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History and Definitions of Family Violence

May 14, 2009, *Daily Press* (Victorville, CA): On Mother's Day, sheriff's deputies discovered a 94-year-old woman living in a wooden shed with no running water or cooling. The deputies arrested her 59-year-old son Ronald Rego and his wife for elder abuse. They were living on the property in a travel trailer. Adult protective services placed the woman in the house of a neighbor who was willing to take her in ("Calif. Husband, Wife," 2009).

May 21, 2009, *Sun News* (Myrtle Beach, SC): A woman told police that her husband tied her up with duct tape, assaulted her, and tried to kill her with a roach-killing gel. After other abuses, he asked her if she was "ready to meet her maker." Police arrested her 24-year-old husband for intent to kill, criminal domestic violence, and kidnapping ("SC Husband Jailed," 2009).

June 6, 2009, *Santa Fe New Mexican* (Santa Fe, NM): A 22-year-old father-to-be, Marino Leyba, intentionally killed his unborn son by shooting his 17-year-old wife in the stomach and upper torso. He also shot the mother's father after bursting into his father in-law's apartment. Although the district attorney could prosecute Lebya for two murders, she could not lawfully prosecute him for killing the fetus. There was no law against killing a baby in the womb, she said ("Police: N.M. Suspect," 2009).

May 7, 2007, *Houston Chronicle* (TX): Two young women thought they could manage the persistent unwanted attention of their ex-boyfriends. They were wrong. Rachel Pendray, a 20-year-old Sam Houston University cheerleader, died when the man she rejected

(Continued)

Unless otherwise noted, all of the case histories presented in this volume come from our own personal knowledge of the cases described, which we have gathered through our experience as researchers and practitioners in the field of family violence. Also, unless otherwise noted, all of the names used in these case histories are pseudonyms.

shot her and then killed himself. Tynesha Stewart, a 19-year-old Texas A&M freshman, disappeared during a spring break. Her ex-boyfriend later admitted to choking her to death, dismembering her body, and burning the remains in his apartment barbecue pit. Although both men were controlling, constantly e-mailing, and showing anger, no one recognized the warning signs ("Ignoring Warning," 2007).

The newspaper articles cited above represent a sample of the diverse stories about family violence that recently appeared across the United States. Although news media accounts of family violence often represent the most sensational cases, there is no reason to believe that the particular stories above are in any way unique. Because of sensationalism in the media, readers hear little about the commonplace, routine violence that occurs within families. To comprehend the complexity of family violence, this text offers an examination of family violence that is both comprehensive and scientific. Even though this chapter serves as a preview, readers will be able to grasp a deeper understanding of many different issues associated with family violence. A list of some of these issues is as follows: (a) the estimates of the different types of assault, (b) the scientific research involved, (c) the various theories that try to explain family violence, (d) the definitions, (e) the various forms of abuse, (f) the physical and psychological consequences of family violence, (g) current treatments for both victims and perpetrators, and (h) various policy recommendations aimed at ending family violence. The first chapter begins by considering two important questions: "When (and how) did family violence come to be recognized as a social problem?" and "How is family violence defined?" The successive chapters in the text will round out the information presented here.

VIOLENCE IN FAMILIES

Society tends to think of the family as a relatively safe place, a safe harbor, a place of sustenance and care. It is a place where spouses love each other and their children. Regrettably, this view of families is idealized. Far too often, families are a source of maltreatment and violence. How common is child abuse, sibling abuse, abuse of parents, dating abuse, spouse abuse, and elder abuse? For a variety of reasons, this question is very difficult to answer. First of all, there is little agreement on exactly what constitutes family violence. Even when definitional consensus is achieved, however, the fact remains that most family violence occurs behind closed doors. It is often hidden, unnoticed, and ignored. As a result, it does not come to the attention of authorities and become part of official estimates. In addition, victims may not recall abuse, may not perceive the behavior as abusive, may not wish to disclose the abuse, or may not even be able to report the behavior. Given these numerous impediments, any statistics on family violence should be interpreted with a degree of caution; most are underestimates. In actuality, there is simply no way to know with certainty how much family violence exists in society.

There are a number of data sources that provide a sense of the scope of the problem. Some, for example, monitor the number of criminal assaults, while others record the number of

homicides. With the advent of computers, governmental organizations have inaugurated one or more electronic databases to better track family violence. A few of the standard and newer *government* systems are the following:

CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION (CDC)	NATIONAL CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT DATA SYSTEM (NCANDS)
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF JUSTICE (NIJ)	NATIONAL CENTER FOR INJURY PREVENTION AND CONTROL (NCIPC)
YOUTH RISK BEHAVIOR SYSTEM (YRBS)	NATIONAL ELECTRONIC INJURY SURVEILLANCE SYSTEM (NEISS)
FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION (FBI)	U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES (DHHS)
NATIONAL CRIME VICTIMIZATION SURVEY (NCVS)	MORBIDITY AND MORTALITY WEEKLY REVIEW (MMWR)
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE (DOJ)	BEHAVIORAL RISK FACTOR SURVEILLANCE SYSTEM (BRFSS)
NATIONAL COMORBIDITY SURVEY (NCS)	ADOPTION & FOSTER CARE ANALYSIS & REPORTING SYSTEM (AFCARS)
NATIONAL VIOLENT DEATH REPORTING SYSTEM (NVDRS)	NATIONAL SURVEY OF CHILDREN EXPOSED TO VIOLENCE (NatSCEV)
NATIONAL INCIDENT-BASED REPORTING SYSTEM (NIBRS)	

In addition, there are a number of surveys conducted by university *academics* and by nongovernmental agencies. A few of these are the following:

NATIONAL FAMILY VIOLENCE SURVEYS (NFVS)	SEVERITY OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN SCALES (SVAWS)
NATIONAL VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN SURVEY (NVAWS)	NATIONAL SURVEY OF FAMILIES AND HOUSEHOLDS (NSFH)

Intrafamilial Nonfatal Abuse

The statistical summaries on family violence that follow document that women and children are more likely to be victimized in their own homes than they are on the streets of America's most violent cities (Bachman & Saltzman, 1995; Hotaling, Straus, & Lincoln, 1990). Family violence has significant ramifications for a number of personal, societal, and health problems that affect people in the United States (e.g., A. S. Jones, 2000). Overall, family interactions comprise the single greatest determinant of an individual's level of violence outside the home. Children who are abused, or who witness violence, are far more likely to engage in violence themselves, both as children and when they are adults.

- *Child maltreatment.* U.S. Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS; 2009) specified that for the year 2007, social service agencies across the United States received approximately 3.5 million reports of child maltreatment, a rate of 10.6 per 1,000 children. The 2007 rate of abuse is below the all-time high of 15.3 per 1,000, which was recorded in 1993. Parents were the perpetrators of the abuse in 80% of these cases.

- *The National Violence Against Women Survey (NVAWS;* Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000b) found that 52% of adult women and 66% of adult men in the survey sample reported being assaulted as children by adult caretakers.

- *The National Crime Victimization Survey* (*NCVS;* Rand, 2009), based on telephone interview data, reported that 255,630 rapes occurred in 2006. Strangers perpetrated 39.1%, and intimates perpetrated 60.9%. Of those raped, 22.9% were 18 to 20 years old and 22.8% were 21 to 29 years old.

- *The NVAWS* (Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000b) found that rape by an intimate partner occurred against nearly 10% of women.

- *The NVAWS* (Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000a) presented data on ***intimate partner violence (IPV)*** showing that 22% of women and 7% of men reported experiencing IPV at some point in their lifetimes.

Intrafamilial Fatal Abuse

- *The U.S. Department of Health & Human Services* (2009b) estimated that in 2007 approximately 1,760 children in the United States died as a result of abuse and neglect. Of these children, 42.2% were under the age of 1 year and 75.7% were under the age of 4. One or both parents caused 70% of the fatalities.

- *The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP; U.S. Department of Justice, 2006)* reported that of juvenile murder victims with known offenders, 39% were killed by family members, 46% by acquaintances, and 15% by strangers.

- *Surveillance for Violent Deaths—The National Violent Death Reporting System (NVDRS—within the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC]; Karch et al., 2009)* tabulated 616 deaths of intimate partners with 16 states reporting. Of these, 370 (60.1%) were females and 246 (39.9%) were males. The largest number of victims and offenders were in the 35 to 44 age range.

- *Surveillance for Violent Deaths—The NVDRS* (Karch et al., 2009) found that of *homicide-suicide deaths,* IPV problems preceded the crimes in 73.0% of the cases (see also Felthous et al., 2001; see Regoeczi, 2001, for Canadian IPV homicides).

- *The U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics* (2007) summarized gender differences among *homicide victims* from 1976 to 2005. For females, intimates killed 30.0%, family members killed 11.7%, known acquaintances killed 21.8%, strangers killed 8.8%, and unknown assailants killed 27.7%.

For males, intimates killed 5.3%, family members killed 6.7%, known acquaintances killed 35.6%, strangers killed 15.5%, and unknown assailants killed 37.8%.

- *The National Center for Injury Prevention and Control* (CDC, 2007) reported that in 2005, homicide was the fourth-leading cause of death for children ages 1 through 11.

Combined homicide-suicide. In *combined homicide-suicides,* a perpetrator commits suicide after killing others, most often an intimate partner. The perpetrators may also kill their children, in-laws, romantic partners of the victim, and others. A related category of deaths are the *collateral deaths of family and friends.* In a claims-making move, scholars in the state of Washington asserted that family homicide rates ought to include these collateral deaths occurring with an *IPV homicide/suicide* (Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence, 2000). Because of family violence researchers' interest in these IPV-related deaths, statisticians are now beginning to tabulate the frequencies of these occurrences.

WHY ARE FAMILIES VIOLENT?

All families have tensions, and all families may occasionally resolve these tensions in inappropriate ways. Even the best parents and the most loving couples display inappropriate behaviors. They sometimes lose their tempers, say intentionally hurtful things to one another, raise their voices when arguing, and even lash out physically. In many respects, aggression is a normal (i.e., common and culturally approved) part of family life. Since these behaviors are so common and widespread, one has to ask "Why," and "Why are women and children so often the ones who are victimized?"

Structural factors. Many structural factors make families particularly prone to violence. One of these is the amount of time family members spend together, which increases the opportunity for violence. In addition, power differentials often exist among family members, and those who are less powerful run a greater risk for victimization. Children are subordinate to parents, wives often must be subordinate to husbands, and sometimes elderly parents are subordinate to their adult children. Further complicating matters is that children and women usually cannot fight back; nor can they always choose with whom they will or will not interact. Children are dependent on their parents, and wives are very frequently dependent on their husbands. Whereas many interpersonal conflicts can be resolved simply through the dissolution of relationships, most family relationships are protected by law and are not so easily severed. Even when child maltreatment comes to the attention of authorities, states are reluctant to break up families. Instead, authorities give dysfunctional families multiple opportunities to change. Finally, the privacy and autonomy traditionally granted to families make violence relatively easy to hide (Brinkerhoff & Lupri, 1988).

Idealization of the family. Levesque (2001) asserts that the problem begins with an *idealized notion of the family.* This image of the family includes several beliefs: (a) parental rights supersede children's rights; (b) parents can and should have control over the development of their children; (c) family members will act in the best interests of children and elderly parents who are incapable of caring for themselves; (d) families rooted in traditional cultures are *strong*

families, even if some of their customs justify family violence; and (e) families have the right to privacy and autonomy, even if this right results in harm to vulnerable members. This perception of the family serves to "justify what otherwise could be construed as violent, abusive, and worthy of intervention" (p. 5).

