

Glossary

OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND TRAUMA AND VIOLENCE-INFORMED TERMINOLOGY

Abuse

Abuse is behaviour used to intimidate, harm, isolate, dominate, or control another person. Abusive behaviour encompasses actions, words, and neglect, and may be a pattern of occurrences or a single isolated incident. The abuse can be sexual, physical, verbal, spiritual, emotional, financial, neglectful, or psychological in nature. Abuse can happen to anyone, of any age, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, or gender. It can affect people of all socioeconomic backgrounds and education levels.

Child Maltreatment

Child maltreatment, sometimes called child abuse, “includes physical, sexual and emotional abuse. It also includes neglect and any violence that children see or hear in their families. The person who abuses the child can be a parent; a brother or sister; another relative; a caregiver; a guardian; a teacher; or another professional or volunteer who works with children (for example, a doctor or coach)” (Department of Justice Canada. (2017).

Coercive Control

Coercive control is an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim. This controlling behaviour is designed to make a person dependent by isolating them from support, exploiting them, depriving them of independence and regulating their everyday behaviour. Coercive control creates invisible chains and a sense of fear that pervades all elements of a victim's life. It works to limit their human rights by depriving them of their liberty and reducing their ability for action.

Collective Violence

Collective violence refers to violence committed by larger groups of individuals and can be subdivided into social, political, and economic violence.

Compassion

Compassion refers to the attitudes and feelings in response to another's suffering. Compassion "is characterized by warmth, concern, and care for the other, as well as a strong motivation to improve the other person's well-being" (Singer & Klimecki, 2014). It is action-oriented.

Consent

Consent is defined in Canada's Criminal Code as the voluntary agreement to engage in the sexual activity in question. The law focuses on what the person was actually thinking and feeling at the time of the sexual activity. Sexual activity is only legal when both parties consent, either through words or conduct. Silence or passivity does not equal consent.

Cultural Violence

Cultural violence refers to prejudice as aspects of a culture that can be used to justify or legitimize direct or structural violence. Cultural violence makes direct and structural violence look or feel "right", or at least not wrong. The colonization of Indigenous peoples is one example.

Deadnaming

Referring to a transgender person by the name they used before they transitioned – this is also often described as referring to someone by their "birth name" or their "given name". This can be done inadvertently, but when done deliberately is harmful and discriminatory and constitutes a form of violence.

Domestic Homicide

Domestic homicide is defined as the killing of a current or former intimate partner, their child(ren), and/or other third parties. An intimate partner can include people who are in a current or former married, common-law, or dating relationship. Other third parties can include new partners, other family members, neighbours, friends, co-workers, helping professionals, bystanders, and others killed as a result of the incident. Domestic homicide is a form of gender-based violence rooted in historical patterns of inequality, exclusion, and discrimination.

Economic Abuse/Financial Abuse

Economic abuse incorporates a range of behaviours that allow a perpetrator to control someone else's economic resources or freedoms. Economic abuse is wider in its definition than financial abuse, a term usually used to describe denying or restricting access to money or misusing another person's money. In addition to that, economic abuse can also include restricting access to essential resources such as food, clothing, or transport, and denying the means to improve a person's economic status (for example, through employment, education or training). There are four different 'types' of financial abuse: interfering with employment; controlling access to financial resources; refusing to contribute to financial costs; and generating financial costs.

Elder Abuse

Elder abuse is a single, or repeated act, or lack of appropriate action, occurring within any relationship where there is an expectation of trust, which causes harm or distress to an older person. Elder abuse often occurs when there is an imbalance of control. The abuser either limits or takes control over the rights and freedoms of the senior. The abuse/violence is used to intimidate, humiliate, coerce, frighten or simply to make the senior feel powerless.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the repeated use of controlling and harmful behaviours by a perpetrator to control a victim, most likely a woman. As a result of emotional abuse, a woman lives her life in fear and repeatedly alters her thoughts, feelings, and behaviours, and denies her needs, to avoid further abuse. Emotional abuse includes verbal abuse, stalking and harassing, isolation, threats, intimidation, sexual and financial abuse, and neglect. Emotional abuse is the greatest predictor of physical violence.

Empathetic Listening

Empathetic listening is an active process that requires the listener to demonstrate compassion, nonjudgement, and a genuine attempt to hear and understand. It involves acknowledging facts and feelings shared by the survivor when you respond. This acknowledgement demonstrates that you are listening, that you are trying to understand, and it also provides an opportunity for clarification in case you misunderstood or missed something.

