

Interpretation:

The Importance of Language in Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault

Frankfort, Kentucky
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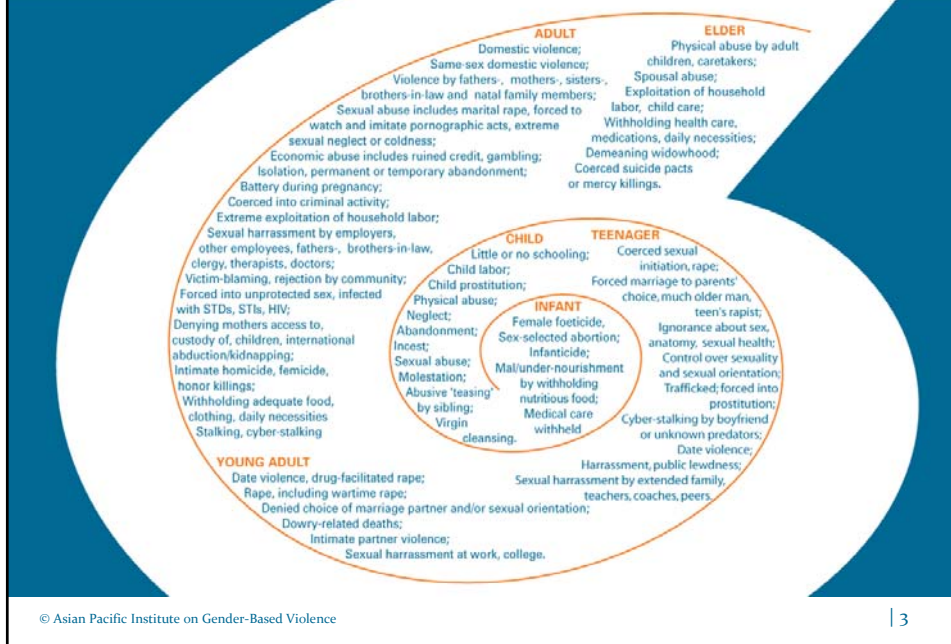


Learning Objectives

As a result of this segment, you will be able to:

- ▶ Learn how victim experiences can affect interpretation
- ▶ Articulate the dynamics of domestic violence in English and the target language
- ▶ Assess how the language of sexual violence impacts a victim's story

Lifetime Spiral of Gender Violence



What is Domestic Violence

How do you define domestic violence?

Is there a term for it in other languages?

Domestic violence is also called:

- ▶ Spousal abuse
- ▶ Intimate partner violence
- ▶ Dating violence
- ▶ Family violence

What constitutes domestic violence?

Domestic Violence

Domestic violence is a systematic pattern of behaviors that include physical battering, economic abuse, emotional abuse, and/or sexual violence. It is intended to gain or maintain **power and control** over a romantic or intimate partner to intimidate, frighten, terrorize, humiliate, blame, or injure.

Domestic violence is not couples conflict.

Domestic Violence Includes Coercive Control

Coercive control are abuses marked by their “routine” nature to establish fear, dependence, domination.

It’s about creating condition in which one’s world becomes very small.

You feel like you have no control over your own life, and can even lose a sense of who you are.

Domestic Violence Creates a Climate of Fear

Domestic violence is more than a series of violent incidents on an identifiable cycle. It is about living in a climate of fear and disempowering restrictions that threaten and affect one's selfhood, psychological well-being, health, economic independence, and emotional availability for parenting.

Vocabulary of Domestic Violence

How do you convey domestic violence in your target language?

- ▶ Does it include the concepts of physical, emotional, verbal, or economic abuse?
 - Name calling
 - Isolation
 - Pulling hair
 - Stalking
 - Intimidation
- ▶ Does it include intimate partner violence and family violence?
- ▶ Does it distinguish between genders?

Victim or Survivor

What do you think of each term?