Family norms. There is little doubt that *family norms,* such as spanking, contribute to a certain amount of family aggression. Summarized by Bender et al. (2007), Phoenix Children's Hospital reported the following *rates of physical punishment* by parents: (a) Nearly 66% of 1- and 2-year-olds, (b) 80% by the time children reach 5th grade, and (c) 85% by the time adolescents are in high school. Along the same lines, the National Opinion Research Center (1998) disclosed that 73% of surveyed Americans agreed or strongly agreed that it is "sometimes necessary to discipline a child with a good hard spanking."

Social tolerance of violence. In addition, social scientists almost universally maintain that *society's acceptance,* encouragement, and glorification of violence contributes to abuse in the family. Such tolerance may have a *spillover effect,* raising the likelihood of violence in the home (Tolan & Guerra, 1998). Depiction of women in advertising and in video games, for example, often characterizes women as sex objects and as victims (Stankiewicz & Rosselli, 2008). Objectification of males in the media appears to be problematic, as well (Johnson, McCreary, & Mills, 2007). As a case in point, a Japanese-produced video game, *Rapelay,* features players stalking and raping a mother and her two daughters. At least in this one situation, Amazon, eBay, and other sellers banned the sale of this "game" ("NYC Official: Ban," 2009). Although a minority of social scientists may still contend that attributing any youth violence to the media is empirically unjustified, most now disagree (C. A. Anderson et al., 2003). Watching media violence constitutes a form of *social learning,* a broadly accepted theory that explains learning through observation.

CASE HISTORY Ben and Lori—Making Up Is Not Hard to Do

At an after-theater party that Ben and Lori attended on their vacation, Ben struck up a conversation with Vanessa, a 20-year-old ingénue from the Dominican Republic. When Lori noted Ben's interest in Vanessa, she began flirting with one of the theater company's young male dancers, Danny. Lori made a show of *kicking back* with Danny, requesting slow music, rubbing up against him while dancing, and asking him to bring her several glasses of wine. The next thing she knew, Ben was out of sight and so was Vanessa. Lori stormed out of the party with Danny in hot pursuit.

As Lori walked down Broadway at midnight, Ben came out of nowhere and pleaded with her to come back to the party. Lori slapped his face, screamed that he was a cheat, and marched on toward their hotel. Ben tried to stop her by pinning her to a wall. He accused her of being turned on by Danny, so Lori taunted Ben, saying things like "Young guys in tight pants look good to me!" When Ben couldn't shut Lori up, he slapped her once and twisted her arm behind her back. When he let go, Lori ran crying to their hotel.

Inside their room, Lori slammed things around and insisted that Ben no longer loved her. She threw Ben's jacket to the floor and stomped all over it. Ben said that Lori ought to know that he

loved her. Didn't she know that he thought she was the "sexiest woman at the party, so blond, so cool, so beautiful"? Lori burst into tears and told Ben that she wanted only him. He grabbed her and began kissing her passionately. The real party lasted until 3 a.m. Lori and Ben had learned long ago that a few slaps here and there were just part of their relationship. After all, they weren't really violent, because they loved each other and no one ever got hurt.

This case history provides an example of how many couples view a certain amount of aggression as acceptable in their relationships.

Social acceptance of violence. Scientific polls gauging the attitudes of large segments of the U.S. population toward IPV have identified an antiwoman bias, enhanced somewhat by the gender of the respondent. In a cynical vein, McMahon and Pence (2003) asserted that society would prefer that battered women be "perfect victims," those who neither instigate abuse nor fight back. Although significant changes in attitudes toward drunk driving and littering were evident over the years 1982 to 1992, changes concerning IPV were more limited. Younger males, but not older males or any-age females, drawn from a random community sample said they would be worried about *legal repercussions* if they hurt someone else. Men also said they would be *embarrassed* if their friends and acquaintances found out that they hurt someone, but they did not report any substantial increases in feeling guilt or shame if others did find out (Grasmic, Blackwell, Bursik, & Mitchell, 1993).

Another poll taken during 1992 uncovered some typical attitudes toward IPV. Americans ranked domestic violence as *fifth* on a list of public concerns, with only 34% of the total respondents agreeing that it is an extremely important topic. The general public *failed to endorse arrest* as the proper response to spouse abuse; that is, most IPV is not seen as a crime. At a minimum, many respondents said a man would have to hit a woman hard (53%) to deserve arrest, but if he punched her, 94% agreed that arrest was appropriate. One disturbing and persistent belief among 38% of respondents was that "Some women provoked men into abusing them" (E. Klein, Campbell, Soler, & Ghez, 1997).

By 1995, domestic violence ranked first among social concerns, with 83% of respondents evaluating it as an extremely important social issue. At that time, the respondents also thought that public intervention was necessary (82%), especially if an injury occurred (96%). The principal reason they cited for the necessity of public intervention, however, was to protect children, not women (E. Klein et al., 1997; see also Nabi & Horner, 2001).

Cultural factors. Cultural factors can also be useful in explaining male-to-female intimate partner violence (MFIPV). Some cultures accept violence; others condemn it. In some cultures, such as Brazil and the Arab world, a husband's violence against an unfaithful wife presumably restores the husband's honor (Kulwicki, 2002; Vandello & Cohen, 2003). Many authorities place partial blame for the widespread acceptance of violence in U.S. culture on the content of television programming as well as movies, sports, toys, and video games (Bushman & Anderson, 2001). Others cite approval of violence within the home as a contributing factor. For some, the most crucial element is cultural acceptance of male dominance.

Individual factors. In addition to powerful social forces that may foster family violence, there are a number of more individual factors that do so as well. One factor, of course, is some type of *mental illness or mental disorder,* such as schizophrenia. Another factor is individual differences, such as vulnerability to *jealousy,* or *anger.* One powerful precursor of family violence that may flow across the lifespan is level of *attachment.* Attachment refers to the affectional bond between a parent and a child or, later as an adult, the bond between romantic partners. Disruptions in attachment are related to numerous correlates of family violence, such as intense emotional dependence (D.G. Dutton & Painter, 1993a; Holtzworth-Munroe & Hutchinson, 1993).

DISCOVERING FAMILY VIOLENCE: HOW SOCIAL CONDITIONS BECOME SOCIAL PROBLEMS

Although historians have characterized America as a violent nation, their focus has been on collective social violence. Consistently overlooked was the significant amount of interpersonal violence and even violence in wars. This oversight helps explain why Americans expressed surprise over the enormous amount of violence among family members (Leonard, 2003). Presumably, few knowledgeable people would now question the assertion that family violence is a serious social problem.

In addition to increased coverage in the media, the academic community has covered the topic in textbooks on social problems and deviant behavior, and increasingly universities are offering specific courses on family violence. The amount of research on the topic has grown exponentially, leading to countless new publications related to family violence. Articles reporting on family violence research have also become increasingly common in mainstream journals in other fields: sociology, psychology, social work, law, criminal justice, epidemiology, cross-cultural issues, human rights, homosexuality, and health. In addition, numerous social movement organizations and federal agencies are increasingly dedicated to assisting victims and preventing family violence (see Adair & Vohra, 2003). Others point to the overall advances in the field (Kendall-Tackett, 2009). Despite all these encouraging signs, Pyles and Postmus (2004) complain that theorizing has not kept pace with the upsurge in research.

Concern and outrage about family violence has also increased around the world, and several *international treaties* explicitly include human rights protection from violent family members. The 1989 *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* proclaimed that all children should be protected from "physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child" (quoted in Levesque, 2001, p. 7). The United Nations Declaration on the *Elimination of Violence Against Women* (1994) condemned any "act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life" (quoted in Levesque, 2001, p. 7). In these documents, the United Nations rejected *cultural relativism,* declaring that all U.N. member countries must eliminate any cultural practices or customs that permit the abuse of women or children. In the ensuing years, however, it is clear that progress in reducing violence against children and women has proceeded at a snail's pace.

Children's human rights. The customary view of children's rights is through the lens of family law, and to date, observers have justly concluded that "international law and the human rights jurisdiction can be surprisingly disappointing in allowing children's rights" (Sawyer, 2006). Children need much more protection in terms of property rights and in custodial decisions. International law seems inoperative in compelling various countries to honor agreements, such as the Hague Convention. A custodial dispute concerning an 8-year-old American boy and his biological father clarifies the problem. A Brazilian court awarded custody of the boy to his Brazilian stepfather following the death of his mother, even though she had abducted him illegally when he was only 3 years old (Simao, 2009).

Women's human rights. Improvement in the status of women across the globe has been painstakingly slow. An *International News* report on October 12, 2006, proclaimed that the U.N. found violence against women to be severe, pervasive, and worldwide. A 2006 *BBC News* report on October 11 stated that Ethiopian women were the most abused women in the world, with 60% reporting sexual violence and marital rape. In addition, 100 countries had no domestic violence laws whatsoever. Emblematic of the sheer needless cruelty toward women, Ghanaian communities punish widows in many of the following ways: "by seclusion, pouring pepper into the eyes and private parts of a widow and preventing her from eating as signs of mourning" (Amoakohene, 2004, p. 2375). Clearly, family violence is a universal problem, receiving recognition on the social agendas of the United States and many other nations. It is important to recognize, however, that concern about family violence is a fairly recent phenomenon.

Social constructionism. When and how did family violence come to be seen as a social problem? According to many sociologists, social conditions become social problems through a process of social constructionism (Loseke, 2003; Spector & Kitsuse, 1977). From this perspective, *societal reactions* are central to the process through which a social condition is redefined as a social problem. Societal reactions to various situations, such as child abuse, can come from many sources: individual citizens, religious groups, social movement organizations, political interest groups, and the media, to name but a few. Through their reactions to particular social conditions, individuals and institutions play a crucial role in transforming public perceptions.

Claims-making. Various interest groups change social conditions into social problems by actively engaging in the process of raising awareness about that condition. The term *claims-making* has been applied to the activities of such groups; it refers to the "activities of individuals or groups making assertions of grievances or claims with respect to some putative condition" (Spector & Kitsuse, 1977, p. 75). Generally speaking, the process begins when claims-makers express anger or distress about a particular condition that they see as highly objectionable. Claims-makers may have vested interests in the outcomes of their protests, or they may simply be *moral entrepreneurs* engaged in what they see as a purely moral crusade (Becker, 1963). As the cause of a particular claims-making group becomes acknowledged by society more generally, the social condition comes to be defined as a social problem. Social problems, then, are essentially *discovered* through this process of societal reactions and social definitions. From this perspective, social problems come and go as societal reactions to given conditions change.

Among other things, the *social constructionist perspective* helps to explain cross-cultural variations in definitions of family violence. That is, what is condemned as abuse in one culture is not always condemned in another. The social constructionist perspective also helps to illustrate how research is used in ongoing debates about social problems. The findings from family violence research have not uniformly settled disagreements about family violence–related topics. Instead, the research has become one of the most contentious areas in the social sciences. Experts pose many significant and far-reaching questions: Is family violence increasing or decreasing? Are men as likely as women to be the victims of intimate partner violence? Should parents be allowed to hit their children? And what constitutes rape? Although one might hope that research could settle such debates, the reality is that competing claims-makers interpret research data differently. Furthermore, those on both sides in any given debate typically arm themselves with their own sets of empirical findings, which they espouse as *the truth*. From a social constructionist perspective, the "winners" of these debates define the nature and the facts of social problems (Best, 2001).

Discovering Child Maltreatment: The Historical Context

> This history of childhood is a nightmare from which we have only recently begun to awaken. The further back in history one goes, the lower the level of child care, and the more likely children are to be killed, abandoned, beaten, terrorized, and sexually abused. (deMause, 1974, p. 1)

Contemporary conceptions of children and childhood in the United States—that childhood is a special phase of life and that children should be loved, nurtured, and protected from the cruel world—emerged only within the past few hundred years. As Empey, Stafford, and Hay (1999) noted, in previous times children were "regarded more as small or inadequate versions of their parents than as sacred beings in need of special protection" (pp. 6–7). One illustration of the previous indifference to children as a group with special status is the historical practice of infanticide. Some scholars maintain infanticide was the most frequent crime in all of Europe and remained a relatively common practice until about 1800 (Piers, 1978).

