Family Violence
Explanations and Evidence-Based Clinical Practice

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Family violence has a long and painful history, likely extending back to the inception of the family. Child abuse and woman abuse were recognized to varying degrees in the mid-1800s, but it was not until the 1960s and 1970s, respectively, that they began to receive recognition as critical social problems touching the lives of many in society. In particular, the women’s movement in the mid-1970s resulted in changes in laws to protect women. Furthermore, women’s shelters began to open throughout the United States during the mid-1970s, bringing increased attention to the plight of abused women. As a result, scholars and the general public began to take a greater interest in family and intimate violence during this time. After the 1970s, other types of family violence were recognized, including violence against male intimate partners, same-sex intimate partner violence, dating violence, and violence toward elders. As a result, research has proliferated, shining a light on the many aspects of family violence. Some research has led to controversy, such as distinguishing between victims and perpetrators, identifying female-to-male intimate partner violence, and identifying best clinical practices.

Family violence occurs in approximately one in four families in the United States (American Academy of Family Physicians, 2000). Many of these individuals present for counseling assistance and yet fail to receive adequate services because many providers lack appropriate training to identify and treat family violence. The majority of graduate training programs provide little if any training in family violence, and they provide only slightly more exposure to child maltreatment (Champion, Shipman, Bonner, Hensley, & Howe, 2003). Thus, counselors often have little exposure to the field of family violence, its effects, and evidence-based treatments in their training. This book provides valuable information for counselors-in-training (e.g., in courses related to crisis intervention and marital and
family counseling), for professional counselors who have little background in the field of family violence, and for professional counselors and educators who are knowledgeable about some but not all areas of family violence.

*Family Violence: Explanations and Evidence-Based Clinical Practice* provides an overview of the major issues and controversies in the field of family violence along with relevant information on assessment and treatment. The text covers a wide range of topics related to family violence, such as the historical and cultural context, major explanations for family violence, and incidence and descriptions of family violence, but always with an eye toward enhancing counselors’ ability to assess and treat each major type of family violence (i.e., both heterosexual and same-sex intimate partner violence, child maltreatment, dating violence, stalking, and elder maltreatment). Material is presented within the context of existing research and scholarly opinion. Case examples are offered to illustrate various issues such as types of family violence, clinical cases, and research. Furthermore, summaries and suggested readings are provided for each chapter. This book is unique in its inclusion of materials pertaining to major issues in the field of family violence plus clinically relevant material on assessment and treatment issues. For example, the cultural/historical information provides a logical segue into explanations for family violence, types of family violence, and finally interventions for family violence.

The first three chapters provide a current and historical context for family violence. Chapter 1 provides material on the prevalence, economic costs, types, and cultural issues of family violence. The latter part of the chapter presents an overview of family violence historically, with a special focus on women and children, followed by a discussion of a more contemporary and controversial issue: intimate partner violence against males. Chapter 2 discusses major explanations for family violence, including those models that influence treatment, such as social cognitive theory, feminist theory, and attachment theory. Chapter 3 addresses specific cultural factors and explanations that influence the manner by which family violence is maintained, interpreted, and addressed clinically.

Chapters 4 through 9 address specific types of and treatments for adult intimate partner violence and include case examples. Chapter 4 focuses on male-on-female intimacy violence, including risk and protective factors, abuser typologies, consequences for victims, and treatment implications. Chapter 5 addresses female-on-male intimate violence, with topics similar to those in Chapter 4. Chapter 6 is devoted to same-sex violence, Chapter 7 to assessing for intimate partner offenders, Chapter 8 to treatment of intimate partner offenders, and Chapter 9 to providing assessment and treatment for victims of intimate partner violence.

The final chapters, 10 through 13, cover the remaining types of family violence. Chapter 10 examines issues related to dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking as well as treatment and prevention. Chapter 11 is devoted to child maltreatment issues, including a wide variety of topics such as types, prevalence, explanations, victim and perpetrator characteristics, Internet exploitation of children, and consequences of child maltreatment. Chapter 12 focuses on assessment and treatment of child maltreatment. Chapter 13 is devoted to elder abuse, the least researched type of family violence.
Working in the field of family violence is demanding and often leaves its imprint on a counselor’s physical and emotional life. And yet the work can be satisfying and life changing for both counselor and client. It is my hope that in conjunction with good supervision and practice, readers will find this book helpful in becoming better prepared to work with family violence issues.
I want to express my appreciation to Carolyn Baker, director of publications, and her colleagues from the American Counseling Association, including the American Counseling Association Publications Committee, for their support, expertise, and attention to detail in helping produce this book. For their helpful reviews, thank you to Lee W. Shefferman, PhD (University of Northern Colorado), and Marie B. Francois-Lamonte, PhD (Compton Central Health Clinic, California).

I am particularly grateful for the support of my wife, Peggy. In addition, I am blessed to have children Paul and Brittney, Joel and Camille, and grandchildren Ashton, Paeton, and Keirstyn.
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