

Preventing Intimate Partner Violence

What is intimate partner violence?

Intimate partner violence (IPV) is abuse or aggression that occurs in a romantic relationship. “Intimate partner” refers to both current and former spouses and dating partners. IPV can vary in how often it happens and how severe it is. It can range from one episode of violence that could have lasting impact to chronic and severe episodes over multiple years.

IPV can include any of the following types of behavior:¹

- **Physical violence** is when a person hurts or tries to hurt a partner by hitting, kicking, or using another type of physical force.
- **Sexual violence** is forcing or attempting to force a partner to take part in a sex act, sexual touching, or a non-physical sexual event (e.g., sexting) when the partner does not or cannot consent.
- **Stalking** is a pattern of repeated, unwanted attention and contact by a partner that causes fear or concern for one’s own safety or the safety of someone close to the victim.
- **Psychological aggression** is the use of verbal and non-verbal communication with the intent to harm a partner mentally or emotionally and/or to exert control over a partner.

IPV is connected to other forms of violence and is related to serious health issues and economic consequences. However, IPV and other forms of violence can be prevented.

How big is the problem?

IPV is common. It affects millions of people in the United States each year. Data from CDC’s National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS) indicate:²

- About 41% of women and 26% of men experienced contact sexual violence, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner and reported an intimate partner violence-related impact during their lifetime. Injury, posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) symptoms, concern for safety, fear, needing help from law enforcement, and missing at least one day of work are common impacts reported.
- Over 61 million women and 53 million men have experienced psychological aggression by an intimate partner in their lifetime.

IPV starts early and continues throughout people’s lives. When IPV occurs in adolescence, it is called teen dating violence (TDV). TDV affects millions of U.S. teens each year. About 16 million women and 11 million men who reported experiencing contact sexual violence, physical violence, or stalking by an intimate partner in their lifetime said that they first experienced these forms of violence before the age of 18.² While violence impacts all people in the United States, some individuals and communities experience inequities in risk for violence due to the social and structural conditions in which they live, work and play. Youth from groups that have been marginalized, such as sexual and gender minority youth, are at greater risk of experiencing sexual and physical dating violence.^{3,4}



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