

Detecting and Arresting Interpersonal Violence: What Every Clinician Needs to Know

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Mental health professionals are increasingly mindful in their professional practices of identifying, managing and responding to risks of violence towards others. This workshop presents a research-based framework for conceptualizing interpersonal violence including distinguishing forms of violence, a review of concepts related to "risk" and violence risk assessment, and a discussion of the complex relationship between behavioral health disorders and violence. The use of research-based actuarial and "structured clinical judgment" approaches to violence risk assessment is described as an emerging standard of care as "unstructured clinical judgment" falls into disfavor in cases involving interpersonal violence.

Strategies for crafting risk management plans and "best practices" interventions are discussed within a "risk-needs-responsivity" model. Implications in assessment and intervention arising from distinctions between risk of general community violence and intimate relationship violence are reviewed. Clinical, ethical, legal and risk management factors are discussed which may shape decisions about whether or how to provide professional services in cases involving threatened or actual interpersonal violence.

Presented by:

Robert Kinscherff, PhD, JD is a clinical/forensic psychologist and attorney who currently is a senior administrator and faculty member at the Massachusetts School of Professional Psychology, Senior Associate at the National Center for Mental Health and Juvenile Justice, and faculty at the Center for Law, Brain and Behavior at the Massachusetts General Hospital. He has previously served as Director of Juvenile Court Clinic Services for the MA Trial Court, Assistant Commissioner for Forensic Services for the MA Department of Mental Health, and Clinical Director for Easter Seals of New Hampshire for programs for adults and youth with high risk of physical and/or sexual aggression.

For the American Psychological Association, he has served two terms as Chair of the Ethics Committee, Chair of the Committee on Legal Issues, Member of the Committee on Professional Practices and Standards, and Chair of the Gun Violence Policy Review Task Force. Dr. Kinscherff publishes, consults and teaches nationally and internationally on his professional practice and research areas, including: violence risk assessment and management with adults and juveniles; adults and juveniles with sexually aggressive behaviors; the developmental impact of adversity and trauma occurring in childhood; and, legal and ethical considerations in professional mental health practice.

(6 CE Credits)

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

At the conclusion of the presentation:

1. Participants will articulate the strengths and vulnerabilities of actuarial, structured clinical judgment, and unstructured clinical judgment approaches to assessing and responding to risk of interpersonal violence.
2. Participants will identify at one evidence-based tool for use in assessing intimate relationship violence (domestic partners) and one tool for use in assessing risk of community violence among persons with significant mental illness.
3. Participants will articulate the elements of the "risk-needs-responsivity" model and the implications of that model for implementing clinical interventions with persons at risk of interpersonal violence.
4. Participants will identify one clinical factor and one ethical factor which may bear upon whether or how to provide professional services in cases involving threatened or actual interpersonal violence.