

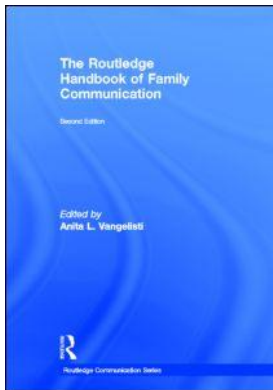
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Publisher: *Routledge*

Informa Ltd Registered in England and Wales Registered Number: 1072954 Registered office: 5 Howick Place, London SW1P 1WG, UK



The Routledge Handbook of Family Communication

Anita L. Vangelisti

Charting Dangerous Territory

Publication details

<https://test.routledgehandbooks.com/doi/10.4324/9780203848166.ch29>

René M. Dailey, Carmen M. Lee, Brian H. Spitzberg

Published online on: 01 Nov 2012

How to cite :- René M. Dailey, Carmen M. Lee, Brian H. Spitzberg. 01 Nov 2012, *Charting Dangerous Territory from: The Routledge Handbook of Family Communication* Routledge

Accessed on: 03 Oct 2023

<https://test.routledgehandbooks.com/doi/10.4324/9780203848166.ch29>

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Charting Dangerous Territory

The Family as a Context of Violence and Aggression

René M. Dailey, Carmen M. Lee, and Brian H. Spitzberg

Every family is a journey of discovery, and each member's path through this journey holds both the promise of great joy and great pain. People find themselves with few maps to guide their journeys through the wilderness of family life. One of the more hazardous detours that often arises in these family journeys is the experience of violence and aggression. This chapter summarizes the research regarding aggressive and violent interactions in family relationships. We map out the prevalence and effects of abuse including some under-explored areas of family violence. We also chart some heuristic theoretical perspectives with an eye toward understanding the communicative nature of aggression and violence. In closing, we survey prevention and intervention strategies and suggest a course for future directions of research.

Mapping the Territory: Definitions and Prevalence of Family Violence and Aggression

A variety of efforts have been undertaken to explore the breadth and depth of family violence (e.g., Anderson, Umberson, & Elliott, 2004; Barnett, Miller-Perrin, & Perrin, 1997; Bergen, 1998). These efforts reveal the extensive interdisciplinary nature of research and theory in family violence as well as the challenges of delimiting the scope of the phenomenon. In addition, the political and ideological forces surrounding the evolving concept of what constitutes a "family" considerably compound the problems of defining family violence. Consensus in defining the nature of violence and its semantic family of concepts is unlikely, but it is incumbent upon serious scholarly inquiry into the topic to specify working definitions and the rationale underlying such choices.

Several stances need to be articulated in the process of defining violence. First, all definitional choices in regard to violence will inevitably run afoul of certain cultural, political, ideological or theoretical fault lines. What is viewed as abusive in one culture may be highly tolerated in another (e.g., Van Oudenhoven et al., 2008). Second, the progress of science requires a narrowing rather than a broadening of the meaning of key

terms. Third, there is a family of terms associated with family violence that deserve consideration and articulation in relationship to one another. The list includes, but is not limited to: abuse (psychological, sexual), aggression, battering, bullying, coercion, harassment, incest, neglect, rape, sexual pressure, stalking, unwanted sex, and violence.

We highlight a few of these terms as they have been more recently used in the literature to specify the more general notion of abuse. First, *aggression* has been defined as any action that is unwanted by and injurious to the victim, whether physically or psychologically (Bandura, 1973; Baron & Richardson, 1994). *Violence* is often used synonymously with aggression, but it is also often viewed as a subset of aggression. Typically these terms refer to some combination of physical contact (e.g., hitting, choking) imposed involuntarily, received harms (e.g., damaging volume, painful punishment), or physical restraint, isolation, neglect or deprivation of sources of sustenance (e.g., restraint, starvation). More generally, *physical violence* (a) is enacted by another with the intent to harm, (b) is unwanted by the target(s), and (c) imposes physical short-term or long-term harm. In addition, what once was primarily referred to as “wife abuse” or “wife battering,” and later as “domestic violence,” has increasingly been studied under the more inclusive term of *intimate partner violence* (IPV).

