The COHSAR Approach – measuring a comprehensive multidimensional definition of IPV

Professor Marianne Hester
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Centre for Gender & Violence Research
Frameworks

• Love and intimacy

• Gender and Power

• Modelling incidence and prevalence
COHSAR survey instrument

- Can compare abusive lesbian, gay male or heterosexual relationships – sensitive to sexuality
- Sensitive to gender and power
- Takes into account a range of IPV behaviours
- Addresses context and impact
- Incorporates experiences of abuse from partners and use of such behaviour against partners.
Content – sections on:

• personal demographic information;
• decision making and conflict resolution in own relationship; [Renzetti]
• own experience of negative emotional/ physical/ sexual behaviours including impact; [BCS]
• own use of negative emotional/ physical/ sexual against partner including why did this;
• help-seeking;
• final section – specific question whether respondent had experienced IPVA.
Abuse scales – detailed & nuanced

- Experience of emotional abuse (27 items),
- physical abuse (13 items), and sexual abuse (9 items)
- within the last 12 months and earlier.
- Had they ‘never’, ‘sometimes’ or ‘often’ experienced the behaviour in question; from a current or previous partner, or both.
Abuse scales – validity and reliability

- Three separate scales relating to emotional, physical, and sexual abuse were created,
- A combined scale including the three items was created.

- All were found to be reliable at >.8 using Cronbach’s Alpha.
Impact measure

• Multi-response - 26 possible outcomes.

• Both positive and negative impacts possible:
  Physical and psychological impacts, effects on relationship quality and partner interactions, and questions regarding self-defence or retaliation.
Impact measure

Questions devised to pick up coercive behaviours and types of harm

Questions included:

- Didn’t have an impact
- Made me feel loved/wanted
- Worked harder to make partner happy
- ... As well as physical injury and wide range of emotional impacts
Impact scales

- three scales developed – emotional impact, physical impact, sexual impact

- high degree of Alpha (Cronbach’s Alpha .933 emotional abuse impact, .959 physical abuse impact, .951 sexual abuse impact).
Abuse behaviour and impact

- Higher levels of abuse associated with a greater impact upon respondents.

- Supported by Spearman’s rank correlation between scores on the impact scales and abuse scales for previous 12 months - strong correlations evident between impact and emotional abuse (.503, p<.001), physical abuse (.463, p<.001) and sexual abuse (.432, p<.001).
Abuse, impact & self-definition

• optimal fit between abuse and impact – at about 7 on the x-axis (impacts) and 4 on the y-axis (abuse).

• Respondents self-identified as experiencing IPV if they reported both high levels of abusive behaviour experience and that this had a significant impact upon their lives.

• ..... i.e. impact important
Result

• Individuals in same sex relationships consider and apparently experience combinations of physical, sexual and emotional abuse as having the greatest impact.

• Combinations of abuse are also most closely allied to individuals’ own definitions of IPV.
References