Over the centuries, the value of children grew in developed societies, and by the 1900s in the United States, the government's interest in the welfare of children resulted in *child protection laws* including child labor laws, the creation of a juvenile court system, and mandatory education requirements. Although these changes likely reflect an increase in the value U.S. society placed on children, they no doubt also came about because of the state's interest in protecting itself from troubled children and the troubled adults these children often become (Pfohl, 1977).

Discovering child physical abuse. In many ways, the indifference to childhood evidenced in previous centuries is not difficult to explain. The harshness of life, the high rates of disease, and the visibility of death all contributed to a general devaluation of life and of children's lives in particular. In addition, most societies regarded children as the property of their parents, who were allowed to treat their property as they saw fit. In some cases, parents probably viewed their children as economic liabilities—as little more than more mouths to feed (Walker, Bonner, & Kaufman, 1988; Wolfe, 1991).

Many scholars trace the actual discovery of child abuse in the United States to the *house of refuge movement* of the early 1800s. The medieval principle of *parens patriae*—that is, the

right and responsibility of the state to protect those who cannot protect themselves—guided this movement (Pfohl, 1977). As a result of reforms brought about by the movement in the early to mid-1800s, authorities began to house children who were neglected, abused, or otherwise *on the road to ruin* in one of many state-supported institutions. The house of refuge movement represents the government's first attempt to intervene in neglect and abuse cases (Empey, et al., 1999).

First child abuse court case. Probably the most famous early court case involving child abuse was tried in 1874. Church social worker Etta Wheeler discovered that 8-year-old Mary Ellen Wilson was being beaten and starved by her stepmother. After unsuccessfully seeking help to remedy the situation, Wheeler took the case to Henry Bergh, founder of the *Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.* Mary Ellen was, after all, a member of the animal kingdom. A courtroom full of concerned New Yorkers, many of them upper-class women, heard the shocking details of Mary Ellen's life. The stepmother had beaten her almost daily and did not allow her to play with other children or even to leave the house. Mary Ellen had an unhealed gash on the left side of her face, where her stepmother had struck her with a pair of scissors. The jury took only 20 minutes to find the stepmother guilty of assault and battery (Pleck, 1987).

Child-saving movement. Because of the resulting public outcry, concerned citizens eventually founded the *Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children* in 1874 (Pagelow, 1984). This organization, and the larger *child-saving movement* of which it was a part, advocated for dramatic changes in society's treatment of children. Increasingly, child protection advocates argued that children need to be loved and nurtured, and if parents fail to protect their children, the state should intervene. They argued, in effect, that parents should not have complete authority over their children (Finkelhor, 1996).

Largely as a result of the claims-making of child advocacy groups, many state legislatures passed child protective statutes in the early 1900s, criminalizing parents' abusive and neglectful behavior and specifying procedures for meeting the needs of abused and neglected children (Pleck, 1987). Although there was considerable movement toward child protection during this time, sociolegal reactions to the problem of child abuse remained somewhat sporadic. For example, no laws existed to make the reporting of suspected child abuse mandatory for certain professionals.

The battered child syndrome. The full recognition of child abuse as a social problem in the United States was not complete until the 1960s, when Dr. C. Henry Kempe and his colleagues first described the *battered child syndrome.* They further suggested that physicians should report any observed cases of abuse (Kempe, Silverman, Steele, Droegemueller, & Silver, 1962). Kempe et al. defined child abuse as a *clinical condition with diagnosable medical and physical symptoms resulting from deliberate physical assault.* This declaration was important because it marked the addition of the considerable clout of the medical community to claims-making about the child abuse problem. When medical doctors combined forces with other professionals and child protection advocacy groups, the movement rapidly gained momentum. Before the end of the 1960s, every U.S. state had created laws mandating that professionals report suspected cases of abuse, and in 1974, Congress enacted the *Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act,* which provided federal funding to help states fight child abuse.

Discovering child sexual abuse. Throughout history, and particularly in certain cultures, sexual interactions involving children have been commonplace. Some cultures have regarded these interactions as appropriate, even healthy for children. As one illustration, the ancient Greeks sexually exploited children, especially boys (deMause, 1974). Despite dramatic changes over the centuries, condemnation of sexual contact between adults and children is still not universal. One extreme minority perspective is that of the North American Man/Boy Love Association (NAMBLA). This organization, founded in 1978, supports "the rights of all people to engage in consensual relations, and opposes laws which destroy loving relationships merely on the basis of the age of the participants" (NAMBLA, 2002). Robert Rhodes, a NAMBLA spokesman, made the following comments when asked whether the group views itself as an advocacy group for children:

> Yes. Considering the legitimacy of sexual relationships with children, there are two main theories that you can work from. One was the classical Greek theory—that is to say that the older partner in a sexual relationship served as initiator and tutor of the younger partner. You can also take a children's liberationist viewpoint—that is to say that children insofar as is possible—and it's far more possible than the current structure allows—should be given liberty to run their own lives as they choose, including the ability to determine how and with whom they should have sex. (quoted in Hechler, 1988, pp. 193–194)

Fortunately, mainstream America totally rejects the philosophy of NAMBLA. Even though freedom of speech allows NAMBLA members the right to express their beliefs, laws forbid any sexual contact between adults and children. Legislatures and attorneys continue their struggle to update legislation to protect children more effectively.

Discovering child neglect and psychological maltreatment. Child neglect is probably the *most forgotten* form of maltreatment (Daro, 1988). Such limited interest in neglect is surprising, however, given that it is much more common than physical or sexual child abuse. Psychological maltreatment is also pervasive and overlooked, even though it is a central component in all child maltreatment. The most obvious reason for these oversights is that physical and sexual abuse are far more likely to result in observable harm, and the definition of child physical abuse tends to be defined only in terms of *harm.* By contrast, the many negative effects of neglect and psychological maltreatment may not result in observable harm.

Although child neglect is a very old phenomenon, society did not come to acknowledge and define it as a social problem until the 20th century (Wolock & Horowitz, 1984). Psychological maltreatment of children has received even less recognition. Professionals have tended to look at psychological abuse as a *side effect* of other forms of abuse, rather than as a unique form of maltreatment. Only since the early 1990s have experts established psychological maltreatment as a discrete form of child maltreatment (see Hart & Brassard, 1993; Loring, 1994; Wiehe, 1990). Now, surveys suggest that Americans have finally come to consider psychological maltreatment a serious problem. Of those surveyed, 75% indicated that exposure to "repeated yelling and swearing" is harmful to a child's well-being (Daro & Gelles, 1992).

Discovering Intimate Partner Violence: The Historical Context

WOMAN'S RIGHTS CONVENTION. A Convention to discuss the social, civil, and religious condition and rights of women, will be held in the Wesleyan Chapel, at Seneca Falls, N.Y., on Wednesday and Thursday, the 19th and 20th of July, current; commencing at 10 o'clock am. (*Seneca Falls Convention*, 1848)

Social conditions in the United States were not conducive to the recognition of wife abuse until the women's movement of the mid-1800s called attention to the subordination of women. This movement, which was followed by the suffragist movement of the early 1900s and the feminist movement of the mid- to late 1900s, was an important precursor to the discovery of marital violence. The Seneca Falls Convention in 1848 planted the seed for a women's rights movement in a Wesleyan Methodist church in Seneca Falls, New York. Lucretia Mott, wife of an antislavery reformer and Quaker preacher, and women's rights advocate Elizabeth Stanton organized the Seneca Falls Convention. In the days prior to the convention, Stanton wrote the convention's Declaration of Sentiments, a document modeled after the Declaration of Independence. The declaration begins with the following pronouncement:

We hold these truths to be self-evident; that all men and women are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; that to secure these rights governments are instituted, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. (*Seneca Falls Convention*, 1848)

In strong language, the document asserts that throughout history men have injured and controlled women in hopes of establishing absolute tyranny over them. It concludes: "In view of this entire disfranchisement of one-half the people of this country . . . we insist that they have immediate admission to all the rights and privileges which belong to them as citizens of the United States."

Through the early 1900s, the struggle for women's rights in the United States focused mainly on securing the *right to vote.* Presumably, the right to vote would give women the necessary power to challenge many injustices, including violence in the family (Ashcraft, 2000). The efforts of the suffragist movement culminated with the passage of the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution in 1920. Another advance for women occurred during World War II when women's joining the labor force changed some opinions about the adage, "women's place is in the home." During the 1960s, interest in women's rights revived as a new feminist movement gained momentum. The 1965 Supreme Court decision giving women access to birth control in every state freed women to limit the size of their families, to undertake alternative roles, and to pursue their autonomy. Now, the movement's major concerns turned to the subordination and victimization of women within the family.

Discovering battered women. Many historians have noted that early marriage laws actually gave men the legal right to hit their wives (R. E. Dobash & Dobash, 1979). Thus, the marriage license

became "a hitting license" (Straus, 1983). English common law held that women were inferior to men, and a married woman had *no legal existence* apart from her husband. The husband, in effect, owned and controlled her, and he also was accountable for her actions. Because social norms expected husbands to govern their wives, the law allowed them a great deal of latitude in using force to do so (Sigler, 1989). Early *British rape laws* also reflected the status of women as property, stating that when a woman was raped, restitution should be paid to her husband (or, if she was unmarried, to her father) (Sigler, 1989).

Recognizing the vulnerability of women within the family, Elizabeth Stanton argued that the rights of women should be acknowledged in all spheres of life. In doing so, she listed a number of facts, several of which related specifically to the family:

> He has made her, if married, in the eye of the law, civilly dead. He has taken from her all right in property, even to the wages she earns. In the covenant of marriage, she is compelled to promise obedience to her husband, he becoming, to all intents and purposes, her master—the law giving him power to deprive her of her liberty and to administer chastisement. He has so framed the laws of divorce, as to what shall be the proper causes, and in case of separation, to whom the guardianship of the children shall be given, as to be wholly regardless of the happiness of women—the law, in all cases, going upon a false supposition of the supremacy of man, and giving all power into his hands. (*Seneca Falls Convention*, 1848)

Despite the efforts of Stanton and other influential reformers, the problem of wife abuse attracted little attention in the first half of the 20th century. As Pleck (1987) has noted, the campaign was, "compared to the child abuse movement of roughly the same time period, an abysmal failure" (p. 109). The modern feminist movement that arose in the 1960s renewed public interest in the problem of the subordination of women, in general, and in marital relationships in particular. Initially, however, leaders of the movement, including the National Organization for Women (NOW), tended to ignore wife abuse. Instead, NOW focused on passage of the Equal Rights Amendment, elimination of discrimination against women in the workplace, public funding for child care, and abortion rights. To the degree that feminists did advocate for battered women, the public, suspicious of their claims, often dismissed the movement as too radical and antifamily (Pleck, 1987).

The battered women's movement gained momentum when *Chiswick Women's Aid,* the first shelter for battered women to gain widespread public attention, opened in England in 1971. Chiswick's founder, Erin Pizzey, published the influential book *Scream Quietly or the Neighbours Will Hear* in 1974. The publicity that surrounded the book, and the subsequent radio and television exposure it generated, helped spread the battered women's movement in Europe. American activists, influenced by visiting Chiswick in the early 1970s, were eager to open similar shelters in the United States. A flood of media attention in the mid-1970s further increased public awareness of the domestic violence problem (R. E. Dobash & Dobash, 1978, 1979; Pleck, 1987).