In contrast to physical violence, communicative aggression may seek to injure, but it does so without, or in addition to, physical contact or restraint. All aggression and violence are forms of communication. Communicative or psychological forms of aggression, however, attempt their injury through a process that is interpretively and symbolically mediated. The terms “psychological abuse” and “communicative aggression” will be treated as synonymous for the purposes of this chapter. *Communicative aggression* (CA) is defined as “any recurring set of messages that function to impair a person’s enduring preferred self-image” (Dailey, Lee, & Spitzberg, 2007, p. 303). CA represents a collection of messages that diminish a person’s self-concept in undesirable ways (e.g., domination, denigration, withholding support, restriction of freedoms, or attempts to cause emotional distress).

Withdrawal, avoidance, ostracism, deprivation, or *neglect* more generally, can also occur physically or symbolically. It is not uncommon to define neglect as actions that result in a deficit in providing for a person’s basic needs (Barnett et al., 1997). This term is most commonly applied to child neglect, but it seems functionally applicable to teen and adult relations as well. Various types of episode-based avoidance, such as the silent treatment, imposed isolation, or conflict withdrawal may be perceived as punitive or abusive (Williams, Shore, & Grahe, 1998).

Another set of concepts relevant to family violence includes sexual abuse, sexual assault, marital rape, incest, and the various terms related to sexual aggression (see Spitzberg, 1998). *Child sexual abuse* (CSA) has been defined in ways that range from any sexual interaction between adults and children, to conditional operationalizations such as whenever a significantly older person or person with substantially greater power engages in interaction with a child for the purpose of sexual stimulation for self or others (Barnett et al., 1997; Rind, Tromovitch, & Bauserman, 1998). *Incest*, in turn, involves sexual interaction among immediate family members that would be proscribed by law (Pagelow, 1984). *Sexual aggression* is the unwanted or societally prohibited imposition of harm or violation through the organs and activities associated with reproduction, ranging from sexual withholding to rape, with various forms of coerciveness in between (Spitzberg, 1998). Despite some similarities, the etiologies and effects of sexually oriented forms of aggression and abuse often appear relatively distinct from nonsexual forms of abuse (Basile, Arias, Desai, & Thompson, 2004; Vatnar & Bjørkly, 2008).

Each of these terms represents a contested site of scholarly and public policy debate (see e.g., Morgan & Wilson, 2005). Some scholars even suggest objective or standardized attempts to capture such phenomena are misguided, given the extent to which victimization itself is individually and socially constructed (Queen, Brackley, & Williams, 2009). Such cautionary admonitions suggest the extraordinary difficulty of mapping the territory (or territories) of violence in the family context.

Prevalence of Violence and Abuse

The precision of prevalence estimates depends heavily on operational and conceptual definitions, which makes claims about prevalence difficult. Whereas most of the estimates refer to lifetime experience, some studies assess repetitive or severe forms of aggression which results in considerably different prevalence rates. Table 29.1 reports a selective

Table 29.1 Summary of Selected Large-scale North American Family Violence Prevalence and Incidence Studies

<i>Construct</i>	<i>Source</i>	<i>Sample</i>	<i>Estimate(s)</i>
Child maltreatment	Fletcher (2010)	8,851 adolescents	20% neglect; 10% physical abuse
	McCarroll et al. (2008)	Incidence rate per 1,000 children of Army parents	All rates < 1%
	Anda et al. (2006)	17,337 health maintenance organization patients	Emotional: 10.6%; Physical: 28.3% Sexual: 20.7%
	Clément & Chamberland (2007)	3,148 mothers (Canada)	Psychological aggression: 6.9–75.9%; minor: 2.4–32.7%; severe: 0.3–4.8%
Childhood sexual abuse	Fletcher (2010)	8,851 adolescents	5%
	Rind et al. (1998)	13,704 (24 samples) males; 21,999 (45 samples) females	14% males, 27% females
	Stander et al. (2002)	5,226 females; 5,969 males	3% males; 18% females,
	Pereda et al. (2009)	37,904 males + 63,118 women	7.9% males; 19.7% females
Communicative aggression/ Psychological abuse	Greenwood et al. (2002)	2,881 men who have sex with men	34.0–36.2%
	Follingstad & Edmundson (2010)	614 adults	77% perpetrated; 84% received
Intimate partner violence	Moracco et al. (2007)	1,800 women	23.4% females
	Fletcher (2010)	8,851 adolescents	30%
	Zlotnick et al. (2006)	Subsample of 3,173 women from national sample of 13,017	2.3% without injury, 1.4% with injury
	Reeves & O'Leary-Kelly (2007)	1,550 female; 823 male employees	21.2% males ; 28% females
	Greenwood et al. (2002)	2,881 men who have sex with men	22.0–24.0%

