# Intersections of brain injury

## Intimate partner violence

Intimate partner violence (IPV) is a widespread public health issue that encompasses physical, emotional, and verbal abuse within intimate relationships. IPV often leads to traumatic brain injury (TBI) due to repeated blows to the head, face, and neck. These injuries can also result from strangulation, causing oxygen deprivation to the brain.

Did you know?

* Up to 92% of IPV incidents involve hits to the head and face and strangulation, often leading to brain injury (BI)
* About 1 in 5 women and 1 in 13 men have experienced contact sexual violence by an intimate partner
* Between 35-80% of women impacted by IPV experience symptoms of TBI
* Globally, it's estimated that one in three women will face IPV in her lifetime

Intimate partner violence transcends race, gender, culture, and socioeconomic status, affecting individuals in both heterosexual and sexual minority relationships. Nonetheless, it is predominantly women—including both cisgender and transgender women—who identify as IPV survivors.

Strangulation is one of the most dangerous forms of IPV, increasing the risk of death in following assaults.

Racial/ethnic and sexual minority groups are disproportionately affected by IPV. Compared to other populations, women with disabilities experience almost twice the rate of abuse in all forms.

Some victims can die weeks after being strangled because of the underlying brain damage, even if there is no visible injury.

Intimate partner violence is underreported, partly due to shame, stigma, and a lack of understanding about what constitutes abuse. Many victims do not realize that their cognitive and psychological struggles might be related to a BI sustained from intimate partner violence. This lack of awareness extends to frontline service providers, who often lack the training to recognize the signs of BI in intimate partner violence victims​. Front line service providers require access to more education and training on proper screening and trauma informed care. Individuals affected by intimate partner violence must have access to services and supports they need, and we need to create environments of trust and understanding to reduce stigma.

For more info, visit braininjurycanada.ca