In 1976, NOW decided to make wife battering a priority issue. As advocates founded organizations such as the *National Coalition Against Domestic Violence,* they effectively brought attention to battered women's issues at the national level. Their work led to improvements in social services for battered wives and changes in legal statutes that failed to protect women

(Studer, 1984). Several other organizations, such as the *National Organization for Victim Assistance* and the *National Council on Child Abuse and Family Violence,* actively fought for the rights of women. Although these organizations had somewhat dissimilar social and political agendas, their combined efforts raised awareness of the significance of violence against women as a *social problem.* Public health scholars recently pronounced violence against women to be a serious national *health problem,* because of the countless negative physical and mental health consequences of IPV (Chrisler & Ferguson, 2006). To some extent, the battered women's movement is a victim of its own success. Broad-based organizations, such as health care and government entities, have become so embedded in the movement that it is now mainstream, no longer in need of specialized advocates (Allen, Lehner, Marrison, Miles, & Russel, 2007).

Discovering marital rape. The women's movement has been influential in the relatively recent discovery of another form of domestic violence: *marital rape.* Historically, rape laws have pertained only to sexual assault outside of marriage. In the 1700s, Sir Matthew Hale, a chief justice of the Court of Kings Bench in England, originated the *marital exemption law.* The exemption held that by mutual matrimonial consent and contract, a wife had given her consent to sexual intercourse with her husband and could not retract it. Countering this longstanding assumption, early reformers viewed a woman's right to control her own body as key to eliminating her subordination, and they waged a vigorous campaign against a man's right to force sex in marriage. Their attempts to change marital exemption laws, however, were unsuccessful, and in the 19th century, the *status quo* continued. There were no criminal charges against any husband for raping his wife (Pleck, 1987).

Not until the modern feminist movement of the 1960s and 1970s did the topic of marital rape materialize once again. Contemporary defenders of the marital exemption law have challenged feminist claims-making during the past 40 years, arguing that the state has no business intervening in the private affairs of married couples. Defenders claimed that once the state intervenes, the love, trust, and closeness in a marriage will disintegrate, unlikely ever to be recovered (Hasday, 2000). Another defense of the marital exemption is that a husband may need protection from a vindictive wife who might falsely accuse him of marital rape as leverage in a divorce case. Diana Russell, however, illustrated the problem of uninformed legislators and others in the 1990 revision of her book *Rape in Marriage,* in which she quotes a telltale statement made by California state senator Bob Wilson: "But if you can't rape your wife, who can you rape?" (p. 18).

Fortunately, feminists have made substantial legal inroads in their attempts to prevent married men from forcing their wives to have sex. Laws against marital rape, while still imperfect, made rape a crime in all 50 states in July 1993. Although marital rape laws now exist, changes in feelings of entitlement among male partners have not always kept pace. In a 1996 inquiry, Raquel Bergen relayed a statement reiterated frequently by a husband to his wife: "That's my body—my ass, my tits, my body. You gave that to me when you married me and that belongs to me" (p. 20).

Discovering dating violence. In 1981, James Makepeace published the results of a seminal study on dating violence. The apparent similarity between the victimization of women in dating

relationships and in marital relationships led advocates and academicians to view dating violence as a form of violence against women (R. E. Dobash & Dobash, 1979). Given this renewed interest and availability of university students for research participation, surveys of dating violence became as prevalent as surveys of wife abuse. As the unresolved issues surrounding female-to-male dating violence resurfaced, advocates were successful in their claims-making, and today many high school and college campuses offer programs educating students about dating violence (Levy, 1991).

Discovering sexual assault among dating couples. In recent years, society has also come to recognize *date rape* as a serious social problem. Surprisingly, researchers determined that *sexual assault by an acquaintance* was far more likely than a violent sexual assault by a stranger. Date rape came more fully into view in the late 1980s when *Ms.* magazine published the results of a study called Campus Project on Sexual Assault (Koss, 1992, 1993). The study, which was funded by the National Institute of Mental Health, found that 27% of the college women surveyed had been victims of a completed rape (15%) or attempted rape (12%). Journalists in the popular press publicized the findings widely, and the study was the subject of a 1991 U.S. Senate hearing on sexual assault. Of late, experts have begun to abandon the term *date rape* in favor of *sexual assault* because the term *sexual assault* goes far beyond forceful intercourse and includes many forms of unwanted sexual touching (Clay-Warner & Burt, 2005).

Discovering stalking. Another form of abuse that is loosely related to dating violence (and wife battering) is *stalking,* which Tjaden and Thoennes (2000b) define as "visual or physical proximity; nonconsensual communication; verbal, written, or implied threats; or a combination thereof that would cause fear in a reasonable person" (p. 5). To provide an empirical definition of stalking, researchers queried battered women via a 13-item inventory. The women responded once for themselves and once for their stalker. See Table 1.1 for percentages of perpetrations and victimizations (items collapsed into subscale scores) reported by battered women (Langhinrichsen-Rohling, 2006).

These data round out the meaning (operationalization) of stalking and demonstrate the gendered nature of the behavior. Although stalking has always existed, criminal codes largely ignored it until the 1990s. Women's advocates and other groups were successful in attracting considerable media and scholarly attention to this behavior in the last few years, and today it is a criminal offense in all 50 states (Rosenfeld, 2000). Ongoing research has recognized stalking

TABLE 1.1 Stalking Perpetration and Victimization

Perpetration	*Victimization*
Begging—29.3%	Begging—87.9%
Unwanted pursuit—41.3%	Unwanted pursuit—87.0.3%
Stalking—25.0%	Stalking—74.4%
Threatening—25.3%	Threatening—78.8%

as a more serious crime, capable of causing traumatic reactions in its victims (Logan & Cole, 2007). With access to computers, *cyberstalking* has also become a frequent tool of stalking perpetrators (Moriarty & Freiberger, 2008).

Discovering elder abuse. Elder abuse has been one of the last forms of family violence to receive societal attention, following the discovery of child abuse in the 1960s and marital violence in the early 1970s (Wolf & Pillemer, 1989). The first research on elder abuse did not appear in the *Social Science Index* until 1981–1982 (Baumann, 1989). It was not until 1989 that a scholarly journal dedicated solely to the topic began publishing. The earliest federal government involvement in addressing elder abuse came in 1962, when Congress authorized payments to states to provide protective services for "persons with physical and/or mental limitations, who are unable to manage their own affairs . . . or who are neglected or exploited" (U.S. DHHS, as quoted in Wolf, 2000, p. 6). In 1974, Congress mandated adult protective services (APS) programs for all states.

For some observers, the image of the stressed and burdened adult daughter abusing an elderly parent *linked elder abuse to child abuse* and resulted in considerable media attention. Following the child abuse model, claims-makers successfully advocated for laws that make the reporting of suspected elder abuse mandatory for certain professionals (Wilber & McNeilly, 2001). Legal progress in the area continues with ongoing attempts to pass the *Elder Justice Act* and related bills. It has become increasingly clear that it is necessary to help protect seniors from financial fraud, phony marketers, and social security misuse. Efforts have resulted in improved emergency law enforcement and rape prevention (Stiegel & Klem, 2007). Most of the legal amendments have centered on advancing guardianship rules and court oversight (Cook-Daniels, 2008a). The *Elder Justice Coalition* originated in early 2003 and included *five* founding organizations, such as the National Committee for the Prevention of Elder Abuse (NCPEA). Finally, advocates inaugurated an Elder Abuse Awareness Day on June 15, 2006.

Discovering battered (?) men. One vigorous debate in the field of family violence centers on the issue of female-to-male intimate partner violence (IPV). The debate can in many respects be traced to survey data from the 1970s and 1980s that suggest that wives are violent toward their spouses as frequently as husbands are violent toward their spouses (Gelles & Straus, 1988; Straus, Gelles, & Steinmetz, 1980). Most of these data emanated from research using the Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS), a self-report instrument that measures the frequency of various kinds of violent interpersonal interactions between couples (see the discussion of the CTS in Chapter 2). Findings from the *National Family Violence Resurvey* indicated that 12% of the women and 11% of the men surveyed engaged in at least one act of interpersonal violence (usually minor violence) in the previous year.

The assertion that women are as violent as men troubles and angers many battered women's advocates who perceive the "real" marital violence problem to be wife battering. Critics charge that the CTS fails to measure the degree to which women who report committing violent acts may be acting in *self-defense* or out of *fear* (Kurz, 1989). As the debate progressed, Saunders (2002) reviewed the available IPV literature and found no consensus among experts that female-to-male partner violence is even a social problem, let alone a behavioral

equivalent to male-to-female violence. While strenuously defending gender equivalence of IPV, Straus and his colleagues (1980) stated that it would be unfortunate if the data on wife-to-husband violence "distracted us from giving first attention to wives as victims as the focus of social policy" (p. 43). Arguably, however, the data derived from their research showing extensive female-to-male violence via the CTS have fed a backlash against the battered women's movement (George, 2003).

Whatever the case may be, it is reassuring to note that the issue of male victimization has attracted more academic attention in the last decade. As researchers found evidence of some female-to-male IPV, the debate evolved into a comparison of gender similarities and differences in IPV (Miller & Meloy, 2006). As an illustration, *coercive control* of one's partner is not only a feature of male-to-female IPV, but also of female-to-male IPV, although to a much lesser extent (Swan & Snow, 2006). Competing claims-makers continue to negotiate the scope and nature of domestic violence. For the time being, the issue of women's violence against men remains in the background to some extent, as the real problem of IPV has emerged as *woman battering.*

The Co-occurrence of Child Maltreatment and Marital Violence

It may come as no surprise that child maltreatment and marital violence very frequently occur within the same family. Co-occurrence refers to situations in which one or both adult partners are abusive not only toward the other but also toward a child within the same family (Knickerbocker, Heyman, Slep, Jouriles, & McDonald, 2007). The exact amount of abusive behaviors that overlap is unknown but seems to extend between 30% and 60% (Appel & Holden, 1998). According to M. A. Dutton (as cited in Dingfelder, 2006b), child maltreatment and partner abuse are linked to such an extent that scholars *must* address them jointly.

Funding sources and advocate organizations are beginning to note this linkage and are altering their approaches accordingly. Scholars have commented on the vastly different mandates of the agencies involved. *Child Protective Services (CPS)* primarily focus on protecting children with much less concern toward mothers. Battered women's advocates focus primarily on the safety of both mothers and children and on the rights of the mother. These different goals came to a head in an adversarial manner when CPS charged a battered mother with child neglect because she *allowed* her children to see her husband beat her. Incredibly, a New York court in 1999 sided with CPS and found the mother guilty. Although higher courts later soundly reversed the decision, the case made it clear that co-occurring violence urgently requires professional attention (Clarke, 2006). For now, representatives from both factions are attempting to resolve their different approaches through collaborative exchanges.

International and Understudied Groups in the Discovery of Family Violence

Most Americans probably did not know much about Osama bin Laden, the Taliban, or the views of radical Islamic fundamentalists prior to the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001.

These attacks not only awakened Americans to the threat of terrorism, but also served to raise awareness about another shocking reality: the oppression of women and children around the world. Many of these practices constitute *human rights violations.* Only after the attacks did the mistreatment of women in Afghanistan make headlines in major U.S. newspapers and magazines. Such mistreatment, however, is not unique to radical Islamic fundamentalism. Other conservative extremist groups across the globe cling to similar cruel customs.