Table 29.1 (continued)

<i>Construct</i>	<i>Source</i>	<i>Sample</i>	<i>Estimate(s)</i>
Intimate partner rape	Breiding et al. (2008); Breiding et al. (2009) Caetano et al. (2008)	70,156 participants 1,136 intact couples	15.9% males; 26.4% females 8% mutual, 4% male-only perpetrated, 2% female-only perpetrated
	Kessler et al. (2001)	3,537 cohabiting or married adults (1,738 men, 1,799 women)	18.4% males; 17.4% females
	Tjaden & Thoennes (1998, 2000)	16,000 adults (8,000 males, 8,000 females)	7% males; 20.4% females
	Tjaden & Thoennes (1998, 2000)	16,000 adults (8,000 males, 8,000 females)	0.2% males; 4.5% females
	Basile (2002)	Subsample of 602 women of a sample of 1,108 adults	13%
	Sexual aggression	Greenwood et al. (2002) Basile et al. (2007)	2,881 men who have sex with men 4,877 females, 4,807 males
Sexual coercion	Reeves & O'Leary-Kelly (2007)	1,550 female; 823 male employees	17.7% women; 0.9% men

assortment of prevalence estimates based on large-scale studies. In sum, the abuse of children ranges from 3 to 20 percent (child neglect: 20 percent; physical abuse: 10 percent; child sexual abuse: 3–27 percent). Incest, including intimate rape, intimate sexual aggression, and sexual coercion, ranges from 0.2 to 18 percent. Intimate partner violence ranges from 4 to 30 percent. Communicative aggression and psychological abuse ranges from 34 to 84 percent. When sex differences are reported, the majority of studies indicate that females are victimized at higher rates than males.

As research progresses, it will be possible to perform cross-sectional and cross-generational meta-analyses on prevalence estimates, which will enable the identification of various operational and theoretical moderators of these estimates. When estimates range from 1 percent to 30 percent and higher, it matters to science and society what the actual rates, and their moderators, are. Despite the need for precision, if these various forms of violence have broader deleterious effects, then even the lowest prevalence estimates indicate that the problem is serious and extensive.

Undesirable Destinations: Effects of Family Violence and Abuse

Research has strongly indicated that various forms of family violence are generally deleterious for most victims (for reviews, see Spitzberg, 2009, 2010). For much of the early stages of research on family violence, a relatively small domain of effects were examined, involving constructs such as depression, anxiety, self-esteem, divorce, post-traumatic stress syndrome (PTSD) and physical injury. As research and theory evolved, a broader typology of effects has been identified. Cupach and Spitzberg (2004) outline several individual level effects, which are all potentially interdependent. *General disturbance* represents diffuse trauma, such as changes in personality, PTSD, or sense of diminished quality of life. *Affective health* refers to emotional forms of trauma, including anger, anxiety, depression, fear, jealousy, and stress. *Cognitive health* includes mental trauma such as confusion, distrust, diminished self-esteem, suicide ideation, and sense of helplessness. *Physical health* effects reflect trauma to immune system, appetite, drug abuse, insomnia, nausea, physical illness, self-injury, and suicide. *Behavioral disturbance* is a category representing disruptions to overt activities, including changing behavioral routines, changing location, and changing work, school, residential, worship, or other activity patterns. *Social health* includes trauma to a victim's relationships with others, such as social isolation, relational cautiousness, and intimacy deterioration. *Resource health* effects represent disruptions of income, career, earning potential, lost time from work, or other forms of resource depletion. *Spiritual health* effects are revealed in the loss of faith, whether in a divine being, a religion, or other social institutions such as marriage, the law, or the justice system. A final set of potential effects has only recently garnered significant scholarly attention: *resilience* effects. Some victims experience some degree of strength, resurgence, renewed sense of self, greater confidence in relationships and family, or general optimism.

