



Veterans and Intimate Partner Violence (IPV): Developing and Implementing a Psychosocial Rehabilitation Approach in the Veterans Health Administration

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Objectives

- Learn about the National Domestic Violence/ Intimate Partner Violence (DV/IPV) Assistance Program
- Understand need for routine screening for IPV
- Learn about trauma informed care for Veterans who use violence
- Examine the role a Community of Practice can play in offering DV/IPV Assistance Program services
- Identify VA and National Resources

DV/IPV Task Force and Plan for Implementation

- In May 2012, VA chartered the DV/IPV Task Force to develop a national program.
- The VHA *Plan for Implementation of the DV/IPV Assistance Program* was finalized December 2013 and includes 14 recommendations.
- Implementation of the plan across the VHA will expand screening, prevention and intervention to Veterans and will strengthen partnerships with community providers/resources.
- Focus is on developing a culture of safety and adopting a holistic, Veteran-centered psychosocial rehabilitation framework to inform all facets of the national DV/IPV assistance program:
 - “Veterans who experience DV/IPV” vs. “Victim” or “Survivor”
 - “Veterans who use DV/IPV” vs. “Batterer” or “Abuser”

Key Actions for Implementation

- Assign Points of Contact (POCs) at Veteran Integrated Service Network (VISN) level.
- Assign local Domestic Violence Coordinators (DVCs) for each Veterans Affairs Medical Center (VAMC).
- Develop a National Awareness/Education Campaign and Communication Plan.
- Develop and deliver training on risk identification and intervention across the VA (including Employee Assistance Program/Employee Health Staff).
- Implement safety assessment/planning and referral process for Veterans who screen positive for experiencing DV/IPV.

Key Actions for Implementation (continued)

- Establish network of national and local community partnerships.
- Partner with a hotline for crisis and prevention calls.
- Implement Veteran-centered services for Veterans who experience DV/IPV.
- Integrate DV/IPV Assistance Program into Workplace Violence Prevention Programs.
- Implement pilot screening and treatment programs for Veterans who use violence.

Current State of DV/IPV Assistance Program

- 45 Domestic Violence Coordinators and 21 IPV Points-of-Contact in 47 facilities (new DVCs are being appointed regularly)
- In FY14: 35 trainings provided to VHA staff and community partners
- Program Pilot scheduled to begin in FY 2015
- National VHA monthly training calls began January 21, 2015

Definitions of Domestic Violence and Intimate Partner Violence

- **Domestic Violence:** Though this term has historically referred to intimate partner violence, it more accurately refers to any violence or abuse that occurs within the “domestic sphere” or “at home,” and may include child abuse, elder abuse, and other types of interpersonal violence (Wallace 2004).
- **Intimate Partner Violence:** “The term intimate partner violence describes physical, sexual, or psychological harm or stalking behavior by a current or former partner that occurs on a continuum of frequency and severity ranging from emotional abuse to chronic, severe battering or even death. It can occur in heterosexual or same-sex relationships and does not require sexual intimacy or cohabitation.” (CDC 2012).

What does DV/IPV look like?

- **Physical violence:**
 - The intentional use of physical force with the potential for causing death, disability, injury, or harm. Examples: Hitting, punching, kicking, use of weapons
- **Sexual violence:**
 - Unwanted sexual activity (threatened, attempted, or completed)
- **Emotional violence:**
 - Trauma caused by acts, threats of acts, or coercive tactics. Includes threatening behavior
- **Stalking:**
 - Repeated pattern of behavior that causes fear. May be in person or virtual by use of technology. Examples: text messages or social media platforms
- **Financial Abuse:**
 - Controlling money, ruining credit

Prevalence of Experiencing IPV

- Among the Women Veteran population, the lifetime prevalence of IPV is 33% (Gerber et al. 2014).
- Among the spouses of Veterans population, the lifetime prevalence of IPV ranges from 13.5% when the Veteran is not experiencing Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) to 33% to 58% when the Veteran is experiencing PTSD (Marshall et al. 2005).