Women and children (especially girls) around the world have been and continue to be victimized by a vast array of cultural practices, including genital mutilation, foot binding, dowry death, child abandonment and infanticide, selective abortion of female fetuses, sexual exploitation, forced prostitution, and violent pornography (Holloway, 1994; Levesque, 2001). Many of these practices continue today essentially as customary laws—that is, customs that predate international legal reforms and are still widely observed (Levesque, 2001). These customs are deeply rooted in some cultures and continue to influence contemporary practices.

In China, for example, the state's one-child policy (which penalizes married couples for having more than the prescribed number of children) appears to have increased infanticide. Demographers estimate that approximately 12% of Chinese girl infants go missing each year (Riley, 1996). Another example of a cultural practice that indirectly contributes to abuse is India's dowry system. Wives whose families cannot pay dowries (payments to a groom) are often abused and sometimes killed by their husbands or their husbands' families (Levesque, 2001).

Levesque (2001) cites estimates made by the United Nations that between 17% and 38% of the world's women are victims of intimate violence, with rates as high as 60% in developing countries. McWhirter (1999) reported that in Chile, *private* violence probably affects 25% of wives and 60% of families. The country's cultural history of machismo, alcohol use, and acceptance of violence, in general, has hindered reform efforts. Illustrative of the seriousness of male violence against women are the criminal penalties for wife abuse. In Chile, legal sanctions apply only if the abuse resulted in at least 14 days of hospitalization for the victim or her loss of work (Levesque, 2001).

Cross-cultural family abuse. For the most part, American academicians have failed to blend into their definitions of IPV nuanced interpretations of family violence derived from other cultures. One indication of cultural variation comes from battered Japanese women who emphasize unprotected sex as a particularly onerous type of *male-to-female intimate partner violence* (**MFIPV**; Yoshihama, 2002). Chinese people living in Hong Kong are especially sensitive to the selection of terms, such as violence versus abuse, when responding to questionnaires about IPV (Tang, Cheung, Chen, & Sun, 2002). For a comprehensive discussion of definitions across cultures, see Malley-Morrison and Hines (2004).

Immigrant family violence. As American culture has become more diverse, the need to study, understand, and respond to cultural variations in family violence has received priority consideration from organizations, such as the American Psychological Association (APA 2003). Scholars in every field have forcefully called for enhanced cultural competence among practitioners and researchers. There is a great need to translate assessment tools, recognize some

of the subtleties of cultures that influence behaviors, and expand programs aimed at minorities (e.g., Calvete, Corral, & Estévez, 2007; Keller, Gonzales, & Fleuriet, 2005).

Immigrant women are especially vulnerable to IPV because they may be socially isolated and economically dependent on their spouses. Husbands can easily threaten their spouses with deportation (LaViolette & Barnett, 2000). Latino immigrants in the United States are more likely than Anglo families to live in poverty and to experience the stresses associated with recent immigration—factors that are likely to contribute to violence in the family. Latino parents tend to be relatively authoritarian and are more likely than Anglo-American parents to *punish their children physically.* As Fontes (2002) notes, the vast majority of these families are not dysfunctional or abusive, and they do not need the strong arm of the state. What these parents need are culturally competent counselors who can apply their knowledge in several ways: (a) to explain the dangers of punishing children physically, (b) to teach nonviolent parenting skills, and (c) to help families to cope with the isolation and other stressors they may be experiencing.

Violence among ethnic and racial minorities. Findings about *ethnic and racial differences* in IPV are mixed. Although several studies have uncovered higher rates of IPV among several minority groups, others have found few, if any, differences (McFarlane, Groff, O'Brien, & Watson, 2005; Smith & Chiricos, 2003). Caution in interpreting these findings is warranted because of other factors: (a) Police bias accounts for some racial disparity in felony arrest rates for black women (Bourg & Stock, 1994); (b) Demographic and socioeconomic factors help explain some racial disparities (Lauritsen & White, 2001); (c) Combining data from several diverse ethnic groups (e.g., Native American Indians and Asian Americans) distorts the findings (Sokoloff & Dupont, 2005); (d) Providing research respondents with inventories labeled as *crime surveys* versus *personal safety* surveys alters the results (McFarlane et al., 2005); and (e) Lack of knowledge of the impact of current and historical parameters of racism have influenced responses. Finally, there is no empirical evidence suggesting that racial differences in family violence are rooted in biology.

Violence between gay and lesbian partners. One form of interpartner violence that has only lately attracted academic research is IPV between *gay and lesbian partners.* One of the first influential books covering same-sex IPV (Renzetti, 1992) appeared in the early 1990s. The amount of contemporary research on the topic, however, has eclipsed expectations and is having a strong impact on the field of family violence. For one reason, findings about same-sex IPV have challenged the attribution of partner violence to the patriarchy (D. G. Dutton, 1994). Research continues to suggest that while the rates of some forms of violence within homosexual relationships are similar to those found within heterosexual relationships, the *forms* of abuse vary considerably. Same-sex assaults produce substantially more injuries, and same-sex homicides tend to be much more brutal than heterosexual homicides (Bartholomew, Regan, White, & Oram, 2008; Mize & Shackelford, 2008).

Abuse of disabled intimates. A 2000 definition of *disability* from the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control defines disability as "limitations in physical or mental function, caused

by one or more health conditions, in carrying out socially defined tasks and roles that individuals generally are expected to be able to do" (p. 1). Research on disabled women and children is especially sad and especially limited. Perpetrators do things such as move furniture around the house so that a blind spouse will trip over it. The prevalence of IPV in various disabled populations is unknown, but specialists theorize that disabled women may be 10 times more likely than nondisabled women to be abused (Sobsey, 1994; see also Sundram, 2000).

Religious diversity. Some current religious groups in the United States rob women of equality with men, going so far as to embed male dominance into their by-laws (Niebuhr, 1998). "The major religions legitimize the power of men over women as a God-given right, and there are strong historical traditions indicating approval of men beating their wives—within certain limits—as a way of controlling their behavior" (Archer, 2006, p. 149). Mormons, for instance, usually believe in rigid gender roles that give preference to men. A smattering of Mormons operating *under the radar* appear to cling to bygone and illegal practices, such as forced early marriage of teenage girls, and polygamy (Tresniowski, Atlas, Lang, & Cardwell, 2009). Because of the dual combination of religious freedom and an emphasis on parental rights in the United States, authorities hesitate to interfere with child-rearing practices that are simply unusual.

Some doctrines, though, incorporate beliefs that are so extreme, that agents of the mainstream culture must intervene. One exemplar is the rejection of modern medicine by Christian Scientists. In the news on May 16, 2009, was a story about a judge who ruled that the parents of a 13-year-old cancer victim must allow the boy to undergo chemotherapy. The doctors feared that the delay in obtaining a court order might already have cost the boy his life (Forliti, 2009). In addition, most denominations condemn homosexuality, thus threatening homosexuals' self-esteem and complicating their help-seeking efforts for same-sex IPV (Lacayo, Barovick, Cloud, & Duffy, 1998). On a more positive note, several studies of female IPV victims judged spiritual beliefs to be beneficial and important to their ability to cope (Farrell, 1996; Goodman, Dutton, Weinfurt, & Cook, 2003; Humphreys, Lee, Neylan, & Marmar, 1999).

Abuse of rural residents. Rural abused women are another subpopulation in dire need of aid, because they are isolated in a cultural enclave of patriarchy (Websdale, 1995). There are several elements that make it especially difficult for rural battered women: (a) a more patriarchal social order, (b) greater gun use, (c) inadequate or no criminal justice response to incidents of male-to-female IPV, and (d) a lack of confidentiality, phones, shelters, transportation, social support, and legal representation (Thompson, 1995; Websdale, 1995).

Abuse among intimates serving in the military. There are reasons to ask whether military training and service negatively influence family harmony and the safety of all family members. The emphases on killing and weapons training, the increased stress caused by family separations, male dominance, and other factors intimate that IPV rates would be very high. Research in the area is ongoing, but the attitudes of some military commanders hamper efforts to identify

problems. Some studies have found that IPV rates among military personnel are higher and that deployment may increase the rates. In one respect, however, military discipline can be somewhat effective in compelling treatment and in enforcing regulations requiring nonviolence in the home (e.g., McCarroll, Thayer, et al., 2000).

Defining Family Violence: Understanding the Social Construction of Deviance Definitions

Just as the claims-making process has played a role in the history and discovery of family violence, it plays an important role in how family violence is defined. Claims-making influences people's understanding of what the problem is and, in turn, impacts academia and policy. Claims-making among researchers has sometimes led to use of vastly different research methodologies that have often produced competing definitions. Because of claims-making and other factors, any given definition is rarely accepted as universally correct. Two examples help to illustrate this point.

Corporal Punishment

Many social scientists and child advocates believe that corporal punishment is morally wrong, harmful to children, and counterproductive. Some go so far as to argue that corporal punishment is a form of child abuse (Gershoff, 2008). Such claims-makers offer their arguments in an attempt to influence societal definitions of child maltreatment. Despite the worries of child abuse experts, surveys have shown that a majority of U.S. parents spank, and every U.S. state protects the right of a parent to spank as long is the child is not injured. But if the voices of these claims-makers become more persuasive in the future, spanking could conceivably be criminalized in the United States, as it is now in some Scandinavian countries (Straus, 1994).

Defining Rape

Equally controversial is how to define rape. Currently, the FBI defines rape as "carnal knowledge of a female forcibly and against her will" (U.S. Department of Justice, 2004). Ordinarily, experts define c*arnal knowledge* so narrowly that it excludes a number of onerous sexual acts. In the past 20 years, feminists have convincingly argued that all forced sexual acts should be legally condemned. In response, most states have rewritten and expanded their legal definitions of rape. Feminists have also advocated, with some success, for a broadening of the interpretation of *against her will,* arguing that where there is no female desire or explicit consent there is, by definition, male coercion. From this more inclusive perspective, a woman whose ability to consent is compromised by alcohol/drugs or through some form of coercion is judged to be a victim of rape.

Defining Family

In general, the term *family violence* refers to violence that takes place between immediate family members: husbands, wives, children, and parents. Yet, consideration of the topic

invariably leads to the discussion of interpersonal violence outside the bounds of the traditional family. Cultural and legal definitions of what constitutes a family are changing, and as a result it has become impossible to discuss marital violence, for example, without also considering violence between unmarried intimates. Today, the term *intimate* is more commonly used to refer to anyone in a very close personal relationship, frequently a sexual relationship, even same-sex relationships. The *U.S. Bureau of Justice and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention* currently use the term *intimate partner violence* to refer to violence between spouses, ex-spouses, or separated spouses; between cohabiters or ex-cohabiters; between boyfriends or ex-boyfriends and girlfriends or ex-girlfriends; and between same-sex partners or ex-partners.

Many of the forms of violence discussed in this volume occur outside of families as well as within them. Child sexual abuse most often occurs within the family, but not always. Elders may suffer abuse at the hands of family members, but society neglects them more generally. Although the primary focus in this text is on the family, there are a few discussions of abusive settings that exist outside the family unit, such as those of persons in a position of trust in the caretaking of children.

Defining Violence

Violence may be defined as "an act carried out with the intention of, or an act perceived as having the intention of, physically hurting another person" (Steinmetz, 1987, p. 729). Although this definition offers a clear and concise starting point, it can be overly narrow when it fails to include some forms of maltreatment, such as child neglect or controlling a spouse's right to leave the house. On the other hand, it may be *overly broad* when it includes corporal punishment or slightly pushing a spouse once in 20 years.

