

Typology of Domestic Violence Couples

Type I: Acute, Situationally Reactive Violence Directed to Partner Only

- Violence is acute, situationally reactive, and only occurs within couple relationship. Does not follow a typical cyclical pattern
- Perpetrator often alarmed and appalled by his loss of control and feels genuine guilt at having injured someone else, particularly someone he loves.
- Able to verbalize and consciously tolerate guilt feelings without retaliating against his partner.
- Violence occurs at a particular juncture in the relationship and reflects the man's failure to master a developmental stage or to cope with external life stressors.

Type II: Cyclical Violent Affective Storms Directed to Partner and Family (Impulsive/Undercontrolled – Borderline)

- Perpetrator's violence is chronic, cyclical, and expressive of his affective storms, directed primarily toward family members.
- Violence is egosyntonic, limited capacity to accept responsibility for his actions.
- See his partner as withholding, controlling, manipulative and after a violent episode experiences remorse, not guilt.
- Struggles with chronic negative feeling states, including depression, anxiety, frustration, rage, jealousy, envy, fear, and shame, and batters his partner in an attempt to coerce her into restoring his elusive feelings of well-being.

Type III: Habitual Instrumental Violence Directed to Partner and Others (Instrumental/Undercontrolled – Antisocial/sociopathic/narcissistic)

- Perpetrator habitually uses violence in order to intimidate and control. Violent and intimidating toward any frustrating person. Often history of involvement with criminal justice system.

Type IV: Acute or Chronic Secondary Violence Directed to Partner and Others

- Perpetrator suffering from a severe mental disorder (paranoid schizophrenia or manic-depressive disorder) or a drug or alcohol addiction.
- Violent incidents are often impulsive, spontaneous reactions to immediate frustrations and do not emanate from the ongoing interpersonal dynamics of the relationship.