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## La violenza intrafamiliare

What is family violence?

Family violence refers to any abusive or violent behaviour that occurs within a family or home. It can take different forms, including physical, emotional, psychological, sexual, economic or verbal violence. Victims of family violence may be children, spouses, intimate partners, the elderly or other family members.

What are the risk and vulnerability factors?

Intra-family violence can result from various risk and vulnerability factors. It is important to note that these factors do not in any way justify violence, but may contribute to its occurrence. Risk and vulnerability factors in violence may include:

1. Family history of violence: those who grew up in an environment where violence was present have a higher risk of reproducing this behaviour in their family relationships.
2. Mental health problems: mental disorders such as depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress or personality disorders may increase the likelihood of violent behaviour.
3. Substance abuse: excessive alcohol or drug consumption can impair judgement and increase aggression, thus contributing to intra-family violence.
4. Financial problems: Financial difficulties can create stress and tension within the family, sometimes exacerbated by power and control issues.

5 Inequalities of power and control: Relationships with severe power imbalances can become conducive to violence, especially when one partner tries to exercise excessive control over the other.

6 Lack of education and awareness: Lack of understanding of healthy communication mechanisms and conflict resolution can lead to violent behavior.

7. Stress related to changes in life: Events such as job loss, moving, the birth of a child or other significant changes can increase family stress and contribute to violence.

8. Social isolation: socially isolated people, without a support network, may be more vulnerable to violence, as they may have fewer resources to cope with difficulties.

9. Cultural beliefs: Some cultural beliefs or social norms may foster tolerance towards violence or strengthen models of aggressive behavior.

## The different types and forms of violence

Violence can take different forms and manifest itself through different types, not limited to just one category. Different forms of family violence can often overlap and coexist. These manifestations of violence can be classified into several categories:

### Physical violence

- Push or drop
- Hurting with a weapon
- Hitting, kicking
- Throwing an object
- Pinch
- Cause burns
- Choke
- Lock someone in a room
- Injuring with a sharp object
- Tie the person

### 1. **Sexual assault**

Sexual touches or sexual activities without consent

- Forced sexual intercourse even when faced with a request to stop
- Forcing a person to perform humiliating sexual acts

### 2. **Psychological violence**

3. Threatening, humiliating, yelling, insulting

4. • Constantly shouting or criticizing

5. • Prevent seeing family or friends

6. • Mocking beliefs or religions, preventing religious practice

7. • Destroying goods, hurting pets

8. • Intimidation or humiliation

### 9. **Finance exploitation**

- • Take money or goods without permission
- • Withhold money or restrict access to control the victim
- • Force to sign documents
- • Forcing to sell assets or change wills

### 10. **Negligence**

- Do not provide adequate food or clothing
- Do not provide necessary medical care or medication
- Do not intervene in case of injury

Types of family violence

1. <b>Violence against a partner</b>	Often called marital or domestic violence, it refers to abusive behavior that occurs within a loving or intimate relationship.
2. <b>Negligence and children abuse</b>	They involve the physical, emotional and psychological well-being of children, perpetrated by parents, siblings, relatives, caregivers, guardians, teachers, etc.
3. <b>Negligence and elderly abuse</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They involve the physical, emotional and financial well being of the elderly inside the family</li> </ul>
4. <b>Honor related violence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• . They involve the use of violence by some family members to protect the family honour</li> </ul>
5. <b>Forced marriage</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• . It occurs when of the spouse does not consent to marriage, often involving physical violence, kidnapping or psychological violence.</li> </ul>
6. <b>Genital mutilation</b>	Procedure that consists in partially or completely damaging or removing the external genital organs of women and girls without medical reasons

#### Intrafamily consequences

The consequences for victims of intra-family violence can be multiple and have short- and long-term impacts on their physical, emotional and psychological well-being. These consequences may vary depending on the severity, frequency and duration of the violence. The most common consequences include physical injury, mental health problems, social isolation, impact on family relationships, financial difficulties, legal problems and may even adversely affect self-perception or increase the risks of self-destructive behavior.

#### Legal framework and obligations of professionals in the prevention and management of intra-family violence

The legal framework and obligations of professionals in the prevention and management of intra-family violence vary from country to country. However, in general, many countries have introduced laws and regulations to protect victims of domestic violence and empower professionals working in this field.

In Belgium (source: Moniteur Belge):

1. The Law of 15 December 2013 on the introduction of a reform of divorce and the Law of 13 April 1995 on the contract of association between spouses: This Law introduced measures to strengthen the protection of victims of intra-family violence, facilitating the obtaining of removal and no-contact measures.
2. The law of 22 April 2024 on the prevention of marital violence, the protection of victims and assistance to perpetrators of violence: This law aims to prevent marital violence, protect victims and take care of perpetrators of violence. It provides for measures such as the protection order and the possibility of imposing accompanying measures on perpetrator The Law of 5 May 2019 amending the Civil Code regarding the prevention of violence between partners and the protection of victims: This law made changes to the Civil Code to strengthen the prevention of violence between partners and the protection of victims. It extended the scope of protection measures and facilitated access to such measures for victims.
3. 3. The Patients' Rights Act of 22 April 2023: This law concerns the relationship between health professionals and patients. It guarantees the right to information, informed consent and respect for confidentiality, but can also impose obligations in case of suspicion of intra-family violence.s.

Professionals, such as social workers, doctors, teachers and policemen, are required to report cases of intra-family violence of which they are aware.

#### Sensitive and ethical communication

Sensitive interview techniques are crucial for health professionals when addressing sensitive topics such as intrafamily violence. These techniques aim to create an environment of trust, facilitate communication and allow people to express themselves freely. Some important principles include:

- Establishing a relationship of trust
- Avoid accusing questions
- Using a person-centered approach
- Apply motivational interview techniques
- Ensuring confidentiality
- Recognizing non-verbal emotions and expressions
- Use clear and simple language
- Giving control to the person
- Asking questions gradually
- Underlining availability for follow-up