Defining Family Violence

The focus of this text is primarily violence that has been successfully labeled *abusive* by claims-makers. Roger Levesque (2001) offers one suitable definition: "Family violence includes family members' acts of omission or commission resulting in physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, neglect, or other forms of maltreatment that hamper individuals' healthy development" (p. 13). A government-convened panel of experts suggests defining violence against intimate partners as consisting of three kinds of behaviors: (a) physical violence, (b) sexual violence, and (c) threats of physical and/or sexual violence. The panel concluded that *abuse* should be defined broadly to include the above three types of violent behaviors *and* two more forms: (d) stalking and (e) psychological/emotional abuse (Saltzman, Fanslow, McMahon, & Shelley, 1999). The *APA Dictionary of Psychology* defines domestic violence as "any action by a person that causes physical harm to one or more members of his or her family unit" (VandenBos, 2007, p. 295).

The imprecision of definitions has contributed to differences of opinion and in some cases to contentious debates about methods for assessing family violence. The terminology selected

by various scholars may *not* convey the *extent of harm* a specific act may cause. Some forms of physical violence, such as cutting with a knife, cause observable physical harm, while others, such as emotional abuse, cause less visible harm. Hence, *observable harm* is not a perfect yardstick. Sexual abuse, for example, may have near-incapacitating effects that last a lifetime but do not inevitably cause physical injury. A spouse can be emotionally tormented and controlled by the other spouse without a blow being struck. Elders can be harmed through neglect and financial exploitation, rather than physical assault.

Perhaps, some acts of family violence should be referred to as *abuse* rather than violence, because they do not meet a *physical harm* standard. Because the definition is so unsettled, most definitions of family violence use the terms *violence* and *abuse* interchangeably. To offset confusion and dissension, progressive social scientists are now calling for **operationalized** definitions for *every* type of family violence (Knickerbocker et al., 2007). An operationalized definition is one developed through empirical measurement. Intelligence, for instance, gains its meaning through standardized IQ tests.

New knowledge from other fields may help resolve these dilemmas. Neurobiological studies have documented actual *brain changes* resulting from childhood abuse. The major alteration was an increased sensitivity to stress (McGowan et al., 2009). Similarly, brain scans have exposed size reductions of the frontal lobe (i.e., thinking) and hippocampus (i.e., memory) of children reared in poverty. The scientists attributed the decreased brain volume to the constant stresses of being poor, especially being at the bottom of the social ladder. The brain deficits caused a decrease in ability to learn that probably will last a lifetime ("I Am Just a Poor Boy," 2009).

Legally Defining Family Violence

Ultimately, societal norms associated with the legitimacy of family-violent acts are formalized into laws. The difficulty of specifying a norm, of course, varies across dissimilar forms of abuse, because beliefs about the legitimacy of behavioral practices diverge across individuals and whole cultures. One set of laws that is not especially ambiguous are the child sexual abuse laws, because they focus on *perpetrator actions.* The laws concerning physical abuse, neglect, and psychological abuse, in contrast, tend to focus on the *injury outcomes* for the victim and, as a result, are far less clearly defined. The legal distinction between legitimate and illegitimate forms of verbal abuse is less clear yet, and making a legal distinction between neglectful parents and poor parents is especially problematic. Legal definitions of physical marital violence may seem relatively unambiguous, because in the eyes of the law there is no legitimate marital violence. Nevertheless, current scholars evaluate legal definitions of IPV as so narrow as to be unacceptable (DeKeseredy & Schwartz, 1998).

Defining family violence is compounded by historical approaches to enforcement of laws, laws that apply to single violent incidents. In reality, IPV rarely occurs as a *single incident,* but more accurately occurs as an ongoing series of violent events (Hirschel & Buzawa, 2002). Furthermore, the law does not take into account many obvious disparities in violence associated with gender. The law considers a hit by a woman to be just as serious as a hit by a man

(Osthoff, 2002). Battered women's motivation for female-to-male violence may be distinctly different from those of a batterer. While advocates view battered women's violence as likely to be self-defensive, criminal justice personnel are just as likely to view it as a form of *mutual combat.* Battered women's motivation for IPV may also be unimportant to some judges or other personnel who are attempting to avoid gender bias in implementing laws (Kernsmith, 2005a; Osthoff, 2002). All these factors emphasize the critical need to understand the dynamics of violent relationships.

Monetary and Other Costs of Family Violence

In addition to concern for children's and women's safety and well-being, society should be concerned about the staggering costs of IPV. Researchers trying to capture the monetary cost of IPV have taken several broad approaches. One tactic is to estimate the financial burden of *treating injuries* and providing *mental health care* for victims. Another line of attack has been to investigate the costs of IPV-related *homelessness and welfare.* Finally, agencies within the U.S. *criminal justice system* have begun to scrutinize the costs of *processing* battery cases. Analyzing the National Violence Against Women Survey (NVAWS; Tjaden & Thoennes, 1998a) and several other data sources, a panel of experts determined the 1995 economic toll of IPV in the United States to be $5.8 billion, or if updated to 2003 dollars, $8.3 billion. Another team of analysts determined the cost for the 45.1% of the 8,000 female victims of IPV surveyed for the NVAWS (Ulrich et al., 2003). Categorizing the costs produced the figures in Table 1.2 (Max, Rice, Finkelstein, Bardwell, & Leadbetter, 2004).

TABLE 1.2   Costs for IPV

Total Costs	Medical Costs for Injuries
Rapes—$320 million	Hospital care, 78.6%
Physical assaults—$4.2 billion	Physician care, 51.5%
Stalking—$342 million	Ambulance/paramedic, 14.9%
Murders—$893 million	Dental care, 9.5%
	Physical therapy, 8.9%

Battered women also took more time off from *paid work* and more time off from *child care and household* responsibilities. A comparison of the average number of injuries multiplied by the average cost of services for each injury yielded significant gendered differences. For men, the total cost of female-to-male IPV was $386.76 per person; for women, the total cost of male-to-female IPV per person was $948. These results emphasize the crucial toll of IPV beyond medical costs of assaults (Arias & Corso, 2005; see also T. R. Miller, Cohen, & Wiersema, 1996). Of course the costs of child abuse are similarly astounding. *Prevent Child Abuse America* published the estimates displayed in Table 1.3 (Wang & Holton, 2007).

| TABLE 1.3 | Total Annual Cost of Child Abuse and Neglect in the United States |

Direct Costs	Estimates of Annual Costs (in 2007 Dollars)
Hospitalization	$6,625,959,263
Mental health care system	$1,080,706,049
Child welfare services system	$25,361,329,051
Law enforcement	$33,307,770
Total Direct Costs	**$33,101,302,133**
Indirect Costs	Estimates of Annual Costs (in 2007 Dollars)
Special education	$2,410,306,242
Juvenile delinquency	$7,174,814,134
Mental health and health care	$67,863,457
Adult criminal justice system	$27,979,811,982
Lost productivity to society	$33,019,919,544
Total Costs	**$103,754,017,492**

PRACTICE, POLICY, AND PREVENTION ISSUES

It is useful to conclude this history of the discovery of family violence with a discussion of the numerous policies and practices introduced in recent years to help prevent family violence. As with the prevention of crime more generally, family violence prevention is confronted with two pervasive tensions. The first concerns the relative importance of prevention versus intervention.

- *Prevention* refers to social support and education programs designed to stop family violence before it occurs in the first place.
- *Intervention* refers to societal responses to family violence after it occurs. Such responses include programs to identify and protect victims, criminal justice sanctions for perpetrators, and various treatment options for offenders and victims.

In terms of intervention, the question arises about who the target of the intervention should be. Should society focus on protecting victims and punishing offenders, or on providing treatment and services for offenders and victims? A variety of *legal interventions* exist, such as mandatory reporting laws, mandatory arrest laws, criminal sanctions, and restraining orders. *Rehabilitative interventions* primarily include various types of counseling and medical treatment.

History helps to put the current social policy debates in context. Once family violence became fully recognized in the 1960s and 1970s, the most immediate concerns of authorities were the identification and protection of abuse victims and the punishment of offenders. This response, however, has often come at the expense of a societal commitment to *primary*

prevention and efforts to help abusive families. With most of the resources available to combat family violence committed to the criminal justice response, little is left for the support and services needed by vulnerable families. Table 1.3 lists a number of family violence prevention and intervention strategies targeted toward children and adults. The following discussions introduce these strategies briefly.

It is possible to approach the subject of family violence prevention on many different levels. Because there are so many precursors to family violence, there are multiple opportunities to prevent it. One might begin with a discussion of the social problems directly or indirectly related to family violence (e.g., poverty, unemployment, inadequate housing, inadequate health care, and inadequate welfare assistance). Although these enduring and complicated problems are causally relevant, an expanded discussion of them is well beyond the scope of this book. More manageable are the various prevention strategies that focus specifically on community education and social services for families.

Family support and training programs. A teenager cannot legally drive an automobile without first receiving appropriate training and passing a driver's license test, but that same teenager can become a parent without any oversight from the state. Many who assume the role of parent are not adequately prepared to do so (Pogarsky, Thornberry, & Lizotte, 2006). In recent years, family support and training programs have become increasingly common as part of community efforts to enhance the knowledge and competence of new parents. Many involve home visits with at-risk (i.e., poor, single, young) parents of newborns or expectant mothers. These contacts give the service providers opportunities to work with the parents in a safe, nonconfrontational environment, and they may also prevent some of the social isolation that is often associated with abuse. Although in-home intervention programs typically focus on child abuse prevention, it is important to note that they could potentially influence marital violence rates as well (Wolfe & Jaffe, 1999).

School-based programs. School-based programs have obvious appeal because they are an inexpensive way to reach many children, teens, and college students. The most common sexual abuse prevention programs target school-age children (ages 6–12) and emphasize primary prevention and detection (Reppucci, Land, & Haugaard, 1998). The overwhelming majority of school districts in the United States offer sexual abuse programs, and research suggests that these programs are successful in increasing children's knowledge and in teaching prevention skills. Whether school-based programs actually reduce the incidence of sexual abuse is a matter of some debate (Wurtele, 2002).

Schools can also be suitable places for identifying children exposed to marital violence (Wolfe & Jaffe, 1999). Many scholars see the adolescent years (ages 13–18), when children often form their first intimate relationships, as an ideal time to teach children about the importance of violence-free intimate relationships (Godenzi & De Puy, 2001). High schools commonly offer a variety of school assemblies, lectures, videos, drama groups, and discussion groups in hopes of promoting healthy relationships and reducing dating and marital violence. Evaluation research suggests that such programs result in positive changes in

knowledge and attitudes, and some reduction of violence perpetration (Wekerle & Wolfe, 1999). Although less common, there are growing numbers of school-based programs designed to educate parents (Hébert, Lavoie, & Parent, 2002). See Table 1.4 for a summary of prevention and intervention types of approaches.

At the *college level,* administrators often broaden discussions about the importance of healthy relationships to include more information about dating violence and sexual assault. Programs can have both primary prevention and intervention goals, including teaching definitions and providing information on its prevalence, its relationship to alcohol and drug misuse, and how to identify a potentially abusive partner. Aspects of the programs may include consciousness-raising regarding the sexual rights of women, rape myths, traditional sex roles,

TABLE 1.4 A Model for Prevention and Intervention

Age-Group Targeted	*Prevention (Designed to Stop Violence Before It Occurs)*	*Intervention (Response to Victims and Offenders)*
Infants and preschoolers (ages 0–5)	*Family support and training programs:*	*Family support and training programs:*
	Education and social support for at-risk families	Intervention services for marginally abusive families
		Foster care and adoption programs:
		Provide alternative homes when conditions warrant removal
		Treatment programs:
		Programs for victims
School age to high school (ages 6–17)	*School-based education:*	*Foster care and adoption programs:*
	Programs to educate young children about inappropriate touching; programs to educate junior high and high school students about violence-free intimate relationships	Provide alternative homes when conditions warrant removal
		Treatment programs:
		Programs for victims and offenders
College age and adults (over age 17)	*College-based education:*	*Mandatory reporting policies:*
	Programs on violence-free intimate relationships and rape	Professional mandates to report child abuse, elder abuse, and, in some states, domestic violence
	Community awareness campaigns:	*Mandatory arrest and no-drop policies:*
	Campaigns to promote awareness about family violence	Policies that essentially force police and the courts to arrest and prosecute offenders
		Treatment programs:
		Programs for offenders and victims

SOURCE: Adapted from Wolfe and Jaffe (1999, p. 137).

and assertiveness training for women (Holcomb, Savage, Seehafer, & Waalkes, 2002). Some special programs focus on the role of college men in preventing assaults on college women, with a few fraternities taking the lead. Universities also publish material for students relevant to prevention, intervention, and help-seeking sources. More and more colleges and universities are requiring attendance at such programs.