Child Adjustment

Children are generally considered the most innocent of victims, and the ones with the longest arc of potential consequences. Research indicates that at the individual developmental level, children who observe family violence are more likely to experience adult anxiety and depression (El-Sheikh, Cummings, Kouros, Elmore-Staton, & Buckhalt, 2008). Children who are the direct recipients of emotional, physical, or sexual abuse appear to have higher adult rates of panic reactions, depressed affect, anxiety, hallucinations, sleep disturbance, severe obesity, multiple somatic symptoms, substance abuse, early intercourse, promiscuity, sexual dissatisfaction, impaired childhood memory, perceived stress, anger management difficulties, and IPV perpetration (Anda et al., 2006). Victims of child sexual abuse also appear more likely to perpetrate sexual abuse as adults (Jespersen, Lalumière, & Seto, 2009), and one study found female victims of CSA were at 25 times greater risk of adult IPV victimization (Vatnar & Bjørkly, 2008). The unique effects of child sexual abuse on adult adjustment, however, appear to be small and confounded with other family dysfunction processes (Rind et al., 1998; Ulrich, Randolph, & Acheson, 2005–6).

Adult Adjustment

The effects of IPV on adults are equally dismal. Communicative aggression victimization as an adult is associated with current poor health, chronic disease, injury, and depression (Coker et al., 2002). Longitudinal research found that IPV victimization was related to

later depression, life satisfaction, self-esteem, and functional impairment for women (Zlotnick, Johnson, & Kohn, 2006). Current partner IPV, sexual violence, psychological aggression, and stalking are also significantly related to PTSD (Basile et al., 2004; Mechanic, Weaver, & Resick, 2008). At the physical level, women IPV victims report higher rates of using disability equipment, activity limitations, cholesterol, cardiovascular disease, joint disease, HIV/STD risk, smoking, heavy or binge alcohol use, and high body mass index; and men IPV victims reported higher rates of using disability equipment, arthritis, asthma, stroke, HIV/STD risk, smoking, and heavy or binge drinking (Black & Breiding, 2008). Of course, IPV is also related to direct physical injury (Tjaden & Thoennes, 1998) and death by partner homicide (Campbell et al., 2003).

Most research to date has been cross-sectional, and attempts to interpret developmental causation have relied heavily on retrospective reports. Many family dysfunctions co-exist and reinforce one another, and factors such as depression can be both a predictor and an outcome of IPV. Longitudinal research that attempts to correct for such methodological problems estimates that cross-sectional effect sizes may be inflated by as much as 20 to 60 percent even though the deleterious effects still appear enduring and significant (Fletcher, 2010).

Under-explored Regions of Violence and Aggression in the Family

Although partner/spousal abuse and parent-to-child abuse are the most researched, other forms of abuse are common and gaining deserved attention. Violence between siblings is in actuality the most common form of family aggression (Strauss & Gelles, 1990). Although sibling aggression may be considered more socially acceptable or even expected, this aggression can have deleterious effects when siblings show a repeated pattern of aggression with intent to harm, humiliate, and defeat (Eriksen & Jensen, 2008). Like abuse in other family relationships, sibling abuse includes psychological, physical, and sexual forms. Prevalence rates vary widely, particularly between measures that objectively assess violent acts (e.g., using the Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS), over 80 percent report psychological abuse and 53 percent report physical abuse) and measures that ask adults whether they label themselves as experiencing sibling violence (15 percent and 11 percent, respectively; Mackey, Fromuth, & Kelly, 2009). Similar effects in other family relationships are reported. For example, those who report experiencing psychological or emotional abuse from a sibling tend to report internalizing problems and lower self-esteem (Kiselica & Morrill-Richards, 2007). Despite these similarities, it is important to keep the unique features of this type of abuse in mind. Siblings use violence for different reasons at different ages (Kiselica & Morrill-Richards, 2007). In addition, siblings may be modeling aggressive interactions they are witnessing or experiencing in the home.

Children can also be abusive toward their parents (child-to-parent violence, CPV). This creates a complex problem given that parents still have the responsibility of caring for their children (Kennair & Mellor, 2007), and parents are not often willing to acknowledge being abused or to seek help (Pagani, Larocque, Vitaro, & Tremblay, 2003). CPV is more prevalent in single-parent families (up to 30 percent) than in two-parent families (up to 18 percent) and when parenting styles are extreme (Kennair & Mellor, 2007). CPV fortunately decreases with the age of the child (Ulman & Straus, 2003) suggesting that, even though they become physically stronger, children rely less on aggressive tactics as they become developmentally more complex. As with other types of abuse,

CPV occurs when there is more stress on the family, when other forms of violence occur in the home, and when children abuse substances.