Victim

Survivor

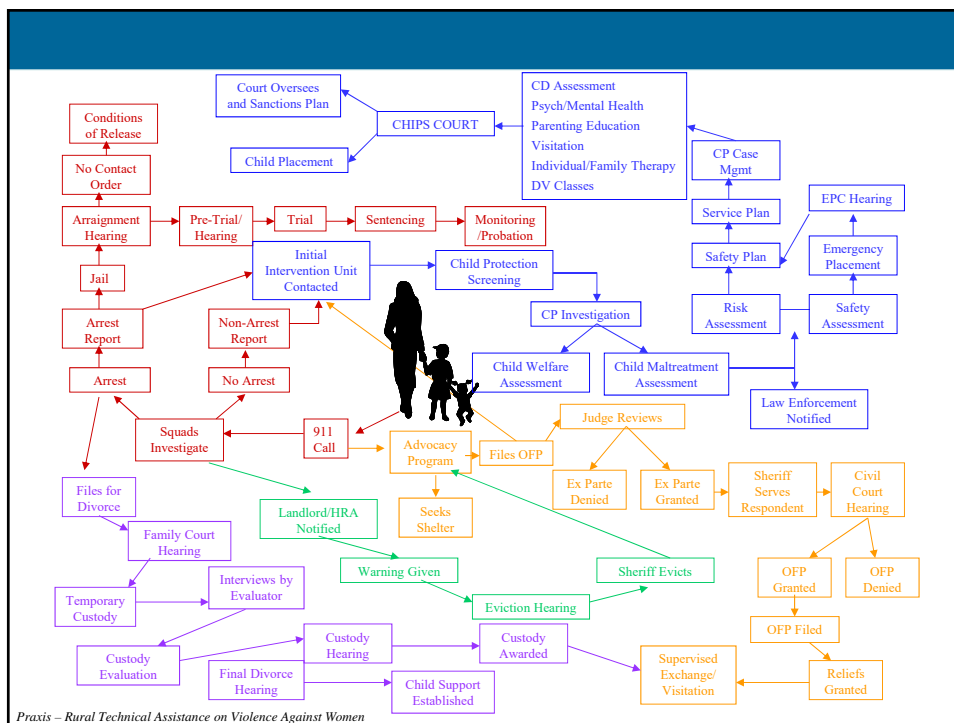
Power and Control Wheel



Group Exercise

Provide examples for the following:

- ▶ Economic abuse
- ▶ Emotional abuse
- ▶ Physical abuse
- ▶ Technology abuse
- ▶ Sexual abuse
- ▶ Immigration status



Points of Contact

- ▶ Police calls/interventions
- ▶ EMT calls
- ▶ Hospital admissions
- ▶ Medical exams
- ▶ Legal services
- ▶ In-custody interviews
- ▶ Court support services
- ▶ Caseworker appointments
- ▶ Anger management
- ▶ Counseling
- ▶ Family therapy
- ▶ Psychotherapy

Sexual Violence

Sexual violence is defined as any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, unwanted sexual comments or advances, or acts to traffic, or otherwise directed against a person's sexuality using coercion, by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim, in any setting, including but not limited to home and work.

- Who Report 2002

Interpreting Sexual Violence

1. Language shaping responses
 - a. Seduced vs. raped
 - b. Victim blaming
 - c. Using consensual language to describe assaultive acts
 - d. Portraying violence

2. Interpretation
 - a. Ensuring accurate interpretation
 - b. Preserving the story

Considerations When Interpreting for Victims of Sexual Violence

Understanding Interpreter Discomfort

1. Interpreter discomfort is a significant barrier to addressing battered women's experiences of, or vulnerabilities to sexual violence.

2. It is important to assess one's own misconceptions, stereotypes, and projections about sexual violence, e.g., make-up sex after a violent incident.

3. Sexual assault victims are affected by the levels of interpreter discomfort; and this can lead to non disclosure of sexual violence history.

Victim Blaming

- ▶ Most of the attention is negatively focused on the abused
 - Is she being truthful?
 - Why was she there in the first place?
 - She should have known better.

- ▶ Attention to the perpetrator is met with a lot of resistance
 - “There are two sides to every story”
 - Future of the perpetrator is ruined – indicating he has high prospects
 - Background of the perpetrator vs. victim

<http://www.deaf-hope.org/project/victim-blaming/>

Language: Vocabulary, Terms, and Interpretation

What is your reaction when you see the following words?

