social IPV norms
  – Male perpetrators in the US [Aldorando, 2010]
Effective IPV Interventions: Focus on Female Victims

• IMAGE -
  – gender equity counseling & microfinance
  – women in S. Africa [Pronyk et al., 2006]

• RHANI Wives -
  – gender equity counseling, IPV norms
  – women in India [Raj et al., 2012]

• Reproductive Coercion Intervention -
  – Gender equity counseling and IPV social norms
  – Family planning clinic patients [Miller et al., 2010]
Community-Level Effort: Tostan in Senegal

• Goal: Elimination of female genital cutting (FGC)

• Tostan Approach (Melching & Mackie, 2012):
  – Social Norms- focus on community leaders, influencers, and families to make a commitment
    • Positive Message: e.g., no FGC makes healthy babies
      [previous message- FGC=death]
  – Gender equity- emphasis on value of girls and mothers, healthy treatment of girls and mothers

• Impact on FGC, child marriage, IPV

Conclusion

• At multiple levels, social factors heighten risk for IPV
  – gender inequities
  – social inequities (e.g., poverty)
  – social norms
  – Context of violence/conflict

• These social factors reinforce the contagion of IPV, which is transmitted via
  – channeling thru generations,
  – Via social norms of IPV and gender inequities
  – from community violence into household violence, and via social norms of IPV and gender inequities.
Building Solutions to Reduce Contagion of IPV

- Framework and Review suggest that the Contagion of IPV can be halted via interventions that affect social risks at multiple levels, linking gender and social inequity is key
  - While evaluated programs are limited, opportunity is great...

Women’s Economic Empowerment

Civilian Re-Entry

Positive Fatherhood
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