Another largely hidden form of abuse is elder abuse. Both the abusers and abused tend to conceal the abuse due to shame (Choi & Mayer, 2000). Whereas elder abuse entails the common types (e.g., neglect, psychological, physical), elders are also subject to financial or material exploitation. Common risk factors of victims include older age and impairments or cognitive deficits. Risk factors for perpetrators include dependence on the abused, substance abuse, psychopathology, and caregiving stress or burden (Choi & Mayer, 2000; Lee, 2009; Yan & Tang, 2004). Effects similar to other types of abuse occur such as PTSD, negative emotions, depression as well as financial losses and poorer survival (Bonnie & Wallace, 2003; Choi & Mayer, 2000).

Studies have shown the prevalence of same-sex violence or sexual aggression is similar to heterosexual relationships (Tjaden, Thoennes, & Allison, 1999; Turell, 2000). Despite this, other societal factors may influence the attention to and intervention of aggression in same-sex relationships. For example, male-to-male violence is perceived as less severe and people are less willing to intervene to help victims of such violence (Seelau & Seelau, 2005). Further, victims of same-sex violence are less likely to seek help as well as receive help when they do report it to authorities (Potoczniak, Mourot, Crosbie-Burnett, & Potoczniak, 2003).

Although these types of abuse are largely similar in terms of victim and perpetrator profiles, facilitating factors, and effects, each type of abuse entails unique dynamics that likely require different theoretical explanations as well as different intervention strategies. For example, although power is typically involved in abuse, the power and control dynamics likely differ between sibling violence, CPV, and elder abuse. In addition, common societal views on sibling conflict and same-sex relationships may hamper efforts to treat these forms of aggression. Overall, even though these forms of abuse are not well plotted on the map of family aggression and violence, they are an important dimension of the phenomenon of family violence that impact the relationships therein.

Explaining the Process of Violence and Aggression: Navigational Tools

The study of violence and abuse within intimate relationships is not without structure. Although most of the investigation of this phenomenon focuses on the prevalence and effects such abuse has on individuals, there is a considerable amount of information that seeks to provide an overarching perspective for understanding violence and aggression within various intimate relations. Despite the multitude of different theoretical explanations, many researchers assert that intimate partner violence results from a combination of various biological, psychological, social, contextual, and interactional factors (see Crowell & Burgess, 1996; Little & Kaufman Kantor, 2002).

One way to examine the various theoretical perspectives of violence and abuse in interpersonal relationships is to organize them based on Spitzberg's (1998) Dispositional-Episodic theoretical continuum. Theories of interpersonal violence and aggression can be placed along a continuum from dispositional theories that attempt to identify genetic and evolutionary causes of violent behavior to episodic theories which examine specific contexts or interactional situations where violence is likely to occur (see Figure 29.1). Although all theories provide insights on the causes of violence and abuse (e.g., alcohol abuse, mental illness), we limit our discussion to theories that focus on the communicative or interactive nature of abuse.

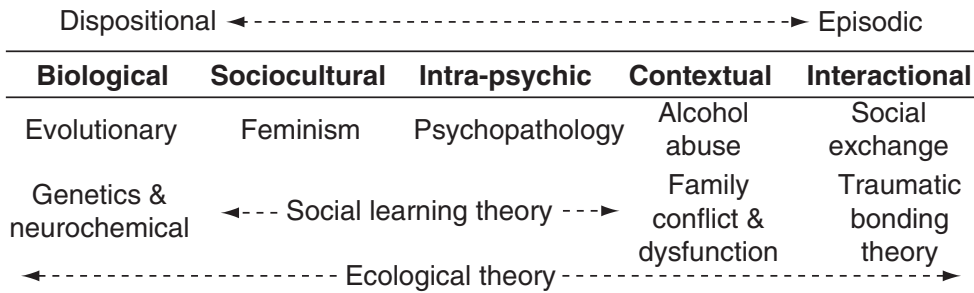


Figure 29.1 Theories of Intimate Partner Violence

Theories of Interpersonal Violence and Aggression

Socio-cultural Theoretical Models

Socio-cultural theories focus on the role of culture and how it socializes individuals in terms of how we think, feel, and behave. These theories include feminist theory and social learning theory.