Equality/Equity

As it relates to social questions of fairness and justice, **equality** entails a principle of impartiality and sameness of treatment for all people—that is, of ensuring equal treatment to all people, without consideration of individual and group diversities. By comparison, **equity** entails a principle of ensuring fair, inclusive, and respectful treatment of all people, with consideration of individual and group diversities.

Family Violence

Family violence is considered to be any form of abuse, mistreatment, or neglect that a child or adult experiences from a family member, or from someone with whom they have an intimate relationship. Family violence is a gender-based crime as most victims are women and girls. One out of four violent crimes in Canada reported to police involves family violence.

The different terms used for family violence can have slightly different meanings depending on where and how they are used, such as in a courtroom or a hospital. For example:

- **Domestic violence** can sometimes mean family violence and sometimes it means intimate partner violence.
- **Intimate partner violence** refers to physical, sexual, or psychological harm by a current or former partner or spouse and can also be called **dating violence** between couples who are not married.
- The terms **violence against women** and **gender-based violence** are also used.
- **Child abuse** is sometimes called **child maltreatment or neglect**, and **elder abuse** is sometimes referred to as **neglect**.

Femicide

Generally understood to involve the intentional killing of women or girls because they are women or girls, but broader definitions include any killings of women and girls. Under the Criminal Code of Canada, an offence found to be motivated by bias or hate based on sex, sexual orientation, or gender identity or expression is considered an aggravating factor which could result in a more serious sentence.

Gaslighting

Gaslighting involves the attempt by the gaslighter to undermine his victim's self-trust: her conception of herself as an autonomous locus of experience, thought, and judgment. The gaslighter's motivation is a strong desire to neutralize his victim's ability to criticize him and to ensure her consent to his way of viewing things (specifically about issues relevant to the relationship, perhaps in general), and thus to maintain control over her. The gaslighter pursues this goal by using a strategy of manipulation, fabrication, and deception that specifically relies upon his victim's trust in him as a peer or authority in some relevant sense.

Gender-Based Violence

Gender-based violence ('GBV') is violence that is committed against a person because of that person's gender identity, gender expression, or perceived gender. GBV can take many forms including physical, sexual, psychological, emotional, economic, technology-facilitated, and societal violence.

Grooming

A deliberate process through which a person gains the trust of someone – most often a minor – for the purpose of manipulating, exploiting, or abusing them. This may result in a survivor understanding that a crime has occurred and/or being reluctant to disclose the incident to others.

Harassment

This covers a wide range of behaviours of an offensive nature including name-calling, displaying pictures that embarrass someone, unwanted touching, or unwanted sexual contact. Broadly, it refers to engaging in a pattern of conduct that induces fear of harm, and/or upsets or disturbs another. Certain forms of harassment such as unwanted sexual touching, stalking, threatening and/or intimidation are serious Criminal Code offences. Human Rights legislation prohibits harassment based on race, religion, sex, ethnicity, and other prohibited grounds for discrimination.

Hate Crime

Criminal acts which promote hatred against identifiable groups of people, motivated by bias, prejudice, or hate. Although individuals and groups that promote this destructive form of human rights-based discrimination often defend their right to 'free speech,' it is a criminal offence to disseminate hate propaganda and/or to commit hate crimes." Under the Canadian Criminal Code, both the "public incitement of hatred" and the "willful promotion of hatred" are considered crimes punishable by law.

Implicit Bias

Implicit bias is the pre-reflective attribution of particular qualities by an individual to a member of some social out-group. Implicit stereotypes are thought to be shaped by experience and based on learned associations between particular qualities and social categories, including race and/or gender.

Intergenerational Trauma

Intergenerational trauma is the transmission of historical oppression and its negative consequences across generations. It is a collective complex trauma inflicted on a group of people who share a specific group identity or affiliation—ethnicity, nationality, and religious affiliation. It is the legacy of numerous traumatic events a community experiences over generations and encompasses the psychological and social responses to such events.

Interpersonal Violence

Interpersonal violence refers to violence between individuals and can be subdivided into family violence and community violence.

Family and intimate partner violence include child maltreatment, intimate partner violence, and elder abuse.

Community violence is broken down into acquaintance and stranger violence and includes youth violence; assault by strangers; violence related to property crimes; and violence in workplaces/institutions.

