



SUBSTANCE USE

Substance use, abuse, and dependence are closely linked with other types of abuse, such as domestic violence (DV) and intimate partner violence (IPV). Individuals with substance use disorders face significant stigma and thus often have increased difficulty accessing care and services. There is a similar concern for those experiencing DV/IPV, resulting in a population that is extremely vulnerable and limited in access. Substance use also puts women at a greater risk of experiencing violence. Conversely, experiencing violence makes an individual more likely to engage in substance use and abuse (Soper, 2014).

DEFINITIONS

Substance Use: recurrent use of a substance which causes significant impairment in interpersonal, occupational, physical, and other spheres of functioning.

- Evidential criteria include impaired control, social impairment, risky use, and pharmacological criteria.
- The Diagnostics and Statistical Manual qualifies substance use disorders on a range of mild, moderate, and severe, depending on the number of clinical criteria that are met (SAMHSA, 2015).

PREVALENCE

- Women who experience IPV are more likely to use tobacco and other illicit substances, as well as high-risk alcohol use than women who have not experienced IPV (CDC, 2015).
- Women in abusive relationships often report being coerced into using alcohol and other substances by their partners (PCADV, n.d.).
- Rates of substance use among women who experience IPV range from 2 to 6 times higher than women who do not experience IPV (Warshaw, 2016).

EFFECTS

- Limited access to services due to patterns of coercion and control (Warshaw, 2016).
- Substance use history can impact credibility of reports of abuse in criminal and legal proceedings.
- Strong correlation of sexual violence and substance use, such as being assaulted while under the influence of substances or being forced to engage in sexual acts in exchange for substances, with one's partner or with others (Warshaw, 2016).

INTERVENTIONS

- Incorporate screening for violence in substance use treatment settings, and screening for substance use/coercion in DV/IPV treatment settings.
- Substance use and coercion needs to be considered when safety planning.
- Integrated substance use and DV/IPV service settings are needed, as well as substance use services with a trauma-informed perspective.
- Motivational Interviewing and Stages of Change models can be an effective tools for supporting change.



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REFERENCES

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Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence. (n.d.) Fact sheet intimate partner violence and healthy people 2010 fact sheet. (n.d.). Retrieved from: <http://www.pcadv.org/Resources/ipv.pdf>.

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). (2015). Substance use disorders. Retrieved from: <https://www.samhsa.gov/disorders/substance-use>.

RESOURCES

National Center on Domestic Violence, Trauma, and Mental Health

<http://www.nationalcenterdvtraumamh.org/>

Phone: (312) 726-7020

TTY: (312) 726-4110

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

<https://www.samhsa.gov/>

SAMHSA's National Helpline

Phone: 1-800-662-HELP (4357)

TTY: 1-800-487-4889

Futures Without Violence

<https://www.futureswithoutviolence.org/>