

Ninth Edition

Family Violence

Legal, Medical, and Social Perspectives

Harvey Wallace, Cliff Roberson, and Julie L. Globokar



Family Violence

Family Violence: Legal, Medical, and Social Perspectives examines the entire spectrum of family violence, focusing on social processes and social relationships.

The Ninth Edition of *Family Violence* is a comprehensive updated version of the classic text on family violence. In addition to the updates to each chapter, the new edition features new research, comments, and discussions on the #MeToo Movement, same gender couples, elder abuse, stalking, partner abuse, and law enforcement's updated responses to these incidents. The new edition, however, still retains the coverage of the seminal research studies that are the bases of popular theories on partner and family violence. In the new edition, the authors have sought to make the material more understandable to the readers so that instructors will not need to waste valuable class time explaining the text.

Harvey Wallace (1944–2007) was a Professor in the Criminology Department, California State University, Fresno. He served as Chairman of the Department of Criminology. During his tenure as Chairman, the department embarked on a number of innovative programs. He was the Associate Dean for the College of Social Sciences at California State University, Fresno from 2003 to 2005. Professor Wallace received a Juris Doctorate Degree from California Western School of Law, an MPA from Golden Gate University and a BS in Criminology from California State University, Fresno. He was considered a subject matter expert by the U.S. Department of Justice in Family Violence and Victimology. He was the author or co-author of nine college texts and has been published in a number of refereed and scholarly journals, as well as presenting his research at a variety of international and national conferences. Professor Wallace was an attorney licensed to practice law in the State of California and his professional experience included appointment as the City Attorney of the City of Fresno, service as the County Counsel for the County of Butte, private practice in a media law firm and experience as a Deputy District Attorney in San Diego, California. In 2008, the Northern California Mock Trial Regional was renamed the Harvey Wallace Northern California Mock Trial Regional in his memory.

Cliff Roberson LLM, Ph.D., is an Emeritus Professor of Criminal Justice at Washburn University, Topeka, Kansas and a retired Professor of Criminology at California State University, Fresno, California. Dr. Roberson's non-academic experience includes U.S. Marine Corps service as an infantry officer, trial and defense counsel, and military judge as a marine judge advocate, and Director of the Military Law Branch, U.S. Marine Corps. He has authored or co-authored numerous books and texts on legal subjects and victims' issues. His previous academic experiences include Associate Vice-President for Academic Affairs, Arkansas Tech University; Dean of Arts and Sciences, University of Houston, Victoria; Director of Programs, National College of District Attorneys; Professor of Criminology and Director of Justice Center, California State University, Fresno; and Assistant Professor of Criminal Justice, St. Edwards University. Other legal employment experiences include Trial Supervisor, Office of State Counsel for Offenders, Texas Board of Criminal Justice and judge *pro tem* in the California courts.

Julie L. Globokar Ph.D., is an Associate Professor at the Sociology Department of Concordia University-Chicago in River Forest, Illinois. Dr. Globokar earned her Ph.D. in Criminology, Law, and Justice from the University of Illinois at Chicago. Her academic work centers on the contextual and historical factors that shape responses to crime, including victim services, probation, and gang policy. Her publications include co-authored works on topics such as domestic violence, victim advocacy, and victim experiences in the *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, *British Journal of Criminology*, *International Review of Victimology*, and *Law Enforcement Executive Forum*. Dr. Globokar is involved in anti-violence work in Chicago, particularly as chairperson of the board for Boxing Out Negativity, a program on the city's West side that empowers at-risk youth ages 8–17 to realize the best within themselves.

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LEGAL, MEDICAL, AND SOCIAL PERSPECTIVES

Harvey Wallace
Cliff Roberson
Julie L. Globokar

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CONTENTS

Foreword xi

Preface xiii

Acknowledgments xv

Chapter 1 Characteristics and Consequences of Family Violence 1

Chapter Objectives 1

Detailed Look at What You Should Know About Family
Violence 1

Introduction 3

Definition 5

Controversies in Family Violence 7

Nature and Scope of the Problem 8

Other Sources of Data on Family Violence 8

Factors that Contribute to Family Violence 15

Intergenerational Transmission of Violence Theory 27

Consequences of Family Violence 30

Mental Consequences 34

Financial Consequences 38

Summary 40 • Family Violence-Related Web Links 41 •

Key Terms 43 • Discussion Questions 44 •

Suggested Readings 44

Chapter 2 Intimate Partner Abuse and Relationship Violence 50

Chapter Objectives 50

Detailed Look at What You Should Know About Intimate
Partner Abuse and Relationship Violence 50

Introduction 52

Partner Abuse 53

Rule of Thumb 53

Definition 55

Extent of the Problem 56

Same Sex Partner Abuse 58

Theories of Partner Abuse 59

Characteristics of Partner Abuse 63

Types of Partner Abuse 72

Family Violence by Police Officers 76
Homicide and Self-Defense 79
Same Sex Partner Violence 86
Nature and Scope of the Problem 89
Legal and Judicial Responses 91
Intervention Issues 94
Mental Health and Disability Issues 96
*Summary 97 • Key Terms 98 • Discussion Questions
98 • Suggested Readings 99*