Feminist theory. From a feminist perspective, violence and aggression toward women is a result of male dominance in the family and society (DeKeseredy, 2011; Johnson, 2011). While feminist theory has been effective at explaining the relationship between gender inequity in society and violence against women (see Graham, Rawlings, & Rimini, 1988), it has received criticism as well. Specifically, researchers have indicated that feminist theory fails to explain instances of female perpetrator–male victimization (Schneider, 1992), child abuse (Ashe & Cahn, 1993), and gay and lesbian domestic violence (Letellier, 1994).

Social learning theory. According to social learning theory (Bandura, 1977), individuals learn how to behave through observation and modeling the attitudes, values, and behaviors of others. When applied to family violence, this theory contends that, as children, individuals learn violence as it is modeled by adults or even social media (e.g., television) and then, in turn, use these learned violent behaviors in adulthood with their own significant others (Mihalic & Elliott, 1997) and children (Feshbach, 1980). Subsequently, this theoretical approach would explain why both men and women experience violence in intimate partner relationships. More specifically, it suggests men batter because they learned violence in their families, and women seek out violent men because they might have experienced or witnessed violence within their home.

Although a considerable amount of research utilizing social learning theory focuses on couple violence, research also indicates intimate partner violence is transmitted through generations. According to the intergenerational transmission of violence hypothesis (see Renner & Slack, 2006), mistreated children are more likely to grow up to become mistreating parents. In support of this, the majority of abusing parents were also found to be abused as children (see Pears & Capaldi, 2001).

Interactional Theoretical Models

Interactional theories of violence and aggression in families focus on the role of communication, both verbal and nonverbal messages, between and among family members. Spitzberg

(1998) suggested “biology, culture, society, cognition, and context become relevant only through interpersonal interaction, and it is the interaction that determines the outcome” (p. 199). Several key interactional theories include traumatic bonding theory, exchange/social control theory, and ecological theory.

Traumatic bonding theory. Dutton and Painter (1993), in their explanation of traumatic bonding theory, suggest that “powerful emotional attachments are seen to develop from two specific features of abusive relationships: power imbalances and intermittent good-bad treatment” (p. 105). Power imbalances are suggested to occur when individuals feel attachment toward a stronger (physical) person, which can result in feelings of power inequality over time. This often results in negative self-appraisal and feelings of being incapable of taking care of oneself. As a result, the individual relies more on the dominant person and develops a dependency. In regard to intermittent good–bad treatment, Dutton and Painter denote that while attachment theory would suggest that bonds are strengthened with consistent good treatment, bad behavior (e.g., physical, verbal, or psychological abuse) intermittently mixed in with good treatment also strengthens the bond between the abuser and the victim. Dutton and Painter further argue that this “paradoxical attachment” is consistent with previous findings indicating strong relationships between abused children and their parents as well as hostages’ positive feelings toward their captors.

Exchange/social control theory. Perhaps the most applicable theoretical model for understanding the role of communication behavior as it relates to violence and aggression in intimate relations is the exchange/social control theory (Gelles, 1982). Gelles proposed two principles that help explain the occurrence of family violence. The first principle, based on exchange theory, is that violence will occur when perpetrators perceive that its rewards outweigh the costs of such violence. According to exchange theory, human behavior is guided by the need to obtain rewards while avoiding costs or punishment. When applied to family violence, Gelles suggests that husbands/fathers might use violence because it equalizes or gains power in the relationship, which is instrumental to goal achievement. The second principle, based on control theory, suggests that violence is utilized when people do not have social controls that restrain their behavior. Specifically, if family members feel that the likelihood of outside intervention (e.g., government, law, or social agencies) is low, violence is more likely to occur.

Ecological model. More and more researchers are utilizing an ecological theoretical perspective or model to examine violence in interpersonal relationships. According to DePanfilis (1998), an ecological model to examining intimate partner violence takes into consideration the interactions among individual, family, community, and societal factors. At the individual level, biological and personality characteristics are considered. At the familial level, parenting styles, parental substance use, and family interactions (e.g., with a specific parent or relatives) are considered. The community level factors in where the family resides as well as the social support that occurs from outside the family structure. Finally, the societal level considers governmental laws that are in place for victims of abuse (e.g., child neglect, maltreatment) (Little & Kaufman Kantor, 2002). Although difficult to examine in one study, an ecological model provides a more comprehensive approach to understanding and explaining violence in families.