Intimate Partner Violence

Intimate partner violence is domestic violence by a current or former spouse or partner in an intimate relationship against the other spouse or partner. It can take a number of forms including physical, verbal, emotional, economic, and sexual abuse and controlling behaviours by a current or past intimate partner. Couples may be dating, cohabiting, or married, and violence can occur in or outside the home.

Lateral Violence

Lateral violence is displaced violence directed against one's peers rather than against those who hold the power to oppress. Lateral violence is common in the gender-based violence sector where organizations are chronically underfunded, cannot meet the demands for service, and are forced to compete for funding to remain viable.

This dynamic can be seen in groups that experience oppression. It has been noted that people who feel victimized by forms of systemic/structural violence may turn on each other, feeling powerless to confront the system that oppresses them.

Marginalization

A process that keeps groups or individuals from having access to all or part of the social, economic, cultural, and political institutions of society. That is, these individuals or groups are on the “margins” of society. Marginalization can occur as a result of several factors, alone or in combination. These factors might include, but are not limited to, poverty, race, gender, discrimination, a lack of education and training, or disadvantaged geographic or social location.

Misogyny

Misogyny is hatred of, contempt for, or ingrained prejudice against women and/or girls.

Patriarchy

Patriarchy is a social system in which men hold primary power and privilege within families, communities, societies, and government and women are largely excluded from this power. Historically, patriarchy has manifested in social, political, religious, economic, and legal organizations across a range of cultures.

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is the most obvious kind of gender-based violence, but it is not the most common and is not necessarily the most serious. It is the intentional infliction of pain or injury by slapping, shoving, punching, strangling, kicking, burning, stabbing and/or shooting; using a weapon or other objects to threaten, hurt or kill; abducting a woman or keeping her imprisoned.

Privilege

Systemic advantages are based on certain characteristics that are celebrated by society and preserved through its institutions. In North America, these can include being white, having money, being heterosexual, not having a disability, etc. Frequently people are unaware that these characteristics should be understood as privileges as they are so effectively normalized.

Psychological Abuse

Subjecting or exposing another person to behaviour that may result in psychological harm or trauma including anxiety, chronic depression, or post-traumatic stress disorder. It is often associated with situations of power imbalance in abusive relationships.

Rape

Rape is non-consensual penetration of the vagina, anus or mouth by a penis, any other body part or object. This includes non-consensual penetration between intimate partners. Rape is considered a form of sexual assault in Canada's Criminal Code.

Resilience

In the context of gender-based violence, resilience is a dynamic process that enables an individual to develop, maintain, or regain their health and well-being despite experiences of significant adversity or trauma. Resilience is multidimensional and is associated with individual, relationship, community, cultural, and environmental factors.

Respect

In the context of trauma and violence-informed approaches, the term respect means to treat self and others with fairness, dignity, and an open mind. It is about setting aside your personal filters (attitudes, feelings, and beliefs based on identity characteristics) about the service user and focusing on them as individuals – their individual circumstances, experiences, and needs. Respect helps to facilitate

communication and collaboration and a sense of safety and trust. It also helps to create safe and healthy workplaces. Respect is expressed through one's attitudes and behaviours and it is both relational and reciprocal (but not necessarily nor consistently, reciprocated).

There are many definitions and understandings of respect, with cultural variations. However, this definition is to provide clarity for the implementation of TVI as a service provider and organization.

Self-directed Violence

Self-directed violence refers to violence in which the perpetrator and the victim are the same individual and is subdivided into self-abuse and suicide.

Sexism

Sexism stems from a set of implicit or explicit beliefs, erroneous assumptions and actions based upon an ideology of inherent superiority of one gender over another and may be evident within organizational or institutional structures or programs, as well as within individual thought or behaviour patterns. Sexism is any act or institutional practice, backed by institutional power which subordinates people because of gender. While, in principle, sexism may be practiced by either gender, most of our societal institutions are still the domain of men and usually the impact of sexism is experienced by women.

Sexual Assault

Under the Criminal Code, sexual assault is an assault which violates the sexual integrity of the survivor/victim. It is unwanted contact in sexual circumstances of person A by person B without person A's consent. This offence becomes more serious (in terms of legal repercussions) if it involves weapons, threats to a third party, bodily harm or disfigurement or endangering a survivor/victim's life. Canada has a broad definition of sexual assault, which includes all unwanted sexual activity, such as unwanted sexual grabbing and kissing, as well as rape.