**Chapter 3 The Criminal Justice Response to Intimate Partner Abuse
and Relationship Violence 107**

Chapter Objectives 107
Detailed Look at What You Should Know About the
Criminal Justice Response to Intimate Partner
Abuse and Relationship Violence 107
Introduction 109
Extent of the Problem 110
Factors Affecting Police Response 112
Arrest and Other Alternatives 114
Restraining Orders 125
Courts and Partner Assault 129
*Summary 137 • Key Terms 137 • Discussion Questions
138 • Practical Application 138 • Suggested
Readings 138*

Chapter 4 Elder Abuse 143

Chapter Objectives 143
Detailed Look at What You Should Know About
Elder Abuse 143
Introduction 144
Definition 148
Extent of the Problem 151
Types of Elder Abuse 155
Theories of Elder Abuse 159
Reporting and Intervention 162
*Summary 174 • Key Terms 175 • Discussion
Questions 175 • Suggested Readings 175*

Chapter 5	Physical Child Abuse	180
	Chapter Objectives	180
	Detailed Look at What You Should Know About Child Abuse	180
	Introduction	181
	Definition	184
	Extent of the Problem	185
	Historical View of Child Abuse	186
	Abusers and the Abused	190
	Indications of Physical Child Abuse	194
	Bruises	197
	Burns	199
	Munchausen Syndrome by Proxy	202
	Fractures	207
	Head and Internal Injuries	210
	Child Homicide	216
	Parricide	218
	<i>Summary</i>	<i>221 • Key Terms 221 • Discussion</i>
	<i>Questions</i>	<i>222 • Suggested Readings 222</i>
Chapter 6	Child Sexual Abuse	227
	Chapter Objectives	227
	Detailed Look at What You Should Know About Child Sexual Abuse	227
	Introduction	228
	Definitions	230
	Abuser and the Abused	230
	Indications of Sexual Abuse	236
	Sexual Abuse	242
	<i>Summary</i>	<i>250 • Key Terms 251 • Discussion</i>
	<i>Questions</i>	<i>251 • Suggested Readings 252</i>
Chapter 7	Child Neglect	256
	Chapter Objectives	256
	Detailed Look at What You Should Know About Child Neglect	256
	Introduction	257
	Definition	258
	Causes of Neglect	259
	Indications of Child Neglect	263

Failure-To-Thrive Syndrome 263
Emotional Neglect 266
Other Types of Child Neglect 270
*Summary 278 • Key Terms 279 • Discussion
Questions 279 • Suggested Readings 280*

Chapter 8 Sibling Abuse 284

Chapter Objectives 284
Detailed Look at What You Should Know About
Sibling Abuse 284
Introduction 285
Extent of the Problem 286
Definition 288
Siblings as Perpetrators 289
Serial Abuse of Siblings 292
*Summary 297 • Key Terms 297 • Discussion
Questions 297 • Suggested Readings 298*

Chapter 9 Child Exploitation 300

Chapter Objectives 300
Detailed Look at What You Should Know About Child
Exploitation 300
Introduction 302
Technology and the Exploitation of Children 303
Definitions 305
Nature and Scope of the Problem 306
Types of Child Exploitation 307
Traffickers and Users 315
Factors that Contribute to Child Exploitation 316
Consequences of Trafficking 323
Uniform Laws on Trafficking 324
*Summary 331 • Key Terms 332 • Discussion
Questions 332 • Suggested Readings 332*

Chapter 10 Special Issues in Child Abuse and Trauma 336

Chapter Objectives 336
Detailed Look at What You Should Know About
Special Issues Concerning Child Abuse 336
Introduction 337
Historical Background 338

	Definition	341
	Types of Ritualistic Abuse	343
	Responding to Ritualistic Abuse	347
	Observing Violence	356
	Arrest and Incarceration of Parents	358
	<i>Summary</i>	360 • <i>Key Terms</i> 360 • <i>Discussion</i>
	<i>Questions</i>	361 • <i>Suggested Readings</i> 361
Chapter 11	Professionals and Their Responses to Child Abuse	365
	Chapter Objectives	365
	Detailed Look at What You Should Know About Professionals and Their Response to Child Abuse	365
	Introduction	367
	National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS)	367
	Reporting	369
	Sex Offender Community Notification (Megan's Law)	372
	Interviewing	376
	Intervention	389
	<i>Summary</i>	402 • <i>Key Terms</i> 403 • <i>Discussion</i>
	<i>Questions</i>	403 • <i>Suggested Readings</i> 404
Chapter 12	Special Populations and Family Violence	407
	Chapter Objectives	407
	Detailed Look at What You Should Know About Special Populations and Family Violence	407
	Victims with HIV/AIDS	408
	Victims with Disabilities	414
	Family Violence in the Military	421
	Mental Issues and Domestic Abuse	432
	Rural Victims	438
	Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Disorder (FASD)	440
	<i>Summary</i>	442 • <i>Key Terms</i> 442 • <i>Discussion</i>
	<i>Questions</i>	443 • <i>Suggested Readings</i> 443
Chapter 13	Sexual Violence	447
	Chapter Objectives	447
	Detailed Look at What You Should Know About Sexual Violence	447

