

Intimate Partner Violence & Houselessness: A Bidirectional Relationship

Ryan Miller*, Kaitlin Moenck*, Kendall Wynde*

*These authors contributed equally to this project

Impetus

- Community members described a causal relationship between intimate partner violence and houselessness.

Definitions

- Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)** is a collective term that includes physical, sexual, and psychological abuse by a partner.
- Houselessness** or homelessness are terms for people living outside, without a residence, or living in temporary housing.

Population

- People with a past or present history of houselessness living in Old Town or the greater Portland area.

Goals

- Investigate the relationship between Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) and houselessness.
- Identify barriers to accessing and maintaining stable housing and employment with a history of IPV.
- Share our findings with an audience of nursing students, health care workers, and community stakeholders.

Methodology

Windshield Survey

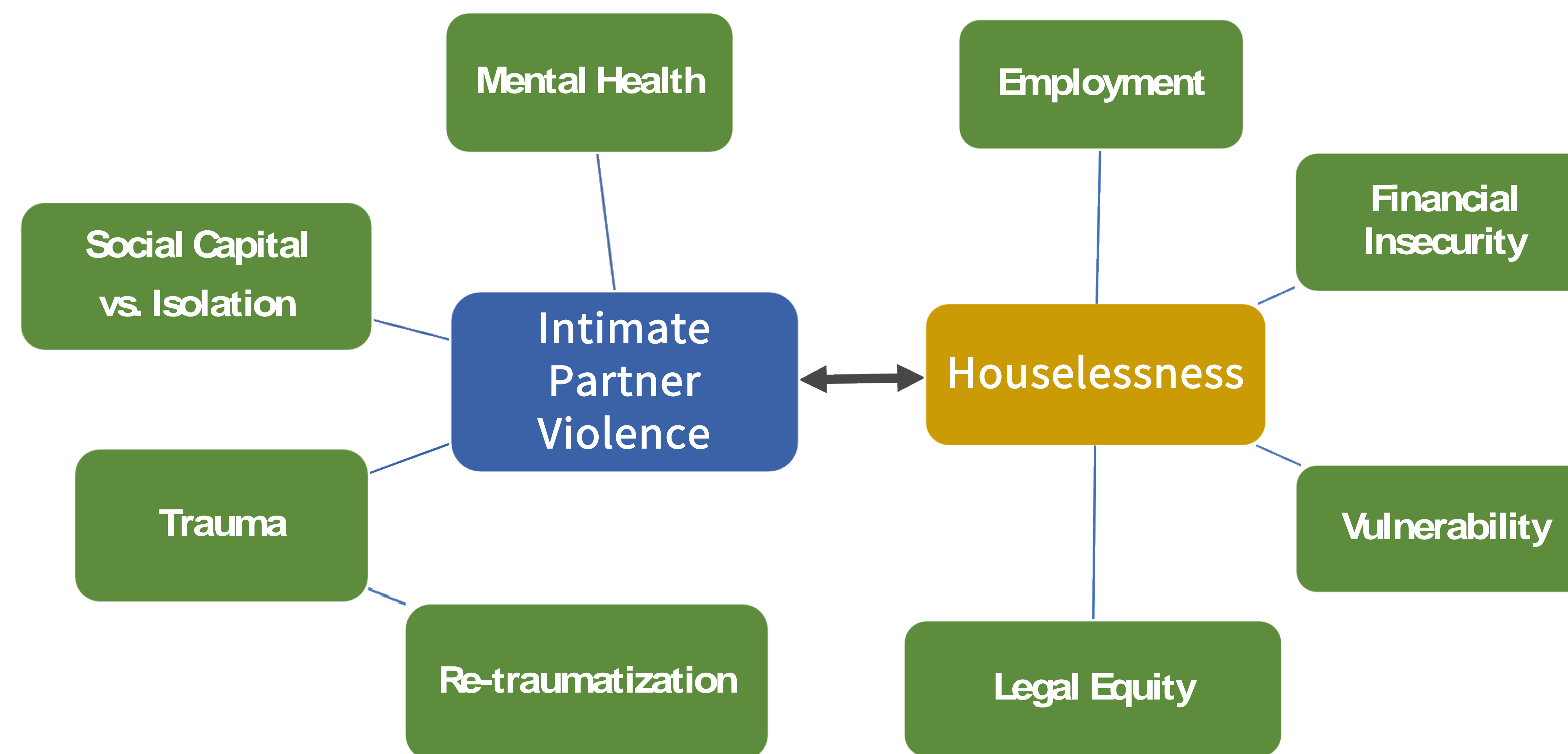
Key Informant Interviews

- Shelters for women
- People who are houseless
- Residential services

Literature Review

Findings

- Key informants (n=12) unanimously reported that IPV directly interferes with work and leads to loss of housing. They also unanimously reported that being on the streets makes individuals even more vulnerable to violence.
- Women who have experienced recent IPV are four times as likely to experience housing instability than women who have not experienced IPV (Pavao et al, 2007).
- “More than 1 in 3 women and more than 1 in 4 men in the United States have experienced rape, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner” (Black et al, 2011, p. 2).
- A literature search yielded 53 articles from peer-reviewed sources; collectively this research suggests a strong relationship between IPV and houselessness (see the web below).



Next Steps & Nursing Interventions

- “Nurses can play a huge role in helping people to secure their housing – for example, advocating for people when their symptoms of mental illness cause them to get evicted.” – *Attorney at the Fair Housing Council of Oregon*
- “You really, really need to work on helping people... Don’t treat them like criminals.” – *Person living in houselessness*
- Practice and advocate for trauma informed care and healing centered engagement (Ginwright, 2018)
- Advocate and bring awareness to local law enforcement and policy makers

“I was isolated to the point where I couldn’t get a job. No phone, no apartment... [Abusive partners] take away your family and anyone who will help you.”

- A woman in temporary housing

“If you’re homeless, you don’t count. If something is happening to you in broad daylight, people don’t stop.”

- A woman in temporary housing

“When homeless women are assaulted, it’s by people they went to... to protect them, to keep them safe on the street, to ask for a safe place to sleep. So, when they go ask for help and receive the most violating type of assault, of course it’s very hard to ask anyone else for help.”

- An employee at a day shelter

“Where can you go that’s safe so other people can see what’s going on, when the cops say you can’t be [in public spaces?]”

- A woman in temporary housing

Future Directions for Research

Based on our search of the literature, the relationship between intimate partner violence (IPV) and houselessness deserves further study.