Chapter 15
Domestic and Gender–Based Violence Data and Developmental Psychoeducational Proposals

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ABSTRACT

Violence in any of its forms is a common secret and an unseen wound that occurs behind closed doors in families whose members are reluctant to admit that they have been victimized because of the fear of renewed threats from the perpetrator and social stigmatization. Possible causes include inadequate psychological functioning of parents, the perpetrator's sense of receiving 'value' counterproductively, possible mental illness, controlling relationships, history of aggressive behavior, lack of trust and solidarity relationships, lack of meaningful communication, shaking of funda-mentals, crisis of humanistic values and the institution of the family, etc. Dealing with such a multifactorial phenomenon requires the rallying of many institutions and organizations and systematic collective efforts to eliminate or at least reduce the phenomenon. Prevention focuses mainly on the cultivation of values such as social equality, justice, meritocracy, the cultivation of moral values and ideals, and

the promotion of good role models.

INTRODUCTION

Violence is born in the womb of society and domestic violence is its most common and essential form. Its main victims are women and children (Hornor, 2005; Rodriquez et al., 1999). It is a social scourge that affects people from all socio-economic strata and educational levels and brings about many psychological and physical consequences.

The term 'domestic violence' is a negative experience of abuse in the home and refers to any act or behavior that is intended to cause some form of harm to another family member, and which is used to coerce, dominate, or isolate.

Known as domestic abuse, it refers to a pattern of abusive behavior, where one person tries to exert power and control over the other. It is using any form of power imposed on the individual to maintain control of the relationship and of the victim's behavior. It is a clear violation of human rights and is severely punishable by law [PTA, Section 3 of *Act 119*(1)2000].

It is a widespread and serious social problem that affects people of all genders, ages, races, and socio-economic backgrounds, and it can have devastating consequences not only for victims and perpetrators but also for children exposed to these behaviors.

Violence against children in particular still plays a leading role among the forms of domestic violence. Unfortunately, throughout human history, children have been subjected to all kinds of abuse, such as child abuse and neglect, abandonment, exploitation, and even murder by their parents and caregivers, etc.

All of these negative childhood experiences constitute serious traumatic events that can have profound, harmful, and long-term effects on children's lives. As a consequence, children's later social and emotional development and overall health (physical and mental) are at high risk of developing severe impairments and a variety of psychological problems such as low self-esteem, anxiety, depression, behavioral problems, educational difficulties, and distorted social relationships.

Indeed, several studies have shown that child abuse/neglect is associated with a range of harmful effects that can persist well during lifespan, including physical and mental health problems, serious illness, anxiety, depression, and suicidality (Holman et al, 2016; Sheffler et al., 2020; Thompson et al., 2019), while long-term abuse can extend negative health effects often across the lifespan (Kong et al., 2021). Although the problem of child abuse/neglect is not a new phenomenon, it is only in the last fifty years or so that researchers have focused on studying it more

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