Typologies of Intimate Partner Violence

In addition to the theoretical approaches utilized to explain why violence and abuse occur in various familial relations, researchers have derived typologies for understanding intimate

partner violence. Although numerous typologies examining violent couples exist, a close examination of the research indicates considerable overlap in content. Two typologies in particular have received considerable attention across various disciplines: Holtzworth-Munroe and Stuart's (1994) male batterer typology and Johnson's (2008) intimate partner violence typology.

Holtzworth-Munroe and Stuart (1994) focus exclusively on the male as a perpetrator based on claims by researchers such as Hotaling and Sugarman (1986) who assert that the occurrence of violence in intimate relationships hinges on the actions of the male (see Herrera, Wiersma, & Cleveland, 2008). This typology is both theoretically and empirically derived and has been consistently supported by subsequent research (see Dixon & Browne, 2003; Johnson et al., 2006).

According to Holtzworth-Munroe and Stuart (1994), three dimensions distinguish types of male batterers:

- 1 severity (i.e., the frequency and breadth of types of abuse);
- 2 generality (i.e., whether family-only or extrafamilial);
- 3 the abuser's personality disorder or psychopathology.

Based on these three dimensions, male abusers can be distinguished as: (1) family-only, (2) dysphoric/borderline, or (3) generally violent/antisocial. Family-only batterers engage in less severe forms of marital violence, whether it is psychological or sexual in nature, and rarely engage in violence outside of the family or criminal behavior. Dysphoric/borderline batterers exhibit higher levels of marital violence, including psychological and sexual abuse, can be low or moderate in their extrafamilial violence, and may exhibit borderline personality disorder as well as consume alcohol or drugs and experience depression. Finally, generally violent/antisocial batterers tend to exhibit moderate to high levels of marital violence, including psychological and sexual abuse, higher levels of extrafamilial violence, and exhibit antisocial or psychopathic personal disorders. Generally violent/antisocial batterers tend also to be high drug/alcohol consumers but tend to experience little depression.

Unlike Holtzworth-Munroe and Stuart's (1994) exclusive focus on the male as a perpetrator, Johnson's (1995, 2008) approach focuses on both males and females in terms of their violent behavior. Johnson's intimate partner violence typology focuses on individuals' motives for engaging in violence—to control the situation or to control their relational partner. Based on this, Johnson (2006) suggests there are four main types of intimate partner violence. Situational couple violence (SCV) involves a motive to control the situation through various violent tactics (e.g., an argument that escalates). In contrast, if the motive is to control the relational partner, Johnson (2006) suggests this can take one of three forms. Intimate terrorism (IT) is when the perpetrator uses violence to exert control over a relational partner, which is suggested to be perpetuated more by husbands than wives. Violent resistance (VR) focuses on the victim's use of violence in an effort to resist intimate terrorist attempts, which is more likely used by wives. Finally, mutual violent control (MVC) occurs when both relational partners use violence in an attempt to control one another.

Although Johnson (2008) contends that four types of intimate partner violence exist, the majority of research examines differences in IT and SCV. Research has found that IT and SCV differ in terms of: (a) severity, with IT associated with more severe, physical

violence than SCV (Johnson & Leone, 2005; Leone, Johnson, Cohan & Lloyd, 2004); (b) victim outcomes, with IT victims reporting more depression and post-traumatic stress disorders as well as seeking more formal help (Leone, Johnson, & Cohan, 2007); and (c) relational types, with IT more likely to occur in marital relationships and SCV more likely to occur amongst cohabitating couples (Johnson, 2006, 2011). However, it should be noted that Brownridge (2010) found a lack of gender and relational asymmetry in terms of victims who experience SCV and IT.

Overall, examination of the various theoretical models and typologies suggests that no one approach is enough to understand the various factors that influence the occurrence of violence within intimate relationships. As presented in the ecological model, researchers need to consider the layering of various individual, family, community, and societal factors. Future research will need to consider the importance of each of these factors or levels as it contributes to violence so that prevention and intervention efforts can be focused. Finally, it was apparent that although communication and interaction are implicit in some theories (e.g., parenting style, modeling, how power and control are communicated), the role of communication in the process of abuse is rarely emphasized. As such, augmenting theories and models by incorporating the interactive nature of abuse may prove useful in future research.