Rape
Coerced Sex
Non-Consensual Sex
Marital Rape
Statutory Rape
Intercourse
Date Rape

Language: Vocabulary, Terms, and Interpretation

What are the meanings and connotations expressed in the following questions?

“Did you want to have sex?”

vs.

“Did he force himself on you?”

vs.

“Did you have to go with him?”

And in the answer:

“I went with him”

(...because he threatened to rape my younger sister if I didn't)

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Language and Sexual Violence | 19

Anatomical Vocabulary

Level of comfort and/or knowledge of anatomy, naming parts of the body and/or using anatomical terms affect interpreters' ability to interpret accurately.

- ▶ Establish if words, gestures, or illustrations will be used
- ▶ Do not hide behind formal or clinical terms for body parts because of interpreter discomfort
- ▶ Be aware of cultural taboos for naming body parts
- ▶ Accuracy is achieved by maintaining the LEP register

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Vocabulary, Terms, and Interpretation | 20

Language: Vocabulary, Terms, and Interpretation

Acknowledge areas of ignorance or gaps in knowledge and learn how to address them with a victim or get staff support. For example, acts of sex or sexual assault can be described using terms that are unfamiliar to the interpreter (in English or another language).

Interpreting Violence

1. Alleged
2. Terms that may indicate consensual activity or minimize attack – pushing, slapping, hugging, holding, massaging, fondling, foreplay, or sexual intercourse
3. Speech that would imply the victim was responsible for the act on the victim rather than the perpetrator
4. Suspect/Perpetrator
5. Active vs. Passive Voice

Rape or “Seduced:” How Language Shape Our Response to Sexual Violence.” National Education Program. Legal Momentum (2013).

Interpreters' Own Reactions, Experiences, and Vulnerabilities

We all have reactions, vulnerabilities, and negative experiences that affect our professionalism.

Preparation can include:

1. Identifying our range of reactions and feelings: understanding how these may be rooted in our own personal experiences and/or (buried) family histories.
2. Knowing our trauma triggers: practicing not to be triggered.

Interpreters' Own Reactions, Experiences, and Vulnerabilities

3. Identifying strategies to cope with physical/psychological reactions such as:
 - Disassociation
 - Traumatic flashbacks
 - Disbelief
 - Anger, rage
 - Fascination
 - Feeling fearful of the perpetrator, or
 - Feeling disgusted by the details of the story

Batterers & the Exercise of Language Privilege

Batterers/Perpetrators can use their English speaking skills and are able to navigate through the cumbersome legal system and undermine their victim.

How does this impact victims?

- ▶ Batterers may use the court system to continue to harass the victim even after leaving the relationship
- ▶ Batterers may seem more credible → victim in an environment where nobody believes him or her, this may impact how they will interact with others
- ▶ In some communities, batterers may use their language privilege to isolate assistance from other members of the community

Advocate vs. Interpreter

1. Role of an advocate
2. Victim with LEP – role confusion
 - Pre-session to re-affirm roles
 - **Scenario Question:** Suppose the victim with LEP tells you something and then says “don’t say anything to the advocate.” You go ahead and interpret as part of following the code of ethics. The victim with LEP is livid and begins screaming and calling you names. What would be the suggested course of action?
3. Medical vs. legal interpretation
4. Attorney & interpreter relationships

The Language of Violence:

Exercise

1. Partner up by language group.
2. Begin translating the 20 words identified by trainers into your target language.
3. If you have time, work through the words on the 100 Verbs of Violence handout.
4. Report back.

Resources

1. National Judicial Education Program Sexual Assault Training
 - a. <http://www.legalmomentum.org/raped-or-seduced-how-language-helps-shape-our-response-sexual-violence>
 - b. Raped or “Seduced:” How Language Helps Shape Our Responses to Sexual Violence
2. Asian Pacific Institute on Gender-Based Violence
 - a. Lifetime Spiral: <http://www.api-gbv.org/violence/lifetime-spiral.php>
 - b. Language Access: <http://www.api-gbv.org/organizing/interpretation.php>

For further questions, please contact us at:
info@api-gbv.org