Introduction 449
Definition 451
Extent of the Problem 453
Theories on Sexual Violence 456
Stranger Rape 462
Marital and Acquaintance Rape 467
Sexual Harassment 474
*Summary 480 • Key Terms 481 • Discussion
Questions 481 • Suggested Readings 482*

Chapter 14 Stalking 487

Chapter Objectives 487
Detailed Look at What You Should Know About
Stalking 487
Introduction 488
Definition 489
Types of Stalking 490
Myths and Assessment of Stalking 493
Stalking Laws 496
Antistalking Measures 502
*Summary 506 • Key Terms 506 • Discussion
Questions 507 • Suggested Readings 507*

Chapter 15 Victims' Issues 512

Chapter Objectives 512
Detailed Look at What You Should Know About
Victims' Issues 512
Introduction 513
Historical Perspective 514
Victims and Civil Litigation 517
Compensation and Restitution 523
Restorative Justice 527
Victim Impact Statements 528
*Summary 538 • Key Terms 538 • Discussion
Questions 539 • Suggested Readings 539*

FOREWORD

This ninth edition of *Family Violence* is a revised and updated text and is joined by Julie L. Globokar, Associate Professor in the Sociology Department at Concordia University-Chicago. The term “family violence” refers to criminal acts with family members as offenders, victims and offender-victims. It includes: child physical/sexual abuse and neglect; spouse abuse including marital rape; the development of shelters; and elder physical/sexual/financial abuse and neglect. Violence and neglect of children were among the first major types of family violence studied beginning in the early 1960s, generally followed by spouse abuse, mostly concerning women as victims, and then the study of elder abuse victimization. A major component of the history of family violence as a topic of intense interest in the U.S., beyond its study, has been its interaction with the criminal justice system, especially the creation of new laws, their applications and the institutional responses to its victims. Some of the more recent areas that have evolved are: sibling abuse, child exploitation and trafficking, stalking, and, with the changes in the family structure and types of relations, the focus on intimate partner violence and the evolution of emergency shelters for elder abuse victims. From the first edition of this text and still valid today, in the words of Professor Wallace, “the field of family violence is broad and multifaceted.” The definition for family violence presented herein is: “*any act or omission by persons who are cohabitating or living together as a family that results in serious injury to other members of the family.*”

On a personal note, I have watched the field of family violence grow since the initial pioneering work of Erin Pizzey in London, England with the Chiswick Women’s Aid, the first refuge for battered wives in the world in 1974. This was followed by the 1975 proclamation by the National Organization of Women (NOW) that marital violence was a major issue in the U.S. My early involvement with domestic violence occurred in 1977 while serving as the founder/director of the Institute of Research and Evaluation, Department of Criminal Justice, at the University of Southern Mississippi in Hattiesburg. Three married women who worked for me, two as secretaries and one as a researcher, were being severely abused by their husbands. Their plight and my involvement with their responses trying to cope, my early work with victimology, victim assistance and the creation of NOVA in 1976, led me to form a program in Hattiesburg to bring local attention to this problem and to establish the Coalition Against Spouse Abuse (CASA) in 1978. This coalition and other advocacy and shelter efforts eventually morphed into a state-wide coalition against domestic violence in 1980. In the years that followed there was a phenomenal explosion of programs, laws and research, for and about victims of family violence, and from what had been a deafening silence there arose a loud voice reflected in a great abundance of administrative resources, research findings and victim services. A significant part of this wealth was the profusion of textbooks documenting new laws, legal and clinical practices, funding opportunities, government and non-government organizations, concepts, findings, courses and ways of preventing and treating these victims. The launching of Harvey Wallace’s first edition in 1996 captured this

rich and evolving field which, with this new edition, continues to contribute and refine this expansive and significant study of family violence, now a major part of our national conversation about human rights and its impact on contemporary life in the United States. Starting with the fifth edition, the involvement of Cliff Roberson has perpetuated the legacy of Harvey Wallace. Beginning with this, the ninth edition, is the addition of a third author, Julie L. Globokar.

This text is very well-organized, balanced, comprehensive, up-to-date, student-friendly, well-priced and clearly written. In my judgement, this premier text on family violence stands head and shoulders above all others.

John P. J. Dussich, Ph.D.
Emeritus Professor of Criminology,
California State University, Fresno

PREFACE

As noted by Professor Wallace in the first edition, the study of family violence is a complex, multifaceted experience. By its very nature, family violence involves physicians, nurses, psychiatrists, psychologists, family counselors, educators, social workers, attorneys, judges, and law enforcement officials. While these professionals have expertise in their own areas of specialization, they may not understand or appreciate the difficulties experienced by others in their areas of interest. For example, a member of the medical profession may be able to diagnose physical injuries but not understand the complexities of the courtroom.

As a nation, we are becoming more aware of the extent and nature of family violence. Nationally broadcast trials have brought family violence into our front rooms.