Community awareness campaigns. One of the easiest and most cost-efficient family violence prevention techniques is public education through advertisements and public service announcements. Many of the social movement organizations and federal agencies devoted to the family violence problem see themselves, at least in part, as public educators. One prominent example is the *Family Violence Prevention Fund* which, in collaboration with the *Advertising Council,* has initiated several public service campaigns. Among these is *Teach Early,* a domestic violence campaign directed toward men that sends the message, "What they learn as boys, they do as men. That's why we need to teach our sons and other boys in our lives that violence against women is wrong. Now, when they need to hear it most." The campaign includes a 30-second television announcement, radio and print spots, and a toll-free information number (Family Violence Prevention Fund, 2002). Evaluation research on education campaigns like this one have found that following the periods of the campaigns, people have more knowledge about family violence and are more willing to report family violence (Wolfe & Jaffe, 1999).

Another example comes from Canada, where the "Violence—You Can Make a Difference" campaign attempted to raise awareness about both child and adult family violence. Television and radio advertisements, along with fact sheets distributed nationally, provided tips on anger management, how to help abuse victims, safety plans, coping with family violence, and getting help. The campaign focused specifically on identifying early warning signs of violence, especially from the perspective of the aggressor (Godenzi & De Puy, 2001).

It is becoming more common for corporations to become involved in family violence prevention. A few employer-based initiatives aimed at preventing family violence include conscious attempts to facilitate stress-free working environments. More common, however, are workplace education and information campaigns designed to help employees who are dealing with family violence. Many of these programs focus specifically on IPV, in part because of the potential costs of reduced employee performance that result from such violence (Urban & Bennett, 1999).

Intervention Strategies

Mandatory reporting laws. Within 5 years following the publication of Kempe's influential research on the *battered child syndrome,* every U.S. state had enacted laws mandating that professionals report all cases of suspected child abuse. Arguably, no other kind of legislation has been as widely and as rapidly adopted in the history of the United States (Zellman & Fair, 2002). Initially, the laws pertained primarily to medical personnel who suspect physical

abuse, but since their initial passage the list of professionals required to report has grown, as has the list of abusive behaviors they must report. Today, doctors, nurses, social workers, mental health professionals, teachers, and other school staff are required to report any suspected physical, sexual, or emotional child abuse. Family violence advocacy groups have generally heralded mandatory reporting laws as a triumph. No doubt the benefits of these laws include increased identification of abuse, which has led to improvements in protecting the powerless and holding perpetrators accountable.

Mandatory reporting protections for adult victims have also become more common. Almost all states, for example, now require medical and social services professionals to report suspected cases of elder abuse (Moskowitz, 1997), and a few states mandate the reporting of suspicions of marital violence (Hyman, Schillinger, & Lo, 1995). Increasingly, however, such laws have been the source of some controversy because of a number of unintended consequences. It is possible that mandatory reporting laws might inhibit women from seeking care or might make them more vulnerable to retaliation (Hyman et al., 1995). These laws also often put people in the helping professions in a difficult position, essentially forcing them to violate the confidences of their clients. Furthermore, many professionals choose to ignore the reporting laws because they see themselves as better equipped to help needy families than the overburdened CPS and APS systems (Melton, 2002; Zellman & Fair, 2002). Research evidence suggests that the more professionals know about the child protection system (i.e., the more formal training they have), the *less* likely they are to report suspected cases of child maltreatment (Melton, 2002).

Family preservation, foster care, and adoption. Child protective services agencies are mandated to make child protection their top priority, but when a child is being abused, what course of action will serve the best interests of the child? How to protect abused children is an especially controversial issue. Some scholars are proponents of the *family preservation model,* a model that maintains that the best place to raise a child is in a nuclear family. Their approach is to provide intensive in-home help in the areas of financial management, nonviolent discipline, anger management, and education (Melton, 2002). Another option is out-of-home-placement, or foster care. This system, however, is not a panacea because of the high rates of maltreatment and inadequate oversight by child welfare bureaus. Some factions within this group believe that the best alternative may be orphanages (e.g., McKenzie, 1998).

Criminal justice responses. Although there is little debate over the necessity of arresting and prosecuting child abusers, a large number of issues concerning children in the courtroom have arisen. How serious is the stress placed on child witnesses? Can a child's testimony be accepted as accurate? Removing parental abusers from the home constitutes another set of challenges. What happens to the family if the breadwinner is no longer present? These concerns are especially pronounced in cases of sex abuse where the traumatic reactions of the victim may supersede all other concerns (Borowski & Ajzenstadt, 2007; Lesher, 2009).

In one neighborhood known to the authors, a series of events led to an intense reaction by a local school administrator and parents in the community. The episode began in a routine manner when school officials placed *all* parents' names for the fourth grade on a list of potential chaperones for school trips. As the school year progressed and an overnight excursion was imminent, parents began to volunteer to accompany the children. Unbeknownst to one father in the neighborhood, a school employee inadvertently placed his name on the list. Next, one parent undertook the task of checking the local sex offender registry. Readers can almost predict the end of this narrative. The father's arrest record came to light. Of course, the school superintendent removed the man's name as a potential chaperone from the list, a volunteer position that the father never agreed to fulfill in the first place. In the uproar that followed, the sex offender's wife divorced him, and the embarrassed wife and children moved because they felt driven from their home.

Despite the fact that domestic violence has long been recognized as a crime, police discretion in making arrests—combined with family privacy norms, cultural tolerance, and the reluctance of women to press charges—has meant that criminal sanctions have often been the exception rather than the rule. Research routinely indicates that courts rarely sanction even the most assaultive men in IPV cases. A synthesis of investigations revealed that police arrest about one fourth of batterers, prosecutors prosecute about a third of those arrested, and about 1% of those prosecuted receive jail time beyond the time served at arrest (often just a few hours) (see Coulter, Kuehnle, Byers, & Alfonso, 1999; Davis, 1998; Holmes, 1993).

Criminologists and women's advocates saw these data as a sign of societal indifference to and continuing tolerance of the abuse of women (E.S. Buzawa & Buzawa, 2003). Citing the deterrence doctrine, they argued that a society that punishes violent family members should have less family violence (see Chapter 2). Advocates argued that punishing family offenders would begin with the limiting of discretion in the criminal justice system. Mandatory arrest and *no-drop prosecution* policies became the centerpiece of improved criminal justice processing. The no-drop rule requires prosecutors to move forward with criminal proceedings, even if the victim has recanted or asked that the prosecution cease (see Robbins, 1999).

Treating offenders. There are a few criminal justice responses to family violence that include some form of treatment. Treatment for IPV rests mainly on court-ordered group counseling over a period of 6 months to a year (Healey, Smith, & O'Sullivan, 1998). Debate about the effectiveness of court-ordered counseling is ongoing and unsettled. Practitioners in the counseling fields increasingly point out the wide variety of mental health problems associated with violent behavior. Empirical assessments indicate that many family-violent individuals suffer from trauma reactions, abnormal socialization factors, impulsivity, addictions, psychopathology, and

personality disorders. In fact, receiving a dual diagnosis is quite common among offenders. Consequently, calls for treatment via psychiatric medications are mounting (Royce & Coccaro, 2001; Silver, 2006).

Mandating perpetrators of family violence to counseling is a part of a more general trend toward *medicalization*. Instead of punishing perpetrators for their harmful behavior, it is more reasonable and effective to treat them for their illness (Conrad & Schneider, 1992). This trend has been the source of some controversy because, taken to its extreme, medicalization suggests that the perpetrators of violence have little or no control over their behavior and, therefore, should not be held accountable. Finally, some theory-based thinkers contend that family violence perpetrators should be both punished *and* treated. The punishment communicates that violence will not be tolerated, and the treatment helps the perpetrators to recognize why they are prone to violence.

Treatments for the perpetrators of child physical abuse, emotional abuse, and neglect most often focus on the unlearning (i.e., extinction) of inappropriate parenting techniques as well as on anger control and stress management (Miller-Perrin & Perrin, 1999). In treatments for perpetrators of sexual abuse, a *mental illness model* is more uniformly endorsed, with some employing drug therapies designed to control sexual impulses (Maletzky & Field, 2003).

Treating victims. Victims of IPV may experience the same types of mental health problems ascribed to perpetrators. A duo of practitioners has pointed out that victims display considerable individual variability. Consequently, victims need individualized responses that include a wide variety of medical, mental health, and social support (Briere & Jordan, 2004). In addition, treating victims can sometimes reduce subsequent rates of violence by empowering victims to take an active role in preventing their abuse. A battered woman may learn in counseling, for example, that she is not responsible for the violence, that her children are adversely affected by the violence, and that she can and should take steps to protect herself and her children (Busch & Valentine, 2000).

Shelters and hotlines. Perhaps the most visible form of intervention for IPV victims is the battered women's shelter. Since the first such shelter opened in England in the early 1970s, battered women's shelters have become more commonplace. Today, most large metropolitan areas have shelters that provide numerous services, including counseling, social support groups, child care, economic support, job training, and some minor legal assistance. The U.S. government took an active role in promoting the shelter movement in 1994 when it passed the first Violence Against Women Act (VAWA). The VAWA, which was reauthorized in 2000 and 2005, has provided funding for shelters and established the National Domestic Violence Hotline (1-800-799-SAFE). Some observers have argued that although implementing VAWA provisions has been expensive, it may have saved U.S. taxpayers billions of dollars in medical costs and social services (Clark, Biddle, & Martin, 2002).

Coordinated community responses. Many communities have attempted to coordinate the implementation of a number of kinds of prevention and intervention strategies. (See the table on the website : www.sagepub.com/barnett3e) Such a coordinated community response to child abuse

prevention, for example, might include education campaigns to raise awareness, in-home visitations of at-risk and marginally abusive families, school-based education on sex abuse, and treatment programs for victims and offenders. A newer approach is to mandate parent education (Pollet & Lombreglia, 2008). A truly communitywide effort of this magnitude would involve doctors, nurses, social workers, police, lawyers, judges, and others in the community willing to take an active role.

The most commonly cited coordinated community response to the problem of domestic violence is the Domestic Abuse Intervention Project (DAIP), which was implemented in the 1980s in Duluth, Minnesota. The DAIP was the first community project to coordinate the responses of police, lawyers, and judges in an effort to limit justice system discretion and ensure at least a minimum legal reaction against perpetrators and the protection of victims. The "Duluth model," as the design of the DAIP has come to be known, has also been influential in the creation of community education and treatment programs for male batterers. Various aspects of this model have been adopted in communities across the United States, and the model has been the subject of much discussion and research (Shepard & Pence, 1999).