Importance of Screening for Experience of DV/IPV

- Prevalence of DV/IPV
- Impact of DV/IPV on mental and physical health outcomes
 - Mental Health issues: Depression, substance use, suicide (de Boenville 2013)
- Healthcare settings particularly lend themselves to screening for DV/IPV
 - Patients are usually seen individually (de Boenville 2103)
 - Providers can discuss abuse and violence in the context of health care to help patients understand the connection between abuse and their physical/mental health and well-being (de Boenville 2013)
 - Patients believe healthcare providers should screen for DV/IPV (Burge et al 2005)

Women's Veterans Preferences for Screening

- Women Veterans generally support screening for DV/IPV.
- Give Veteran a choice about what, when, to whom, and how to disclose.
- Provide follow-up support.
- Ask permission before documenting IPV in healthcare record.
- Providers should be knowledgeable about VA and community resources.
- Offer a “head-ups” before beginning the screen.
- Avoid clinical terms.
- Be present and “tuned-in.”

Adapted from Iverson et al. (2014)

Barriers / Concerns About Screening

- Is this my business?
- What if the Veteran says yes?
- How do I help the Veteran?
- How do I fix this?

E-HITS Screening Tool

- The DV/IPV Assistance Program recommends use of the E-HITS Screening tool to assess for the presence of DV/IPV. The Tool consists of 5 questions:
 - **H:** Has your partner ever physically hurt you in the past 12 months?
 - **I:** Has your partner ever insulted you in the past 12 months?
 - **T:** Has your partner ever threatened to harm you in the past 12 months?
 - **S:** Has your partner ever screamed or cursed at you in the past 12 months?
 - **Extended:** Has your partner ever forced you to have sexual activities in the past 12 months?
- The Veteran is asked to respond to each of the above questions with one of the following:
 - 1. Never
 - 2. Rarely
 - 3. Sometimes
 - 4. Often
 - 5. Frequently

HITS copyrighted in 2003 by Kevin Sherin MD, MPH. VHA has obtained permission to use EHITS internally for non-profit purposes.

Danger Assessment Inventory Questions

- If a Veteran scores 7 or above on the E-HITS Screen, (or if in the provider's clinical judgment, further inquiry is warranted) a licensed independent provider will follow up with 3 questions from the Danger Assessment Inventory*:
 - Has the violence increased in frequency/severity in the past 6 months?
 - Has s/he ever choked you?
 - Do you believe s/he may kill you?
- Yes =1 / No =0
- A score of 1 or above is positive.
- *Jacquelyn C. Campbell, PhD, RN, FAAN, Copyright 2004 Johns Hopkins University, School of Nursing

SAFER Protocol

- **Screen with E-HITS**
- **Acknowledge and validate**
- **Focus on safety using danger assessment items**
- **Educate**
- **Referral and documentation options**

SAFER Protocol developed by VHA DV/IPV Assistance Program Pilot Project Team.

Treatment & Services for Veterans who experience DV/IPV

- PTSD
- Substance Abuse
- VHA Homeless Services Programs
 - Grant and Per Diem Program
 - Housing and Urban Development-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing
- Community based support groups
- Community based advocacy and legal services agencies
- Domestic Violence Shelters/Safe Houses

Treatment & Services for Veterans who use DV/IPV

- PTSD
- Substance Abuse
- Veterans Justice Outreach
- VHA Pilot Program (Strength at Home)
- Community/Court Ordered Intervention Programs

Pilot Treatment Program for Veterans Who Use Violence

- **Strength at Home “Men’s Program”**
 - Cognitive behavioral, trauma-informed group treatment.
 - Enhancing motivation for change and skill building.
 - Psychoeducation and anger management.

VA Employees Affected by DV/IPV

- The DV/IPV Assistance Program is committed to developing a culture of safety for all members of the VA Community. This includes employees.
- Training for managers and employees about DV/IPV as a workplace issue is being developed.
- The DV/IPV Assistance Program will work closely with Employee Health, the Employee Assistance Program and the Workplace Violence Prevention Program.