Many states require students in certain fields of study to take courses in specific areas of family violence as a condition of receiving a license to practice. Law enforcement agencies are generally not required to respond in certain ways to domestic abuse cases. Many times, members of the medical profession are the first to encounter victims of family violence. They must not only recognize the physical and emotional symptoms of the victims but also understand how their own role relates to law enforcement and the legal system. Criminal justice professionals, including law enforcement personnel, are becoming more involved in cases of family violence.

As this text discusses, no single cause or factor contributes to family violence. This, however, should not deter students and professionals from understanding the existing controversies in the field. These factors must be understood to appreciate fully the consequences of family violence.

Family violence courses are becoming more common at the junior and community college level. Many of these courses are offered in the areas of sociology, nursing, and law enforcement. They are providing students with a much-needed perspective on a topic that for too long has been left in the area of upper-division courses or graduate study. The study of family violence does not belong only in the rarified atmosphere of select university classes. Rather, it is a subject with which more people should become familiar.

A survey of law enforcement agencies indicated their desire for new recruits to receive formal training in family violence. In addition, professionals are becoming more aware that they must adopt an interdisciplinary approach to this problem, and more and more seminars are being offered in the area of family violence. These developments are both a blessing and a curse. On one hand, as we learn more about family violence, we are better able to respond to it. At the same time, the more we learn, the more we must be aware that there are increasing data in this field and that we can be overwhelmed with studies and their results. We are rapidly approaching an overload of information based on this research and yet have failed to agree on something as simple as a definition for the term *family violence*.

The study of family violence has many excellent texts that completely cover specific areas of this topic. There are comprehensive treatises on intimate partner abuse, child abuse, treatment, intervention, and legal issues of family violence. Because this area is so fragmented and complex, the problem arises of finding one source that provides an overview or introduction while supplying references that allow the reader to expand his or her knowledge in a specific area. This text is an attempt to examine the more commonly discussed topics of family violence from medical, social, and legal perspectives. It addresses specialized topics, such as sexual harassment, stalking, and victims' rights, that are normally not found in many family violence texts. This text is an introduction to this complex area, and it provides the reader with sufficient knowledge to understand the various dynamics involved in family violence.

Since the publication of the first edition of this text in 1996, many aspects of family violence have changed. Numerous states have passed additional laws affording victims of family violence more protection. New textbooks and academic journals provide additional research into this complex area. However, the dilemmas faced by professionals in the field remain the same. New and important research is being conducted even as this text goes to print. The authors have attempted to add new information that affects professionals in the field. We must strive to understand how to deal with victims of family violence who are different from you and me. We must also understand the impact and consequences of family violence.

This edition continues to change and adapt, as does the knowledge and research in this evolving area. Rather than undertaking a complete rewrite of the text, the authors have relied on comments from other academics, researchers, and reviewers to update and modify this edition. A series of Promising Practices boxes that bring professional knowledge and accomplishments into the classroom was first added in the eighth edition and continued in this edition. These are not the only promising practices in the field; rather, space dictated that the authors limit the number and type of procedures that are currently being used by professionals in the field. The authors have also included international perspectives in this edition. These perspectives allow students to understand that family violence crosses borders and cultures. For example, the Istanbul Convention of the 2011 Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combatting violence against women and domestic violence provides us with a working definition of the phrase "violence against women." The Convention defines the phrase as a violation of human rights and a form of discrimination against women and means all acts of gender-based violence that result in or are likely to cause physical, sexual, psychological, or economic harm or suffering to women.

Many additional updates and new materials are spread across this edition, including child homicide, family violence in the military, churches' responses to family violence, and an expanded section on police officers who abuse their spouses.

Comments or suggestions for improvement to the text, corrections, etc. may be submitted to cliff.roberson@washburn.edu or to julie.globokar@gmail.com

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Over the long period of time it has taken to complete this revision and previous editions, we have become indebted to many people who provided advice, support, resources, and encouragement. First and foremost, we would like to thank those who coordinated the many details of getting this text into print.

Professor Wallace's students, at both the graduate and the undergraduate levels at California State University, Fresno (CSUF), as well as those attending the Victim Services Institute and the National Victim Assistance Academy, provided the authors with insight into the teaching of family violence.

Harvey's colleagues at CSUF were especially helpful and supportive to Harvey in the development and publication of the first five editions of *Family Violence*. Those colleagues include Steve Walker, Ph.D.; John Dussech, Ph.D.; Arthur Wint, J.D.; and Eric Hickey, Ph.D. of the Criminology Department. Bernadette Muscat, Ph.D., another colleague and friend of Harvey, reviewed the earlier editions. Her suggestions and recommendations were invaluable. Christine Edmonds, special consultant with the Office for Victims of Crimes, furnished Harvey with material and data on a variety of topics. Al Stickler of Santa Rosa, California, provided much-needed editorial assistance. The following reviewers provided the authors with invaluable suggestions and corrections that helped to improve this text: Bonnie Black, Mesa Community College; David Briscoe, University of Arkansas at Little Rock; Lisa Nored, University of Southern Mississippi; Chuck Baker, Delaware County Community College; Patricia O'Brien, Elgin Community College; and Beverly Stiles, Midwestern State University. Finally, a special word of thanks to a long-time friend and former colleague at Washburn University, Nancy Palmer, who provided the authors with insight, comments, and recommendations regarding teaching a course in family violence and her use of the text in her classes.

