



# Trauma, Resilience, And Recovery: Psychological Impact Of Violence Against Women

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## OPEN ACCESS

SUBMITTED 30 August 2025

ACCEPTED 23 September 2025

PUBLISHED 28 October 2025

VOLUME Vol.05 Issue10 2025

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**Abstract:** Violence is a severe affliction for society that leaves painful consequences not only for its direct victims but also for every member of that society. Today, the increasing risk of violence not only complicates the solution to the problem but also leads to a rise in the number of victims, normalizing it as a common occurrence in society. This results in various detrimental consequences. Currently, women and children suffer from different forms of violence.

**Keywords:** Violence, violence against women, cyber violence, social-psychological assistance, Gestalt therapy, psychodrama, art therapy.

**INTRODUCTION:** Several factors can be analyzed regarding the occurrence of violence. In this article, we will examine not only the causes of violence but also its consequences on victims' lives and mechanisms for overcoming it. This article highlights the socio-psychological changes that occur in women as a result of violence and their long-term effects. Violence not only has a profound impact on women's psyche but also inflicts social, physical, and physiological trauma, damaging their relationships with themselves and others. It has been observed in practice that anxiety about the future can lead to negative consequences.

## METHOD

The World Health Organization defines violence as "the intentional use or threat of physical force or power directed at oneself, another person, or a group or community, which results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment, or deprivation." The Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, adopted by the United Nations in 1993, states: "Violence against

women means 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 in private life."

One of the scholars who studied violence, G. N. Kireev, wrote: "Violence is a special type of relationship between people, formed on the basis of opposing attitudes towards the conditions of their existence... and nevertheless, the subjective factor is mediated and determined by material relations; violence occurs where there is a state of appropriation, subordination, seizure of the subject's will, and domination over it." The causes of aggressive behavior are the circumstances that lead to the manifestation of violence. They can be considered from various aspects: historical perspective, cultural traditions, methods of family and school upbringing; as well as objective conditions of modern social life, i.e., historical and socio-cultural factors influencing at the micro and macro levels; features of socialization of girls and young women, their peculiarities of communication with parents and peers, the system of state provision for combating violence against women, etc.

Typically, several types of violence are distinguished:

- physical - manifests in the form of threats of physical force, intimidating actions, as well as the use of force such as striking and beating;
- sexual - committing acts of a sexual nature against the victim's will, as well as coercing the victim into unacceptable forms of sexual relations, using force or exerting continuous pressure by the perpetrator;
- emotional-psychological - manifests as ignoring the victim's psychological needs, constant threats and insults, isolation, forming a family alliance against them in family relations, as well as a husband's cold attitude towards his wife;
- economic - depriving the victim of means of subsistence and controlling them, as well as concealing income, refusing to provide for children in family relations, wasteful spending of family funds, etc.;
- cultural violence - discrimination against and destruction of a person's unique characteristics and way of life, as well as violence in the form of gender discrimination, ethnocentrism, racism and colonial ideologies, and other forms of moral segregation that justify aggression, domination, inequality and oppression;
- cyberbullying - any form of psychological pressure, aggression, harassment, extortion, harm, insult, slander, theft, modification, illegal collection, manipulation, illegal processing or distribution of

personal data, as well as organized and widespread dissemination of online content aimed at malicious attacks or mockery, carried out through electronic means;

- gender-based violence - discrimination based on gender.

The violence we will focus on today is gender-based violence, and we will examine the form of violence directed at women.

In her article "Violence Against Women," L. Hezy defines violence against women as "a form of pressure or aggressive behavior that harms a woman's personality, freedom, and psychological integrity, stemming from gender inequality, social stereotypes, and power imbalance." Violence against women has become not only a negative indicator in society's social life but also a concerning tool in political activity. According to the UN Secretary-General's Report on Conflict-Related Sexual Violence published in 2025, cases of armed conflict-related sexual violence increased by 25% in 2024 compared to 2023. More than 4,600 people fell victim to violence used as a weapon of war, a means of torture, a method of intimidation, and political repression. In 21 countries, violations were recorded by both state and non-state actors. The highest number of cases were observed in the Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Haiti, Somalia, and South Sudan. Women and girls accounted for 92% of the victims.[1].

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The form of domestic violence against women is a widespread phenomenon throughout the world. Every year, the number of victims of domestic violence increases, and the consequences are worsening. If previously this problem was studied within the framework of crimes in the family-domestic sphere, today the study of the causes of its occurrence, the processes of its occurrence, as well as ways to eliminate it, from a scientific, philosophical, social, psychological, and legal point of view, explains how deeply the problem has taken root and the complexity of its solutions.

Usually, victims of violence do not want to report that they have been subjected to violence. They are stopped by fear, shame, or a sense of loyalty to their family. Victims of domestic violence do not apply to law enforcement agencies, even if the violence is physical. In the case of systematic psychological violence, the victim does not even have the idea that it is possible to involve official bodies in resolving conflicts. As a result, domestic violence is recorded only when a crime is committed.

Women who have experienced violence experience various emotional consequences. As a result of violence, they experience deep suffering, stress, and fear, lose trust, and change their attitude towards others. As a result, there is an inability to accept one's personality, self-doubt increases, anxiety about the environment in which one lives and about people, about the future increases. Sexual and physical violence leads to health problems. In studies, post-traumatic stress disorders were observed in women who experienced violence.