Communities of Practice

- “A community of practice is a group of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do, and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly.” (Wenger-Trayner 2014)
- “A community of practice is held together by the ‘learning value’ members find in their interactions. They may perform tasks together, but these tasks do not define the community. It is the ongoing learning that sustains their mutual commitment. Members may come from different organizations or perspectives, but it is their engagement as individual learners that is the most salient aspect of their participation. The trust members develop is based on their ability to learn together: to care about the domain, to respect each other as practitioners, to expose their questions and challenges, and to provide responses that reflect practical experience.” (Wenger-Trayner 2014)

DV/IPV Communities of Practice

- How can a Community of Practice assist us in serving Veterans who experience or use DV/IPV?
 - Relationships and networks.
 - Increase knowledge via case based learning and multi-disciplinary information exchange.
 - Opportunity for reflective practice. (Kings College London 2013).

From: Hennessy, C. et al., (2013). *Toolkit: Developing a Community of Practice*.

Developing a DV/IPV Community of Practice

- Inquire (Who? Purpose? Goals? Vision?).
- Design (Activities/technologies/group processes/roles).
- Prototype (pilot the community of practice with key stakeholders).
- Launch (Roll out the community to a broader audience over time).
- Grow (Collaborative learning and knowledge sharing activities).

From: Cambridge et al., (2005) *Community of Practice Design Guide*.

Key DV/IPV Community of Practice Members

- VA Staff (DVC, VJO, Homeless Program, Mental Health, Women's Health, Primary Care, OEF/OIF/OND, Caregiver Support Program, Health Services Research & Development, VBA Point of Contact)
- Domestic Violence Shelter
- Homeless Shelters
- Community Domestic Violence Counseling Programs
- Supervised Visitation Programs
- Local DV Coalition
- "Batterers" Intervention Programs
- Legal Aid
- Office of District Attorney/State Attorney
- Law Enforcement
- Child Welfare
- State/County Health and Human Services/Entitlements Programs

National Resources

- **Click to Empower** provides online financial empowerment trainings for individuals experiencing DV/IPV: <http://www.clicktoempower.org/>
- **Danger Assessment Inventory:** <http://www.dangerassessment.org/>
- **DomesticShelters.org** national online database of DV/IPV shelters, community based counseling and legal services:
<https://www.domesticshelters.org/>
- **National Coalition Against Domestic Violence:** provides online safety planning tool and links to state coalitions: <http://www.ncadv.org/>
- **National Domestic Violence Hotline** 1-800-799-7233 (SAFE) also lists contact information for State Coalitions and LGBT resources:
<http://www.thehotline.org/>
- **One Love Foundation** download a free relationship assessment/safety planning app from this site: <http://www.joinonelove.org/>

Safety Planning Resources

- Web resources for Safety Planning:
 - <http://www.ncadv.org/protectyourself/SafetyPlan.php>
 - <http://www.safehorizon.org/index/get-help-8/domestic-violence-35/create-a-safety-plan-1.html>
 - <http://www.womenshealth.gov/violence-against-women/get-help-for-violence/safety-planning-for-abusive-situations.html>

Web Links to learn more about DV/IPV

- **Battered Women's Justice Project E-learning Course:**
http://www.bwjp.org/elearning_course.aspx
- **Centers for Disease Control:**
<http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/intimatepartnerviolence/index.html>
- **Futures without Violence:** <http://www.futureswithoutviolence.org/>
- **Motivational Interviewing with Individuals Experiencing IPV:**
 - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P3JUXQ4kkHs&list=PL5A76222400692548&index=2>
 - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lrnkEQRUyJM&index=3&list=PL5A76222400692548>
 - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jxNBQKMW1wg&index=4&list=PL5A76222400692548>

Web Links to learn more about DV/IPV (con'td)

- **Simmons College – School of Social Work Self-Paced Domestic Violence Training:**
<http://www.simmons.edu/ssw/academics/professional/online/domestic-violence-training/index.php>
- **Veterans Affairs – Women Veterans Health Care:**
<http://www.womenshealth.va.gov/WOMENSHEALTH/outreachmaterials/abuseandviolence/intimatepartnerviolence.asp>

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Questions?

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