Finally, a special thanks to Dr. Yumi E. Suzki, School of Criminal Justice, Wichita State University, for preparation of the Supplements for the ninth edition; to John Dusich for submitting a Foreword to this ninth edition; and to Robert Jerin and Yoshiko Takahashi for their informative comments and discussions on elder abuse that are included in Chapter 4.



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Characteristics and Consequences of Family Violence

CHAPTER OBJECTIVES

After studying this chapter, you should be able to:

- Explain what acts or conduct are considered to constitute family violence;
- Discuss the consequences of family violence;
- List and explain the mandatory reporting laws on child abuse;
- Recognize the extent of family violence in today's society;
- Understand the widely used intervention strategies used in dealing with family violence;
- Recognize and explain the controversies in family violence.

Detailed Look at What You Should Know About Family Violence

- It is difficult to define what constitutes family violence.
- There are inherent problems in attempting to measure the extent of family violence.
- The study of family violence is still in its infancy.
- There are numerous myths and misconceptions that surround family violence.
- Family violence is a wide-ranging concept that must remain flexible to adaption as we learn more about its scope and impact.
- The term *serious injury* may involve physical or emotional harm or a violation of another family member's rights and freedom of choice.
- Intervention strategies vary widely in dealing with family violence.

- The most commonly relied on data on the extent of family violence are reports by local law enforcement agencies, the American Humane Society, the Uniform Crime Reports (UCR), and the National Crime Victimization Survey.
- Since the adoption of the mandatory reporting laws for child abuse, and in some states mandatory arrest of those accused of intimate partner abuse, local agencies have been able to provide researchers with a wealth of information regarding family violence.
- The Violence Against Women Act provides a fundamental change in the criminal justice system's gathering of information on violent crimes committed against women.
- The UCR program is a nationwide statistical compilation involving more than 1,800 cities, counties, states, and other law enforcement agencies that voluntarily report data on reported crimes.
- The psychiatric model tries to understand family violence by analyzing the offender's personality traits and mental status.
- The **psychopathology theory** is grounded on the concept that certain individuals suffer from mental illness, personality disorders, and other dysfunctions that cause them to engage in aggressive acts within the family.
- The **substance abuse theory** accepts the proposition that drugs or alcohol cause or contribute to family violence.
- The social-psychological model analyzes external environmental factors that affect the family unit. Factors such as stress, family structure, the intergenerational transmission of violence, and family interactions are all considered as primary causes of family violence.
- The **social learning theory** assumes that the type of behavior most frequently reinforced by others is the one most often exhibited by the individual.
- The **exchange theory** is based on the premise that persons act according to a system of rewards or punishments.
- The **frustration-aggression theory** is based on the premise that human beings display aggression toward objects that impede their achievement of certain goals.
- The **ecological theory** is based on an analysis of the organism and the environment, the interacting systems in which family development occurs, and the environment in which the family resides.
- The **sociobiology or evolutionary theory** is based on the concept that parents display aggressive acts toward children who are not their own or do not have the potential to reproduce.
- The sociocultural model of family violence focuses on the roles of men and women in our society as well as on the cultural attitudes toward women and the acceptance of violence as a cause of family violence.
- The **culture of violence theory** is based on the premise that violence is unevenly distributed within our society, and that violence is more prevalent in the lower socioeconomic sectors of society.

- The **patriarchy theory** views society as dominated by men, with women in subordinate positions, treated by men as possessions and things.
- The **general systems theory** views the maintenance of violence as a result of the social system in which families live.
- The **social conflict theory** analyzes large-scale conflicts, marriages, and the communication process.
- The **resource theory** is based on the proposition that the one who controls resources, such as money, property, or prestige, is in the dominant position in a relationship.
- The **intergenerational transmission of violence theory** was formerly known as the cycle of violence theory.
- One of the most obvious consequences of family violence is the physical injuries suffered by victims. These injuries are easy to observe and treat.
- There are four general classifications of physical injuries inflicted on victims of family violence: immediate injuries that heal leaving no trace, injuries that leave visible scars, unknown long-term physical injuries, and long-term catastrophic injuries.
- The types of physical injuries suffered by victims of family violence can cover the entire spectrum of illness, from simple bruises to deadly gunshot wounds to the head.
- **Acute stress disorder (ASD)** is acute stress that is experienced in the immediate aftermath of a traumatic event.
- **Posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD)** is defined as the development of characteristic symptoms following a psychologically distressing event that is outside the range of usual human experience.
- Victims of family violence may suffer a wide variety of mental disorders as a result of their victimization.

INTRODUCTION

The study of **family violence** as a discipline is still in its infancy. In U.S. society, numerous myths and misconceptions are present when examining family violence issues and prevention techniques. Many laypersons, students, and professionals are skeptical regarding the dynamics involved in family violence. It is not uncommon to hear “Persons who molest children are mentally deranged,” and “Women who stay with abusive partners must really like it or deserve it.” Otherwise knowledgeable individuals display an alarming lack of understanding regarding the various aspects and issues involved.