Correcting the Course: Prevention and Interventions

Although an extensive review of intervention programs is beyond the scope of this chapter, a general description of what is being done to either treat or prevent these types of abuse is warranted. Many types of interventions exist, and they vary in the target (e.g., victim, perpetrator, couple, parents, children, family), structure (e.g., psychoeducation curriculum, cognitive-behavioral therapy, communication and problem-solving skills training, group versus individual sessions), and setting (e.g., in-home, schools or community centers, psychotherapist offices). Few rigorous, empirical evaluations of these programs have been conducted (Foshee, Luz, Reyes, & Wyckoff, 2009; Sullivan, 2006), and unfortunately, the data from these studies suggest the programs have either no impact, or small to moderate effects on the recidivism of abuse (e.g., Babcock, Green, & Robie, 2004; Gondolf, 2011).

To provide a picture of the types of intervention programs, we outline a few examples of the varying approaches that have been subjected to more empirical testing. The Duluth Domestic Abuse Intervention Project (DAIP or Duluth model; Pence & Paymar, 1993) is a common batterer intervention program (BIP) typically mandated by state authorities. It is a feminist-based, psychoeducational program that focuses on men's use of power and control over women. The goals of the program are to change men's attitudes and behaviors toward their partner, and research suggests this program can be effective (Babcock et al., 2004).

One of the more extensively tested child maltreatment programs is parent-child interaction therapy (PCIT). This intervention targets parents who have abused their young children and involves live-coaching, behavioral parent training that focuses on teaching parents to enact relationship enhancing and discipline skills to decrease negative responses and increase positive responses to child behavior (Herschell & McNeil, 2005). Whereas BIPs tend to have more standardized implementation, PCIT is more individualized to each parent. Research to date shows this program holds promise (e.g., Chaffin et al., 2004; Herschell & McNeil, 2005).

In preventing IPV, the Youth Relationship Project (YRP; Wolfe et al., 1996) targets adolescents who have been previously maltreated to prevent abuse in their subsequent

relationships. YRP employs curriculum based on social learning, feminist, and attachment theories. It aims to educate participants about: power and its role in relationship violence, developing skills to build healthy relationships, and seeking help from community resources (Wolfe et al., 1997). Intervention participants indeed reported less frequent and severe abuse than those in a control group over two years (Wolfe et al., 2003).

Despite the lack of rigorous testing and limited effects of intervention programs, most researchers have similar suggestions for the construction and evaluation of abuse intervention programs. Researchers contend more integrated or ecological approaches (e.g., Whitaker et al., 2009; Wolfe et al., 1997) as well as programs that are individualized or tailored to the type of violence (e.g., Babcock, Canady, Graham, & Scharf, 2007; Murphy, Meis, & Eckhardt, 2009) will be more effective. For instance, violence in which partners are mutually aggressive (e.g., situational couple violence; Johnson, 2008) should be treated in a different manner than violence perpetrated by only one partner (Babcock et al., 2007). In terms of evaluation, more rigorous, experimental, and large-scale studies are needed (Sullivan, 2006) that measure the enactment or experience of subsequent abuse rather than the typically assessed outcomes of attitude change, knowledge, or intentions (Foshee et al., 2009; Whitaker et al., 2006).

In addition, coordination among researchers and practitioners is needed. Given the various factors involved in abuse, interdisciplinary approaches in constructing these programs are necessary (e.g., psychologists, social workers, law enforcement, etc.). Specific to the field of communication, as Morgan and Wilson (2005) argue, communication researchers are particularly poised to provide recommendations on the communication involved in treating abuse. Indeed, many of the intervention programs include communication and skills training, and these programs can be enhanced by the work of communication researchers.

Conclusions

The attention family violence and abuse have garnered from researchers, mental health counselors, social organizations, and governmental agencies is a sign of progress. Research has yielded a strong foundation for describing the prevalence and effects of abuse, paths for explaining why abuse occurs, and preliminary methods for combatting abuse. Yet, much of the map of abuse and aggression needs further exploration and clarification. For example, we need to better explicate the *process* of abuse such as how abuse emerges in families and how families change abusive patterns. Additional research could also expand beyond the dyad and assess the systemic dynamics of violence in families. More generally, an ecological approach incorporating multiple levels of factors simultaneously would better elucidate the progression, outcomes, and interventions of abuse in the family context. Furthermore, the differences between families and individuals who experience resilient outcomes, versus those who experience greater trauma, need to be better understood. Although not a simple task, these are the important next steps in understanding and preventing this form of communication that has such deleterious effects on the individual family members and their relationships.

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