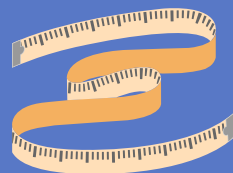


When working with families from African Caribbean Black (ACB) communities, family support workers should consider emotional support needs of family members and try to involve trusted community members who share a similar background to those experiencing IPV.

Family support workers require training and collaboration with ACB community-based organizations and leaders to create culturally-informed services.

Approaches must understand intersectional factors and not be one-size-fits-all.



Service providers must understand barriers to seeking help in order to provide proactive support. Finally, cultural strengths and coping mechanisms must be legitimized in the process of devising strategies.

⁴Yoo, J. A. (2014). Racial variations in the link between domestic violence and children's behavioral outcomes. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 44, 90-99. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chidyouth.2014.06.001>

For more information on this project please visit our website:

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Parenting

Intimate Partner Violence



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IPV, children, and parent-child relationships

On the surface, it might seem that Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) is a problem faced primarily by the couple involved in the conflict, with consequences only for them. However, it is vital to remember that children often occupy the same domestic spaces as the couple experiencing violence. As such, these children, and the parent-child relationships in these spaces are deeply impacted by the presence of IPV in the family, not just in the short-term but over the long term too. Thus, IPV can become a multigenerational problem unless these complexities are recognized and handled effectively by formal and informal providers of family supports.

The relationship between IPV and the parenting experience is often a two-way street. For instance, conflicts and issues with children, as well as disagreements between couples on matters of child-rearing can be stressors that contribute to IPV down the road. The broader community is not shielded from this impact. Once IPV occurs, its implications for children and their parents can be even more detrimental. Exposure to IPV can lead to the involvement of child welfare services, and potentially to the removal of the child from the home. This is one of the biggest fears of immigrants who are

experiencing IPV and often discourages them from seeking formal support. Black Canadian children and youth are far more likely to be investigated for exposure to IPV than white children, leading to their over-representation in the welfare system¹. Children are also far more likely to be transferred to the welfare system when their parents are employed part-time or receive social assistance².

Particularly in women, IPV causes mental health issues such as depression and anxiety in survivors, in turn affecting the quality of their parenting and leading to behavioural issues in children. Children learn from modeled behaviours: research shows that witnessing violence between parents leads to children responding with violence. Witnessing verbal IPV can cause children to direct verbal violence towards both parents. However, witnessing physical IPV often results in children directing physical violence largely towards the mother, not their fathers³. Finally, children exposed to IPV often have issues in sleeping, eating, mental health, academic challenges, irritability, aggression, and reduced conflict resolution skills.

¹Antwi-Boasiako, K., Fallon, B., King, B., Trocmé, N., & Fluke, J. (2021). Examining decision-making tools and child welfare involvement among Black families in Ontario, Canada. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 126(106048), 106048. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chilyouth.2021.106048>

²King, B., Fallon, B., Filippelli, J., Black, T., & O'Connor, C. (2018). Troubled teens and challenged caregivers: Characteristics associated with the decision to provide child welfare services to adolescents in Ontario, Canada. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 87, 205–215. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chilyouth.2018.02.037>

³Lyons, J., Bell, T., Fréchette, S., & Romano, E. (2015). Child-to-parent violence: Frequency and family correlates. *Journal of Family Violence*, 30(6), 729–742. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10896-015-9716-8>

*Most of the research on children in the welfare system is based in Ontario; there is limited to no research available for other Canadian provinces.

WHAT CAN WE DO?

Child welfare workers may have unique perspectives of IPV and must be included in the formulation of interventions.

Family support workers across sectors should work together with culturally appropriate services in the community in cases where children may have been exposed to IPV.

Family support workers must be trained to use a macroscopic view, to see IPV not as a problem of one family, but as one that requires the active input and involvement of the broader community. The "rescue and prosecute" approach often used in Western contexts ("saving" women by arresting and prosecuting men who have caused harm) may not work for everyone. Involving trusted community leaders may allow for nuanced understandings and solutions that take into account complex issues of immigration, shifting in family dynamics (i.e. parenting, finances, etc.), and potential fear of police involvement.