The media, including television and popular magazines, have brought the specter of family violence into our living rooms on a daily basis. For example, in 2007 Court TV covered the trial of Mary Winkler, a former schoolteacher accused of killing her pastor husband. During the three days of jury selection, the defense lawyers and prosecutors used phrases such as “spousal abuse,” “brainwashed,” and “fog of war.” Through questions from Winkler’s lawyers about battered wife syndrome and posttraumatic stress disorder, the defense painted a picture of the defendant as an abused spouse whose role as a minister’s wife elevated her status in the community while isolating her from it

within a “fishbowl.” Her lawyers suggested that her situation rendered her incapable of seeking help or escaping the abusive marriage. During jury selection, the defense attorney asked potential jurors: “Do you all agree with me that people, especially women, will live in an abusive relationship for a variety of reasons?” Two prospective female panelists, who said they were once victims of domestic violence, agreed that abandoning the abusive relationships was not as easy as it seemed.¹

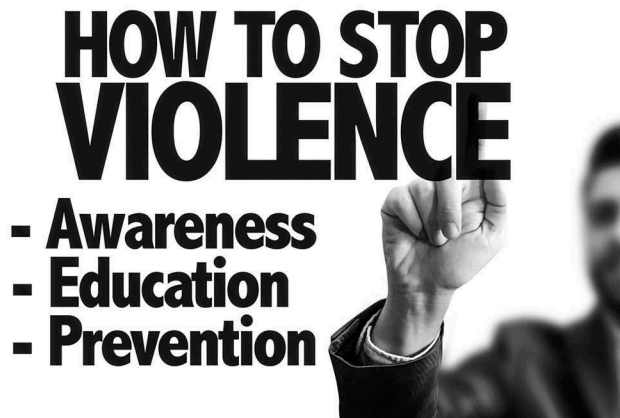
From May to July 2011, CNN and other news media brought the investigations and court proceedings involving the death of two-year-old Caylee Marie Anthony into our living rooms with numerous updates each hour. Caylee’s mother Casey Anthony was charged with killing Caylee. Casey was acquitted on July 5, 2011. The verdict was greeted with public outrage, and was both attacked and defended by media and legal commentators. Some complained that the jury misunderstood the meaning of reasonable doubt, while others said the prosecution relied too heavily on the defendant’s allegedly poor moral character because it had been unable to show conclusively how the victim had died. *Time* magazine described the case as “the social media trial of the century.”

In 2014, a video surfaced of then-Baltimore Ravens running back Ray Rice dragging his unconscious fiancé out of an elevator at an Atlantic City casino. A second video later surfaced showing the preceding moments when Rice knocked his fiancé unconscious in the elevator. The NFL came under criticism for initially only giving Rice a two-game suspension for the incident and increasing his penalty only after the case began to draw more publicity. Many believed that the NFL was failing to sufficiently address the issue of violence against women among its players.

In response to this criticism, the NFL took a number of steps to improve their internal handling of domestic violence and sexual assault cases. They contracted with former FBI Director Robert Mueller to evaluate their response to such incidents. In response to his feedback they hired a former sex crimes prosecutor to assist with investigations and enlisted a panel of domestic violence experts for consultation. They also implemented more stringent penalties for violations of the League’s personal conduct policy. The NFL began to air public service announcements to raise awareness about domestic violence in stadiums and during NFL broadcasts.

There continue to be questions about whether these steps have been sufficient. In 2018, a video emerged of then-Kansas City Chiefs running back Kareem Hunt assaulting a woman in a Cleveland hotel. Many felt that, similar to the Rice incident, the League’s response to the incident was prompted primarily by bad publicity, not concern for the behavior. Another incident around the same time involved then-San Francisco 49ers linebacker Reuben Foster. While Foster was released from the team, the Washington Redskins quickly expressed interest in acquiring him. These incidents and others continue to draw attention to the NFL’s handling of domestic violence cases.

Numerous controversies in the area of family violence are discussed in this textbook. No definition of the term *family violence* has been universally accepted by all scholars, researchers, and other professionals. The full extent and nature of the subject is still being debated. However, statistics gathered from independent research as well as projections from state and federal agencies clearly establish its widespread existence.



Most researchers believe that the best way to reduce partnership violence is through education, awareness, and prevention.

DEFINITION

Simply defining the term *family violence* causes debate. Some argue that the use of the word *family* is too restrictive and should be replaced with the term *intimate*, because current research includes studies of couples who cohabit but are not necessarily married. However, most professionals now accept the idea that a family unit may exist without any formal sanction such as a marriage ceremony. Therefore, the term *family* will be used to include situations in which individuals are living together regardless of whether they are legally married. Family violence can affect families of all forms, including those with or without children, couples of any gender or sexual orientation, and those of any race, class, culture, religion, or ethnicity.