According to R.M. Sadikov and N.L. Bolshakova, in the context of domestic violence, women exhibit victim behavior, that is, a tendency to become victims of crime. This is a persistent personality trait that tends to be a victim of a crime in more cases than others or in situations that are safe for the majority. This is related to protective psychological mechanisms. The main features of protective mechanisms in women subjected to violence are manifested as follows:

- denial (the inability to openly discuss the problem);
- rationalization (the inability to seriously assess the situation);
- isolation (decreased sensitivity to psychotraumatic factors);
- substitution (directing anger at a stranger).

Victim women do not have a clear idea of how others should treat them, do not pay attention to their feelings and needs, and live waiting for a negative attitude from their husband and others.

In the studies conducted by A. Semerikova and N. Anisimova, it was studied that fear, as one of the main reasons for the behavior of women who have become victims of domestic violence, makes them a convenient target for management.[2].

In addition to fear, the reasons why victims do not seek to break ties with their partners include:

- cultural and family values that encourage the preservation of the family at any cost;
- lack of real opportunities to find work and receive financial assistance, especially for victims with children;
- lack of necessary housing that can be a reliable shelter for the victim and their children;
- a state of immobility as a result of physical and mental trauma;
- people who convince the victim that they are guilty of the violence and that they can stop the negative attitude if they obey the partner's demands.

Weakness of movement is characteristic of the behavior of female victims: the woman often remains

inactive, does not know how to make a firm decision.

Constantly living under stress, feeling helpless, a woman does not strive to change anything, because she sees no meaning in it. She spends her energy in vain on solving problems that should not be prioritized. As a result of constant violence, women adapt to living in crisis conditions. The most terrible thing for female victims is to be left alone with their own thoughts. Negation of reality, living under stress, and suppressing negative emotions often cause physiological disorders along with emotional-psychological disorders in female victims. Some scientists emphasize that female victims cannot cope with a simple cold or colds for a long time, and they also suffer from psychosomatic illnesses.

Among the syndromes of a neurotic and pathological nature characteristic of post-traumatic stress disorder, the following are distinguished:

- chronic feeling of guilt;
- increased heart rate, excessive sweating, pain behind the chest, abrupt breathing;
- impulsive behavior with attacks of aggression and violence against the background of internal closure and suspicion, promiscuous sex;
- memories of "intolerable" events, forcibly entering the consciousness;
- a passive life position, striving for the status of a disabled or chronically ill person, consciously considering the use of benefits as beneficial;
- progressive asthenia syndrome - rapid aging, mental weakness, weight loss, and a desire for peace.

Access to sources of socio-psychological support for women who have been subjected to violence is also very low. According to a study conducted by Ya. Sluzhivaya and I. Osipenko among women, it was found that 56 percent of women who experienced violence had a low rate of seeking help. Researchers explained this by the fact that women who have become victims of violence do not want to share their experiences with others, as well as do not want to pay attention to their problems, and rarely expect advice, understanding, and sympathy.

Studying women's personal characteristics allows for the implementation of various rehabilitation activities aimed at providing professional psychological support to women who have suffered domestic violence, restoring their sense of self, forming a new system of values, taking responsibility for themselves and their lives, and abandoning the victim role. This process helps a woman to understand herself, restore her self-worth, and choose an independent path. Psychotherapeutic training, including cognitive behavioural training and training incorporating elements of Gestalt therapy

(such as self-introduction through flowers, the Empty Chair technique), and art therapy methods to address emotional blocks (such as drawing one's body posture, selecting emotions, the Happiness Card), as well as psychodrama role-playing, are of great importance. Working with a specialist, the process of carefully recalling the past allows for the reconstruction of traumatic memories, where the details of the event become detached from feelings of distress. It is necessary to create an environment free from emotional pressure and accusations. If support is strong, feelings of guilt, shame, fear, and depression are observed to a much lesser extent in the client. Working with the body can reduce the impact of memories ingrained in the subconscious, decreasing anxiety, depression, and irritability. As a result, the client's stress tolerance increases. Social support is crucial for normalising the victim's condition; she needs to feel accepted, understood, and trusted by her relatives, friends, and significant people in her life.

Violence against women is a complex socio-psychological phenomenon that undermines human dignity and worth, leaving deep psychological scars. Such incidents disrupt a woman's sense of self, erode her self-confidence, and diminish her social activity and enthusiasm for life. The severity of the psychological trauma is directly linked to an individual's psychological defense mechanisms, the presence of social support systems, and their inherent resilience.

Currently, violence must be viewed not only as a legal issue, but also as a psychological trauma that deeply affects the human psyche. Supporting women and restoring their mental well-being after such incidents is a crucial guarantee of social stability and the moral health of society. Therefore, a comprehensive approach – incorporating psychotherapeutic interventions, social rehabilitation programs, and principles of positive psychology – is essential. Fostering resilience and inner resources in women, restoring their sense of self-awareness and self-worth, and actively reintegrating them into society is not only

a process of individual recovery, but also a vital factor in strengthening peace, trust, and social cohesion at a societal level.

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