Chapter 14: Circles of influence

Gendor 101 training materials

Jhpiego is a nonprofit global leader in the creation and delivery of transformative health care solutions that save lives.

In partnership with national governments, health experts and local communities, we build health providers' skills, and we develop systems that save lives now and guarantee healthier futures for women and their families. Our aim is revolutionizing health care for the planet's most disadvantaged people.

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Chapter 14: Circles of influence

Learning objectives

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- Identify the links between gender inequality and intimate partner violence (IPV)

- Explain why IPV is never justified

> **Facilitator note:** This activity should only be completed *after* participants have completed the "What Is Violence?" session.

Time needed

40 minutes

Materials needed

- Link: Circles of Influence Interactive Image

- Ecological Model Jamboard Template

- Participant Handout: Ecological Model of Intimate Partner Violence

- Facilitator Resource: Ecological Model

- Facilitator Resource: Character Statements

Advance preparation

1. Email copies of the Participant Handout: Ecological Model of Intimate Partner Violence to all participants.

2. In the same email, let participants know that this session includes an interactive activity in which roles are assigned in advance, so it is important to let the facilitator know if they are not able to attend.

3. Consider printing relevant Participant Handouts and Facilitator Resources so you may easily reference them during the session.

4. Make a copy of the Ecological Model Jamboard Template.

5. Type up a list of your participants' names (*not* in Excel/Google Sheets, but somewhere where the text can be easily copied and pasted into the Zoom chat). Number each participant 1 through 30. If you have fewer than 30 participants, do not number participants sequentially up until the number of participants in your group. Instead:

   o Make sure numbers 1 and 2 are assigned.

   o Make sure at least 3 numbers within the following sequences are assigned:

      – 3-8

      – 9-23

      – 24-30

Steps

Introduction (1 minute)

Open the activity by stating that gender-based violence (GBV) occurs within a broad social, cultural, economic, and political environment in which factors that drive GBV operate. Explain to participants that this activity will give them the opportunity to explore the various factors that help perpetuate violence, as well as the various levels from which these factors exert their influence.

Factors that perpetuate violence (38 minutes)

1. **Technology Action:** In the chat, post your list of participant names, with each participant's name clearly labeled with a number (numbers distributed as described in "Advance Preparation").

> **Facilitator note:** As participants log on, review your list of participants and their assigned number, and consider who has actually shown up to the session as compared to whom you expected to show up during the session. If some participants are not in attendance, some changes may need to be made to the list before sharing it in the chat.
>
> - Make sure **numbers 1 and 2** are assigned.
> - Make sure at least **3 numbers** within the following sequences are assigned:
>   - 3-8
>   - 9-23
>   - 24-30

2. Explain to participants that, in just a minute, you're going to post a link in the chat. This link will open up an interactive image; everyone will need to have the image open on their own computer or phone in order to complete the rest of the activity.

3. **Technology Action:** Share your screen showing the circles of influence interactive image.

4. Walk through the interactive image. Call participants' attention to the three circles, on top of which are icons of people, each of whom is identified by a number. Each participant should find their number on this interactive image, as identified in the chat. Then, they should click on that numbered person. When they click on their number, a text box will open. Participants should read that statement silently to themselves, and they should keep the text box open on their computer. Participants should not click on any other numbers/icons.

5. Confirm that everyone has received their number and there are no questions.

6. **Technology Action:** Post a link to the circles of influence interactive image in the chat. Stop sharing your screen.
   https://ds8h8s59z0bwt.cloudfront.net/jhpiego/gender/circles%20of%20influence/v1/story.html

7. Give everyone one minute to open the link on their own computer and open their numbered statement.

8. Explain that, now, you will go around the virtual "room" and ask that each participant read their statement. The participant with number 1 will start, and then the group will continue reading all the statements sequentially up until the last number.

9. Note that some numbers may be missing from the list, so participants may want to look back at the list of participants posted in the Zoom chat and make a note of after which participant they will speak.

10. Ask if anyone has any questions. Then request that the participant labeled number 1 reads their statement. Continue until everyone has read their statement. (Spend no more than 8 minutes on steps 1 to 10.)

11. Next, facilitate a 10-minute debrief using the following questions:

    o Which circle do you think has the most influence on Betty and Benja? Why?

    o Are there any circles that do not have an influence on Betty and Benja? Which ones? Why?

    o What does this exercise tell us about community norms?

    o How can this exercise inform our efforts to reduce violence?

12. Next, ask participants to transform their statements into a positive one such that their character takes action to help Betty and/or Benja. Before participants begin this part of the exercise, explain that the positive statement should be one sentence, or a maximum of two sentences. This should not be treated as a role play. Start with the participant who has number 3. After 3 through 30 have transformed their original statements into positive statements, ask Betty and Benja to transform their original statements into positive statements, taking into consideration all of the new positive statements. Make sure that Benja specifically articulates that he should not perpetrate violence and that violence is never justified. (Spend no more than 6 minutes on this step.)

13. Before moving on, explain that the activity was intended to demonstrate factors at various levels that influence individuals' lives. GBV can be perpetrated and perpetuated by any number of actors— intimate partners, family and community members, and the state. However, these individuals can also play a role in preventing GBV. In fact, all individuals in the community can play a role in preventing GBV. Explain that by representing the three circles around the female and male characters, the group recreated an "ecological model."

14. Technology Action: Screen share the ecological model on the Jamboard template.

15. State that researchers developed this model to show how various factors at the individual, relationship, community, and societal levels cause and allow GBV to happen.

16. Explain each of the levels by using the points below:

    o **Individual level:** the two individuals involved in an intimate relationship (woman and man). Individual-level factors contributing to IPV include personality traits, personal experiences, and history of both the people experiencing violence and the perpetrators (e.g., childhood traumas, acceptance of violence as a means of resolving conflict, alcohol abuse, women's unemployment, etc.).

    o **Relationship level:** close social relationships, most importantly those between intimate partners and within families. Relationship-level factors contributing to IPV include poor communication, inequalities in decision-making, etc.

    o **Community level**: the community context in which social relationships exist, including peer groups, schools, workplaces, and neighborhoods. Community-level factors contributing to IPV include social norms supporting wife-beating, emphasis on family privacy, lack of legal or moral sanctions for violence, etc.

    o **Societal level/macrosocial**: larger societal factors that "create an acceptable climate for violence, reduce inhibitions against violence" (Krug et al. 2002, p. 13). Societal-level factors that contribute to IPV include lack of economic rights and entitlements for women, collectivist versus individual cultural orientation, etc.

17. Explain that women bring to their relationships certain personality traits and many experiences from their childhood and adolescence. They partner with men who likewise bring their own personality

traits and personal histories to the relationship. The couple's relationship has its own dynamics, some of which may increase or decrease the risk of abuse, and the relationship is embedded in a household and neighborhood context that affects the potential for violence. In many low-resource settings, this includes the influence of extended family members who interact with the couple in ways that may either increase or lessen the chances of abuse. In turn, both partners engage with various "communities," including those related to work, friendship networks, faith communities, and governance structures. Finally, these various communities are embedded in a macrosystem, which refers to the cultural, economic, and political systems that inform and structure the organization of behavior at lower levels of the social ecology (e.g., community, relationship, and individual) (Heise 2011).

18. Ask participants for examples of factors that perpetuate GBV at each of the four levels.

19. **Technology Action:** As participants share ideas, write them on the Jamboard diagram in the corresponding circle using sticky notes (refer to Participant Handout: Ecological Model of Intimate Partner Violence for additional examples).

20. Explain that the various factors and levels are linked, and that each level influences the others. Emphasize that understanding GBV requires understanding its underlying causes and contributing factors, as well as the dynamics between the individual and the broader environment (e.g. family, community, society). (Spend no more than 10 minutes on steps 13 to 20.)

21. Before ending the session, allow participants 4 minutes to ask questions and/or make comments.

22. Remind participants that they can access the **Participant Handout: Ecological Model of Intimate Partner Violence** from their email.

23. When closing, emphasize that research is ongoing on the causes and risk factors for intimate partner and sexual violence. However, research done by Lori Heise, who initially coined the ecological model for IPV, shows that countries with the most gender-inequitable, patriarchal norms are prone to higher levels of violence.

> **Facilitator note:** The ecological model can sometimes cause debates over how each factor is categorized and what should be considered a factor or not. If that happens, you may emphasize to participants that the model is only intended to demonstrate the various factors influencing GBV, thereby contributing to the design of effective violence prevention interventions.

Closing (1 minute)

End the activity by stating that although the sociocultural and political environment is important for understanding why GBV occurs, it does not excuse it. People, mostly men, still make a choice when they use violence. They need to be held accountable for their decision to use violence and for the suffering they cause. GBV is never justified.

Sources

Adapted from "Circles of Influence" in Raising Voices. 2009. PREP Module of *The Sasa! Activist Kit* Kampala: Raising Voices.
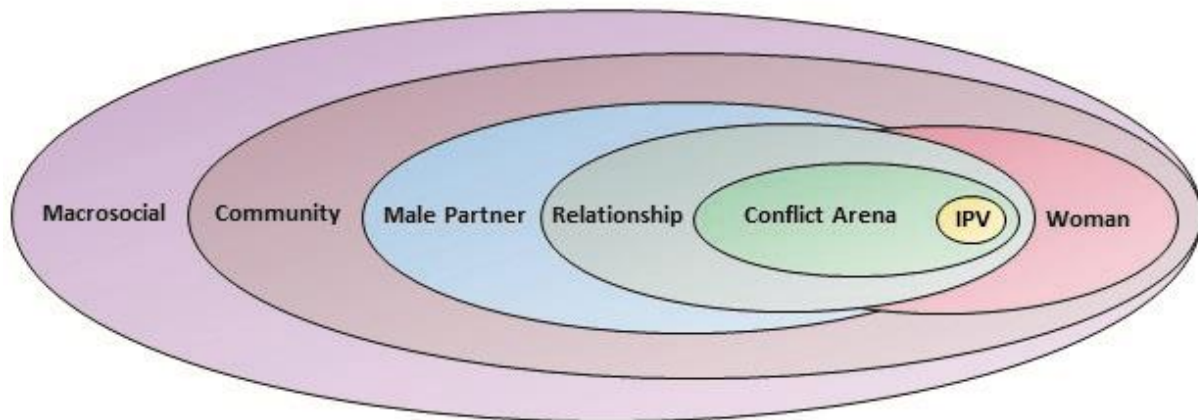
The ACQUIRE Project/EngenderHealth and Promundo. 2008. *Engaging Men and Boys in Gender Transformation: The Group Education Manual.* Session 9.4. New York, NY, and Rio de Jeneiro, Brazil: EngenderHealth and Promundo.

References

- Heise LL. 2011. What Works to Prevent Partner Violence? An Evidence Overview. London, UK: STRIVE.

- Krug EG, Dahlberg LL, Mercy JA, Zwi AB, Lozano R. 2002. World Report on Violence and Health. Geneva: Switzerland: World Health Organization, 13.

Participant handout: Ecological model of intimate partner violence

(*Source:* Heise LL. 2011. *What Works to Prevent Partner Violence? An Evidence Overview*. Figure 1.2 Revised conceptual framework for partner violence, 8. London, UK: STRIVE. https://www.oecd.org/derec/49872444.pdf)

Macrosocial — Community — Male Partner — Relationship — Conflict Arena — IPV — Woman

Gender order	Norms	Violence in childhood	Interaction	Childhood violence
•Lack of economic rights and entitlements for women •Discriminatory family law •Composite measures of gender inequality **Cultural factors** •Collectivist versus individual cultural orientation •Emphasis on women's purity and family honor **Economic factors** •Level of development •Women's access to formal wage employment	•Acceptance of wife beating •Male right to discipline/ control female behavior •Tolerance of harsh physical punishment of children •Stigma for divorced or single women •Norms linking male honor to female purity •Family privacy **Lack of sanctions** •Lack of legal or moral sanction for violence •Others do not intervene **Neighborhood** •Community violence •High unemployment • Low social capital • Poverty	•Harsh physical punishment •Witnessing parental violence •Other childhood traumas •Psychological dysfunction •Antisocial behavior •Adult attachment issues **Attitudes** •Accepting of violence as a means to resolve conflict •Acceptance of partner violence •Gender hierarchical or transitional attitudes **Alcohol abuse** **Gender role conflict** **Delinquent peers** **Sociodemographic** •Young •Low level of education	•Inequality in decision-making •Poor communication •High relationship conflict **Situational triggers** •Sex/infidelity •Money/distrib ution of family resources •Children or in- laws •Division of labor •Male drinking **Patriarchal triggers** •Female challenge to male authority •Failure to meet gender role expectations •Assertions of female autonomy	•Child sexual abuse •Other childhood traumas •Witnessing mother being beaten **Attitudes** •Tolerance of wife beating •Sociodemographic •Young age (for current violence) •High education attainment (protective) **Low social support** **Factors that operate differently in different settings.** •Women's unemployment •Participation in credit schemes or other development programs •Asset ownership

- **Individual level:** the two individuals involved in an intimate relationship (woman and man). Individual-level factors contributing to IPV include the personality traits, personal experiences, and history of both the victims and the perpetrators (e.g., childhood traumas, acceptance of violence as a means of resolving conflict, alcohol abuse, women's unemployment, etc.)

- **Relationship level:** close social relationships, most importantly those between intimate partners and within families. Relationship-level factors contributing to IPV include poor communication, inequality in decision-making, etc.

- **Community level**: the community context in which social relationships exist, including peer groups, schools, workplaces, and neighborhoods. Community-level factors contributing to IPV include social norms supporting wife-beating, emphasis on family privacy, lack of legal or moral sanctions for violence, etc.

- **Societal level/macrosocial**: larger societal factors that "create an acceptable climate for violence, reduce inhibitions against violence" (Krug et al. 2002, p. 13). Societal-level factors that contribute to IPV include lack of economic rights and entitlements for women, collectivist versus individual cultural orientation, etc.

Women bring to their relationships certain personality traits and a host of experiences from their childhood and adolescence. They partner with men who likewise bring personal histories to the relationship. The couple's relationship has its own dynamics, some of which may increase or decrease the risk of abuse, and is embedded in a household and neighborhood context that affects the potential for violence. In many low-resource settings, this includes the influence of extended family members who interact with the couple in ways that may either increase or lessen the chances of abuse. In turn, both partners engage with various "communities," including those related to work, friendship networks, faith, and governance structures. Finally, these various communities are embedded in a macrosystem, which refers to the cultural, economic, and political systems that inform and structure the organization of behavior at lower levels of the social ecology (e.g., community, relationship, and individual) (Heise 2011).

Factors operating at the different levels combine to establish the likelihood of abuse occurring. No single factor is sufficient, or even necessary, for partner violence to occur. There are likely to be different constellations of factors and pathways that may converge to cause abuse under different circumstances. Likewise, the same set of personal history and situational factors (such as abuse in childhood or having too many drinks) may be sufficient to push a particular man toward partner violence in one sociocultural and community setting, but not in another. One can imagine that a man's response to "perceived" provocation may be quite different based on what his expectations are regarding male/female relations; whether his friends, neighbors, and local authorities are likely to find his behavior "acceptable" or shameful; and whether his partner has the social permission and economic means to leave him if he crosses the line (Heise 2011).

References

- Heise LL. 2011. *What Works to Prevent Partner Violence? An Evidence Overview*. London, UK: STRIVE. https://www.oecd.org/derec/49872444.pdf.

- Krug EG, Dahlberg LL, Mercy JA, Zwi AB, Lozano R. 2002. *World Report on Violence and Health. Geneva: Switzerland*: World Health Organization.

Facilitator resource: Ecological model
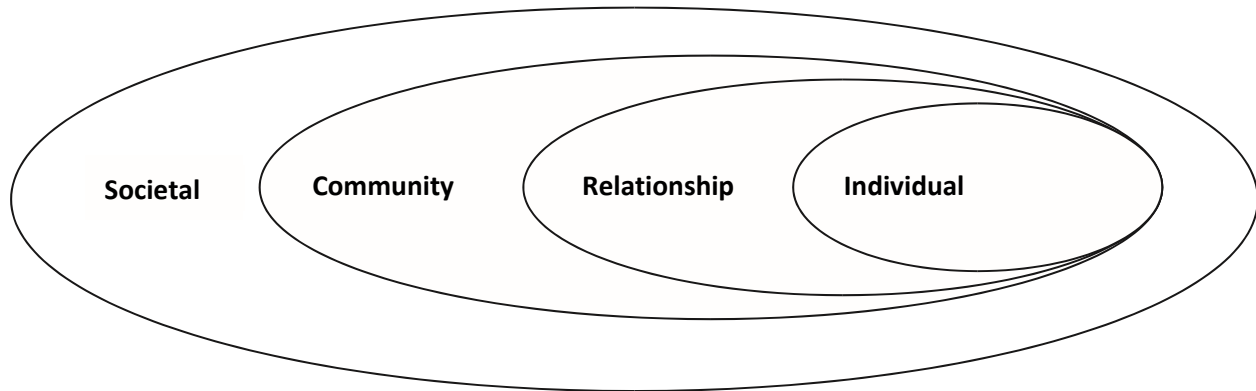
Facilitator resource: Character statements

1. My name is Betty. I am married to Benja. We used to be okay, but nowadays Benja shouts at me a lot and even sometimes hits me. It's especially bad when he's been drinking. I fear him and so do my children. But my mother endured the same fate as well.

2. My name is Benja. I am married to Betty. For some time now, things at home have not been so good. My wife annoys me, and I have no choice but to shout at her. Sometimes I even beat her. I guess this is what happens in marriage.

Level: R

3. I am a relative of Benja's. We were raised knowing that men can discipline women. This is how things should be.

Level: R

4. I am a friend of Benja's. We go to the drinking joint together. I see how you drink and then go home angry. But it is normal for men.

Level: R

5. I am a friend of Betty's. You and I discuss everything. My relationship is similar to yours—men are head of the house, and we have to endure.

Level: R

6. I am Betty's mother-in-law. If you didn't disrespect my son so much, he wouldn't hit you. You are to blame for the violence!

Level: R

7. I am Betty's mother. Your father and I care very much for you, but it would be a disgrace to the family if you were to leave your husband. As a woman, it is important to be patient and tolerant.

Level: R

8. I am Benja's brother. After the seeing the way your wife spoke back to you the last time I came to visit, it is no wonder you punish her. My wife would never speak to me that way!

Level: C

9. I am an elder. You respect me and follow my advice. Men have to make all the decisions for a family.

Level: C

10. I am your neighbor. I hear your fights at night but say nothing. It isn't my business.

Level: C

11. I am an adolescent. I keep silent when I see the violence happening. What can I do?

Level: C

12. I am a priest/imam. I keep silent about violence. God/Allah will take care of things.

Level: C

13. I am a health care provider. I take care of your injuries but don't ask anything. It is not my business.

14. **Level: C** 14. I am a food seller. I see her bruises but keep silent.

Level: C

15. I am a police officer. Men sometimes can't avoid using some small violence at home. It is a domestic issue.

Level: C

16. I am a farmer. I think a woman is not equal to a man. A woman should obey her husband.

Level: C

17. I am a taxi driver. I think violence should be used against a woman once in a while. Otherwise women start thinking they can do anything.

Level: C

18. I am a market seller. Women and men are not equal. If a man wants to show that he has more power, then that is a woman's fate.

Level: C

19. I am a local leader. Violence in relationships is a domestic issue. I don't have time for it!

Level: C

20. I am a pharmacist. You buy things from me, and ask for my advice. I think women must be patient and endure.

Level: C

21. I am a teacher. Making jokes about girls is just for fun; it doesn't do any harm.

Level: C

22. I am your doctor. I advise you on many issues but don't see how violence and HIV/AIDS are connected.

Level: C

23. I am a social welfare officer. I see violence in the community but I mostly focus on children, as violence between women and men is pretty normal.

Level: S

24. I am a judge. Sometimes women file cases just for simple violence. I dismiss the cases.

Level: S

25. I am a parliamentarian. There are no laws in my country specifically about domestic violence. That's a private matter!

Level: S

26. I am a donor. I fund AIDS prevention programs in Africa. I only fund ABC programs. They're the best!

Level: S

27. I am a radio announcer. You hear my messages every day. We joke about women and violence. What's the harm?!

28. I am a United Nations official. I monitor countries' progress on international conventions, but I don't see the connection between violence against women and HIV/AIDS.

29. I am a minister of health. I decide which services are available at the health centers. Women's rights issues don't belong in clinics. We prescribe drugs!

30. I am a newspaper editor. I show promiscuous photos of women in my paper, because it sells!