Violence implies physical acts that result in injuries to the victim. As will be discussed, some forms of family violence involve the withholding of physical or emotional support and can have devastating long-term consequences for the victim. Therefore, violence within this context includes physical or mental acts or omissions that result in injuries to the victim. Violence may also be directed at restricting or denying another person certain rights or liberties.

The concept of family violence includes several subtopics, such as child abuse, intimate partner abuse, and elder abuse. It is therefore a wide-ranging concept that

Focus

Ninety percent of the time, the best predictor of domestic violence is past behavior.

Source: B. Auchter, "Men Who Murder Their Families," *NIJ Journal*, No. 266, (2010), page 11.

must remain flexible to adaption as we learn more about its scope and impact. The definition of *family violence* for purposes of this textbook is: *any act or omission by persons who are cohabitating or living together as a family that results in serious injury to other members of the family.* This definition includes those who live together or are married. It also includes same gender couples living together as a family regardless of their marital status. The term *serious injury* may involve physical or emotional harm or a violation of another family member's rights and freedom of choice. As will be seen, the great majority of victims of family violence are females or children. This is not to say that men are not battered.² However, they are in the minority, and the reasons for this disparity are discussed in detail in Chapter 2, which deals with intimate partner abuse. This definition is broader than Straus, Gelles, and Steinmetz's approach to family violence, because their study did not include neglect.³ It goes beyond Pagelow's definition in that it specifically applies to those who live with other persons.⁴

The topic of family violence cuts across dimensions of law, social behavior, and medicine. Each of these dimensions has its own proponents and advocates, and each defines family violence from its own perspective. Despite the need for an acceptable definition from which research and treatment can proceed, each of these interest groups claims its view or approach as the only true alternative. A quick review of the literature in the field highlights this disparate approach to family violence. Some textbooks deal with legal issues and child abuse, policing of intimate partner abuse, medical interventions for victims, and psychological treatment for survivors of abuse. While a few textbooks attempt to take a global approach to family violence, these are in the minority, and professionals continue to specialize within subgroupings of this form of aggression.

As the preceding discussion indicates, conflict exists among scholars, academics, and professionals regarding the definition of the term *family violence*. However, this should not hinder further study of this form of aggression. It simply means that we must remain flexible in evaluating all forms of aggression to determine whether they fall within the realm of family violence. Defining the term *family violence* is only one of many controversies in this area.

Focus

Prevalence of Domestic Violence in the United States

- On average more than three women a day are murdered by their husbands or boyfriends in the United States.
- One in four women in the United States reports experiencing violence by a current or former spouse, life partner, or boyfriend at some point in her life.
- Women are much more likely than men to be victimized by a current or former intimate partner. Women constitute 84 percent of spouse abuse victims and 86 percent of victims of abuse at the hands of a boyfriend or girlfriend. About 75 percent of the persons who commit family violence are male.
- Women aged 20 to 24 are at the greatest risk of experiencing nonfatal intimate partner violence.⁵

CONTROVERSIES IN FAMILY VIOLENCE

Numerous controversies are present when studying family violence.⁶ Specific controversies are addressed in chapters that deal with specific forms or types of family violence. However, an overview of issues that affect the study of family violence provides a basis for understanding that this form of aggression requires additional research before we can determine all of its ramifications.

Family violence has several distinct subgroupings, such as child physical and sexual abuse, intimate partner abuse, and elder abuse. Many scholars have focused on these specific areas and ignored the broader view of family violence. Conversely, others have attempted to view family violence from a broad perspective by creating models of research that are so vague as to be difficult, if not impossible, to test or validate. How does one accurately study or research a phenomenon if a definition cannot be agreed on because the definition of any act both sets limits and focuses research within certain boundaries? The lack of agreement in defining *family violence* has led to confusion and disarray in attempts to determine factors that cause or contribute to family violence.

Just as there are numerous definitions for the term *family violence*, so there are myriad competing and conflicting theories on the causes. The psychological approach, the social-psychological approach, and the sociocultural approach are but a few of the more popular models or theories of family violence. Although feminist perspectives may fall within parts of these models, some authors argue that it is another valid method of classifying family violence. These approaches are discussed later in this chapter, but it must be remembered that no one approach or theory has yet to gain universal acceptance within the field of professionals who deal with this phenomenon.

Intervention strategies vary widely in dealing with family violence. There is widespread agreement that in many instances a child should be removed from the home immediately to prevent further harm or injury. However, in some situations experts argue that removal from the family is a very traumatic experience for the child and should be avoided at all costs. Intervention may also be challenged by defense attorneys who claim that some therapists have brainwashed or planted the thought of abuse in the minds of impressionable children. This technique is commonly used by a number of defense attorneys today, although it is unknown how effective this strategy is in convincing juries.

Reporting and law enforcement's mandated response to child abuse, elder abuse, and intimate partner abuse is a current topic of controversy. Some authorities argue that mandatory reporting of child abuse and elder abuse should be expanded. Others believe that mandatory arrest of intimate partner abusers leads to increased risk to the victim. Still other professionals would expand some laws to require terms of incarceration for those who abuse their spouses.