Common Myths About Family Violence

Family violence is a topic that generates both strong opinions and strong emotional reactions. These attitudes, however, are not always well informed. Without sufficient knowledge, people are likely to develop *common sense* understandings that are not necessarily accurate. Some overly simplistic explanations for the occurrence of family violence have been repeated so often that they have taken on the semblance of well-established fact (Gelles & Cornell, 1990). A new assessment tool shows promise in measuring myth acceptance and elaborates how acceptance functions to promote victim blaming, exonerating the perpetrator, and minimizing the violence (Peters, 2008). Sometimes it seems as if society is aware of many more myths than facts; some myths have been particularly hard to dispel, because they contain a kernel of truth. Providing accurate information regarding such myths is one important role of the social scientist. Gelles and Cornell (1990) were the first writers to call attention to the myths in family violence.

Myth 1: Family violence is uncommon. Because family violence is hidden, subjectively defined, and difficult to measure, it is impossible to estimate precisely how frequently it occurs. These observations, however, should not be taken to mean that it rarely occurs. In fact, if there is one point about which all family violence experts seemingly agree, it is this: Family violence is far more common than is generally realized (Straus & Gelles, 1986). Although approximately 3,000 people died on September 11, 2001, it is important to remember that in the same year, 2,387 people were killed by family members or by their boyfriends or girlfriends (U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2002). The loss of life on September 11 was an anomaly, an aberration, but the number of intimate homicides in 2001 was normal.

Myth 2: Only poor people are violent. A substantial body of evidence does show higher rates of family violence in lower socioeconomic groups. First, the link between family violence

and low socioeconomic status is largely unquestioned, but this empirical connection should be interpreted with a degree of caution for two reasons: (a) People who are poor and lack other resources may be more likely than those who are better off to turn to police and social service agencies, and therefore have their violence represented in official estimates of family violence (Hampton & Newberger, 1988); and (b) Even if social class is a statistically viable risk marker, it does not suggest that *only* poor families are violent or that poor families are always violent.

Myth 3: Abused children always become abusive partners or parents. A history of family violence is commonly recognized as a correlate of family violence. Studies have consistently found that abusive adults have been exposed to significantly more childhood violence than nonabusive adults (Egeland, 1993). As with socioeconomic status, however, one must be careful not to overinterpret the data. A childhood history of abuse is neither a necessary nor a sufficient cause of adult violence. At best, the data suggest that individuals who were abused as children, or who witnessed abuse in childhood, are more likely to be abusive adults. Children growing up in abusive households are not predetermined to be abusive adults. In fact, the majority of abused children do not grow up to be abusive adults (Widom, 1989b).

Myth 4: Battered women "ask for it." Some commentators and scholars have chosen to explain family violence by focusing on the victims. A woman is beaten because she *nags, drinks too much,* or comes from a *dysfunctional family* (Tilden, 1989). She might even be a masochistic martyr who actually enjoys being beaten (Shainess, 1979). Those who blame battered women for not just leaving violent men often say, "If she didn't like it, wouldn't she leave? If she just left, the whole problem would go away." Implicit in many of these assertions are assumptions that something must be wrong with battered women, that they somehow deserve the violence directed at them, and that they should do something to alleviate the violence. This shifting of the blame from the perpetrator to the victim is inherently unfair (see Hotaling & Sugarman, 1990). No one deserves to be hit, and no one "asks for it." The perpetrator, not the victim, bears responsibility for the abuse.

Myth 5: Family violence sometimes "just happens." Some members of society believe that family members can be expected to "lose control" from time to time, that parents and spouses sometimes need to "blow off steam." They may rationalize that a man who hits his wife is not really violent; he just had a bad day at work and lost his temper. Or they may rationalize that a woman is generally a good mother, but her kids were really acting up and she only hit them because she lost control for a minute. Some people believe that such actions are inevitable—*even natural*—and are hardly worthy of serious societal reaction.

The ludicrous nature of the "it-just-happens" justification becomes clear when one recognizes that stranger violence is not so summarily dismissed (Gelles & Straus, 1988). When one stranger assaults another, society does not allow the assailant to set aside his actions as a momentary loss of control, a need to blow off steam, or a reaction to a bad day at work. According to Gelles and Straus (1988), family members hit family members because "they can." That is,

because society has generally accepted the "it-just-happens" justification, the social and legal costs attached to family violence are very low.

Myth 6: Minor acts of family violence are always trivial and inconsequential. Although minor acts of violence are not equivalent to severe violence (Emery & Laumann-Billings, 1998), it is not true that minor violence is always trivial and inconsequential. Parents who push, shove, and occasionally hit one another are implicitly endorsing such violence as the way to settle disagreements. The same can be said for parents who condone pushing and hitting between siblings and for parents who hit their children. Furthermore, emotional abuse is not always less serious than physical abuse. Battered women nearly always say, for example, that the psychological abuse they endured is far worse than the physical abuse (see Currie, 1998; Lynch & Graham-Bermann, 2000).

Myth 7: Alcohol and drugs are the real cause of family violence. Men and women who drink are more likely than those who do not to hit each other and to hit their children (Greenfeld et al., 1998). The rate of husband-to-wife violence is approximately 3 times higher for *binge* drinkers (19.2%) than for abstainers, and alcohol is involved in roughly 1 out of 4 instances of wife beating (Kantor & Straus, 1990). Heavy drinking by abusive partners and parents, nevertheless, may *not* actually be the cause (K. D. O'Leary, Slep, & O'Leary, 2007; Zubretsky & Digirolamo, 1994). Abusive individuals are abusive whether sober or drunk (Barnett & Fagan, 1993). Drunkenness, however, often serves as a justification or explanation for abuse, thus allowing some couples to maintain the belief that their marriage is salvageable (LaBell, 1979). Finally, the vast majority of men who drink do not hit their wives (Kantor & Straus, 1990).

Myth 8: Women who claim date rape are "lying," "deserve what they got," or were "asking for it." Probably the most common myth about women who report date rape is that they are lying (Burt, 1991). The purpose of rape myths may be to cloud interpretation about consent and shift the blame to the victims. Implicit in this myth is the assumption that the raped woman actually consented to sexual intercourse. This trend has contributed to some observers' belief that women who report date rape were not really raped. Perhaps the woman led the man on and was essentially asking for it. Perhaps she feels guilty about a sexual experience she now sees as negative, so she alleges rape out of vindictiveness or to conceal an unwanted pregnancy. Associated with the myth about lying is the myth that most rapes are committed by strangers in a *blitz* rape (a violent attack by a stranger). True, many women are raped by strangers, but college rape statistics show that a woman is most vulnerable at a party where the alcohol is flowing (Mohler-Kuo, Dowdall, Koss, & Wechsler, 2004). In truth, rape is such an underreported crime that exaggerations and false reports, while not unheard of, are especially unlikely (National Center for Victims of Crime, 1992).

Myth 9: Some people cannot be raped, and anyway, coercive sexual contact is not damaging. Even the FBI has contributed to this long-standing belief that men cannot be raped, despite well-known assaults in prisons ("Prison Rape Panel," 2008). Presumably homosexuals cannot rape

their partners, nor can legally married husbands rape their wives, but they do (Merrill, 1996; Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000b).

Myth 10: If he ever laid a hand on me I would leave. People tend to believe that love and violence are so opposite that they cannot coexist, but in reality, love does not preclude violence. Children learn that parents who love them may also hit them (Straus, 2001). Violent couples express love for one another also hit each other (Muldary, 1983). The statement who "If he ever lays a hand on me, I'll leave" does not mirror reality. Physical aggression does not herald the demise of a marriage (Lloyd, 1988; Margolin & Fernandez, 1987).

GOALS OF THIS BOOK

There are many reasons for writing this book. First, it is important to summarize the available research on the topic of family violence so that readers will gain a substantive knowledge of the scientific information available. In the process, it is also important to challenge many common myths about family violence. Second, greater factual knowledge of the topic should foster an understanding of the magnitude of the problem and the devastation it causes. Finally, the book should help alleviate the problem of family violence by providing practical information on prevention and policy, and by motivating people to get involved. Providing numerous sources of information will give students, practitioners, researchers, academicians, advocates, and policymakers a better foundation for their work. The compelling nature of the topic motivated the authors to write this book, and they hope it will generate interest and concern among readers. Readers will find that exploration of the field of family violence is fascinating, relevant, and worthwhile.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

The intent of this chapter, in part, is to inform readers about the *significance and prevalence* of family violence in U.S. society. The United States is one of the most violent industrialized countries in the world, and a remarkably high proportion of this violence occurs within families. To expound upon this theme, two tables detail several statistical summaries about the frequencies of nonfatal and fatal family violence.

The next section focuses on *why* there is violence in families. Theories suggests that male dominance, an idealized notion of the family, various family norms about behavior, and the influence of the media combine to create a cultural acceptance of violence within families. Family violence is an overwhelming problem that has finally captured international reactions that have led to the developments of a *human rights convention* for children and women.

In the United States, *claims-makers* began to define the various forms of family violence as social problems. Despite history's long record of abusing children and women, the *mistreatment of children* began to receive serious attention during the child-saving movement of the mid- to late 1800s. The medical and academic communities essentially ignored child abuse until the 1960s. Society similarly ignored the victimization of women until the late 1800s, and

the social problem of *woman battering* was not fully discovered until the early 1970s. *Other forms of family violence* kept emerging: child sexual abuse, child neglect, marital rape, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, elder abuse, and battered men. As claims-makers continued, their work resulted in the recognition of intimate violence among special populations: cross-cultural groups, immigrants, ethnic/racial minorities, disabled women, religious communities, rural women, and personnel in the military.

Defining such terms as *child neglect* or *wife battering* are integral parts of the claims-making process. *Definition*s of family violence are, to some degree, subjective and always evolving. Words such as *abuse, battering, assault, maltreatment,* and *violence* are commonly used in discussions of family violence, but there is sometimes little agreement on exactly what these words mean. Their meanings are negotiated by claims-makers, and the winners in these negotiations earn the right to define particular behaviors and to estimate their prevalence. Most recently, claims-makers in the health field have declared family violence a *national health problem,* not just a social problem. Definitions are a crucial part of any research or social policy endeavor, as can be seen in the necessity to legally define maltreatment terms. Social scientific progress in the field of family violence depends, to some extent, on a shared understanding of what constitutes family violence.

A series of evaluations have determined the surprising estimates of the *monetary costs* of family violence. Governmental and nongovernmental organizations have compiled some estimates of the costs, which encompass hospitalization, mental health services, welfare services, criminal justice processing, and costs arising from other entities. These costs are staggering, and even those presented here are underestimates.

To address family violence, society has relied upon a number of *prevention and intervention strategies.* Prevention efforts are attempts to keep family violence from occurring in the first place, whereas intervention strategies are responses to family violence after it occurs. Prevention efforts usually include support of families in their own homes, school-based informational programs, and community awareness campaigns. Interventions encompass mandatory reporting, criminal justice responses, and often an emphasis on family preservation and family reunification. To date, U.S. social policies have tended to emphasize intervention rather than prevention, and many of the intervention strategies have focused on protecting victims and deterring perpetrators from committing further violence.

The chapter ends with a presentation of examples of common myths about family violence. Only a smattering of myths appear, but they provide a glimpse into how little members of society actually know about the tragedy of family violence.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Are family members violent compared with nonfamily members of society?
2. Women and children in the United States are in more danger at home than on the streets of the most violent cities. Is this an empirically defensible claim?
3. Why would some people say "the marriage license is a hitting license"?
4. What are some of the rationales for family violence? What is your opinion?

5. Who defines family violence? Why is it important to examine the influence of claims-making on definitions of social problems?

6. How would you judge the degree of consensus on the meaning of family violence?

7. What categories of monetary costs are now apparent? What is your reaction to these costs?

8. Are children more valued today than at any time in history?

9. What claims-making have you heard about family violence?

10. Why have greater societal resources been directed toward intervention in cases of family violence than toward prevention?

11. Do you have any perceptions about family violence that have been challenged by anything you have read in this opening chapter?

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