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is unwanted sexual advances or obscene remarks, including verbal and non-verbal conduct. Examples include unwanted touching, unwelcome jokes, whistling, rude gestures, unwanted questions about your sex life, requests for sex, staring at your body in an offensive way, or promising rewards in exchange for sexual favours. It can happen anywhere including public spaces, online and in workplaces.

Certain forms of sexual harassment, such as unwanted sexual touching, stalking, intimidation and/or threatening are serious Criminal Code offences (see Stalking definition). Sexual harassment is a type of discrimination under the NWT's Human Rights legislation. Such behaviour may also fall under WSCC policies and legislation which require employees who witness harassment in the workplace to report it to their employers, who must respond and ensure that harassment is prevented or minimized in the future.

Sexual Violence/Abuse

A broad category of gender-based violence that is about exerting power and control over another through physical or psychological violence carried out through sexual means or by targeting sexuality. It includes various forms of sexual violence including, but not limited to childhood sexual abuse, sexual assault, rape, sexual cyber harassment, sexual exploitation, and sexual harassment.

Stalking

Conduct directed toward a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to feel fear (even if the actor does not intend to cause fear). Stalking behaviours may include, but are not limited to following, spying, unwanted phone calls, text messages, letters, or gifts, waiting at places for the person, monitoring their computer use. A stalker may be someone who is known or unknown to the survivor/victim. Legally, this **falls under harassment** in the Criminal Code.

Systemic Violence / Structural Violence

Systemic/structural violence is a form of violence by social structures or social institutions that cause harm to people by preventing them from meeting their basic needs. It is violence perpetrated through systems, often as a result of widespread beliefs and socio-political systems, for example, ethnic-based genocide such as the Holocaust, the colonization of Indigenous peoples, or the normalization of gender-based sexual violence. The terms systemic and structural violence are often used interchangeably.

Survivor

A survivor is a person who has experienced interpersonal violence. Many prefer the term survivor to victim as it reflects the reality that many abused individuals cope and move on with personal strength, resourcefulness, and determination. Increasingly, the term “person with lived experience of violence” is being used for those individuals who do not accept either label nor agree to be defined by their experience of interpersonal violence. **Always use the terminology that the person who has experienced the violence prefers.**

Technology Facilitated Violence

Technology can facilitate all forms of violence, including but not limited to intimate partner violence, sexual violence, and harassment. These actions are carried out using mobile technology and/or the internet and everyone is potentially vulnerable. As a result, technology is expanding the impact of existing types of violence and creating new forms of violence.

Trauma

Trauma is the response to an event that **overwhelms our ability to cope**. It describes the challenging effects that living through a distressing event or series of events can have for an individual. Trauma may impact one's physical, psychological (emotional or cognitive), social, and spiritual health and well-being.

Defining a traumatic event can be difficult as the same event may be more traumatic for some people than for others. However, traumatic events experienced **early in life**, such as abuse, neglect, and disrupted

attachment, can often be devastating. **Later life events**, such as experiencing violence, a serious accident, sudden unexpected loss, or living through a natural disaster or war can be equally challenging and traumatic. (CAMH, 2022). Trauma can also result from intergenerational and historical acts, such as genocide, terrorism, and colonialism.

Trauma Exposure Response

Trauma exposure response is a term used to describe the various internal changes as a result of repeated exposure to violence and trauma: hearing and/or witnessing traumatic and/or violent events, often without adequate resources and supports to offset the risks. This exposure can be primary (you directly witness the suffering), it can be secondary (you hear or see the suffering from those that suffer), or it can be tertiary (you hear of or read of the suffering). Your trauma response does not always differentiate between the three types and any or all of them may be felt as your own experience.

Verbal Abuse

A form of emotional abuse that may include constant criticism, repeated insults, and name-calling. Depending on the circumstances, such behaviour may constitute a criminal offence or a human rights or workplace safety violation. This is often present in intimate partner violence or domestic violence.

Victim Blaming

Victim blaming is a devaluing act that occurs when the victim(s) of a crime or an accident is held responsible, in whole or in part, for the crimes that have been committed against them. This blame can appear in the form of negative social responses from legal, medical, and mental health professionals, as well as from the media and immediate family members and other acquaintances.

Violence is the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, which either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment, or deprivation.

Sources

The definitions provided in this Glossary have been sourced from the work of stakeholders throughout the GBV field. In this regard, the Glossary aims to reflect the rich theoretical and conceptual insight of scholars, advocates, support workers, policymakers, and survivors involved in addressing this important issue.

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