If no agreement can be reached on the cause of family violence, how can the factors present in a violent relationship be addressed? Depending on the study one reads, different factors are found to exist in family violence. This chapter examines four common factors present in families that have experienced violence. This does not mean that these are the only factors that may exist in every form of abuse, only that these factors are the most common.

Does ritual abuse of children really occur? Probably no subject in family violence has generated as much controversy as the topic of ritual abuse of children. Some critics have suggested that the symptoms are therapist enhanced, whereas others claim that ritual abuse clearly exists and is more widespread than believed.

As the prior discussion indicates, many controversies exist in the field of family violence. Where appropriate, these subjects are examined in more detail in the chapters that deal with the specific form of abuse. These controversies should not create anxiety or apprehension, but they present a series of exciting and stimulating ideas that should cause healthy discussion and debate among all those interested in this topic.

NATURE AND SCOPE OF THE PROBLEM

The National Family Violence Surveys

Two of the most comprehensive studies of family violence were carried out by Murray Straus and Richard J. Gelles in 1975 and 1985.⁷ Both surveys involved interviews with a nationally representative sample of 2,143 respondents in 1975 and 6,014 respondents in 1985. The results of these landmark surveys continue to provide information and data for the study of family violence. Even though the surveys are dated, they are continually cited as authoritative in numerous textbooks, articles, and research projects.

In both surveys, *violence* was defined as an act carried out with the intention or perceived intention of causing physical pain or injury to another person. Acts of violence that had a high probability of causing injury were included even if injury did not occur. Violence was measured by using the Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS). This tool was developed at the University of New Hampshire in 1971 and is still used today in many studies of family violence. The CTS measures three variables: use of rational discussion and agreement, use of verbal and nonverbal expressions of hostility, and use of physical force or violence. Respondents were asked how many times within the last year they used certain responses that fell within one of the three classifications when they had a disagreement or were angry with family members.

Both studies were judged to be reliable because of the sampling procedure, the large number of respondents, and the validity of the CTS as a measuring instrument. The studies surveyed families from all fifty states and assessed many different relationships: parent to child, child to parent, wife to husband, husband to wife, and sibling interactions. Interviews were conducted by trained investigators and lasted about one hour in the 1975 study and thirty minutes in the 1985 survey.

Other Sources of Data on Family Violence

Other social surveys have added to our knowledge of family violence. *Rape in America*, conducted by the National Victims Center, shed new light on this form of aggression, and a survey of Boston residents examined elder abuse. Both surveys are discussed in detail later.

Clinical studies are another source of information regarding family violence. These studies are carried out by practitioners in the field—medical professionals, psychiatrists,

Focus

Conflict Tactics Scale

The conflict tactics scale (CTS) is the most widely used instrument in conducting research on family violence. It is also one of the most widely criticized instruments. There are two versions of the scale; the CTS2 which is an expanded version of the original scale and the CTSPC (CTS parent-child) version. The scales are based on the premise that conflict is an inevitable aspect of all human association. The CTS focuses on conflict tactics and measures one's own interest within a conflict as a behavior. It also measures the conflict tactics of both the victim and the abuser.

The revised CTS2 uses a total of 39 behaviors which are subdivided into five categories and each category is further subdivided into two subscales.⁸ CTS2 questions are presented in pairs. The first question in the pair asks respondents to indicate how often they carried out each item, in a range from never to more than 20 times, in the referent period.

The second asks how often the partner carried out each item within the same referent period. Referent periods are usually 12 months, but other spans of time may be used. Subscales measuring the degree of severity of less severe and more severe behaviors are included for all CTS scales, based on the presumed greater harm resulting from acts in the severe subscale.

The severity of behaviors can also be measured by analyzing the frequency of the acts and by whether an injury was reported by the respondent. For example, in the sexual coercion category a question may include the following choices: Have you ever insisted on sex with your partner when the partner did not want sex (considered as minor) or forced your partner to engage in sex (considered as major). The possible answers that can be selected are: never, once, twice, 3–5 times, 6–10 times, 11–20 times, and more than 20 times.⁹

psychologists, and counselors—all of whom use samples gathered from actual cases of family violence. These researchers collect information from hospitals, clinics, and therapy sessions. Clinical studies normally have small sample sizes, and therefore, caution must be used when drawing any conclusions. However, these studies provide valuable data on the nature of abuse and assist in evaluating the different types of interventions used in family violence as well as pointing out areas for further research.

Many different types of official reports are compiled by private or public agencies in the form of statistical data. These provide a much-needed resource for further research into family violence. The most commonly relied on are reports by local law enforcement agencies, the American Humane Society, the Uniform Crime Reports (UCR), and the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS).

Since adoption of the mandatory reporting laws for child abuse, and in some states mandatory arrest of those accused of intimate partner abuse, local agencies have been able to provide researchers with a wealth of information regarding family violence. This information is usually limited to a specific geographic location and therefore does not reflect any national perspective.

The Violence Against Women Act provided a fundamental change in the criminal justice system's gathering of information on violent crimes committed against women. A 1996 report of Congress indicated that both the federal government and most states are collecting data on family violence.¹⁰ This report points out two continuing controversies: