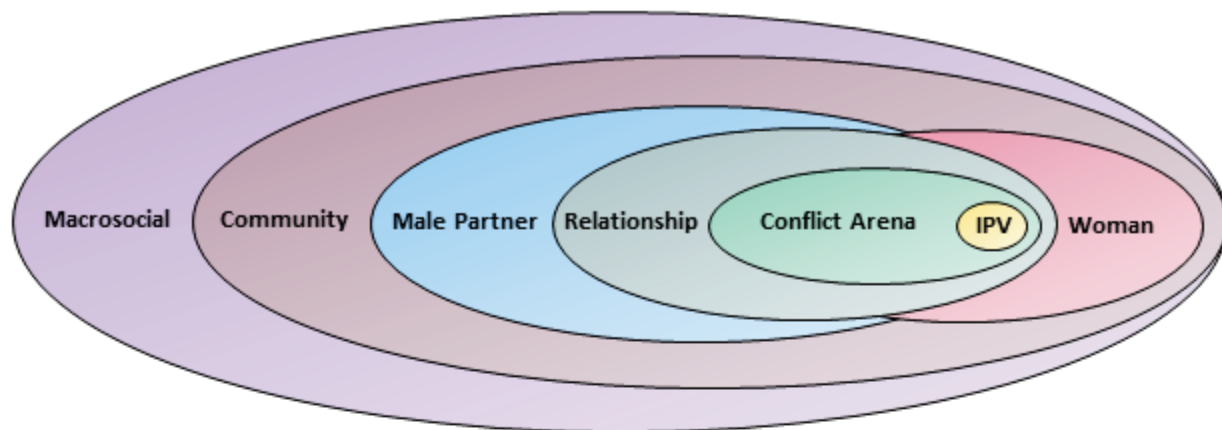


## Participant Handout: Ecological Model of Intimate Partner Violence

(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>)



- Gender order**
- 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

- Norms**
- 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

- Violence in childhood**
- 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

- Interaction**
- Inequality in decision-making
  - Poor communication
  - High relationship conflict
- Situational triggers**
- Sex/infidelity
  - Money/distribution 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

- Childhood violence**
- 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.