Violence against Women

The Health Sector Responds

1 in 3 women will experience **physical and/or sexual violence** by an intimate partner at some point in her life.

World Health Organization

Violence against women **takes many forms, including:**

The most common type of violence experienced by women is **intimate partner violence.**

Violence against women **is widespread.**

It occurs in all countries of the world

...but prevalence varies from country to country.

Prevalence also varies **within** countries.

Studies from **different countries** show that the percentage of women 15 to 49 years old who've **experienced physical and/or sexual violence by an intimate partner** in their lifetime ranges from

15% to 71%

This variation shows that violence against women **is preventable.**

Violence against women has **serious health consequences.**

Death

Physical injuries

Unintended pregnancies, induced abortions

Sexually transmitted infections, including HIV

Depression, post-traumatic stress disorder

Harmful use of tobacco, drugs, and alcohol

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Economic Impact

Costs of intimate partner and sexual violence for countries are very high. They include the provision of **health, social, and legal services and costs of lost earnings.**

Violence against women **affects the whole family.**

Children exposed to intimate partner violence in the home are more likely to:

- Be abused themselves
- Not receive healthcare
- Have behavioural, emotional, and schooling problems

As adolescents, they are more likely to:

- Use alcohol and drugs in harmful ways
- Smoke
- Have unsafe sex

Adults who grew up with violence in the home are more likely to **perpetrate or experience intimate partner violence.**

Violence against women **is preventable.**

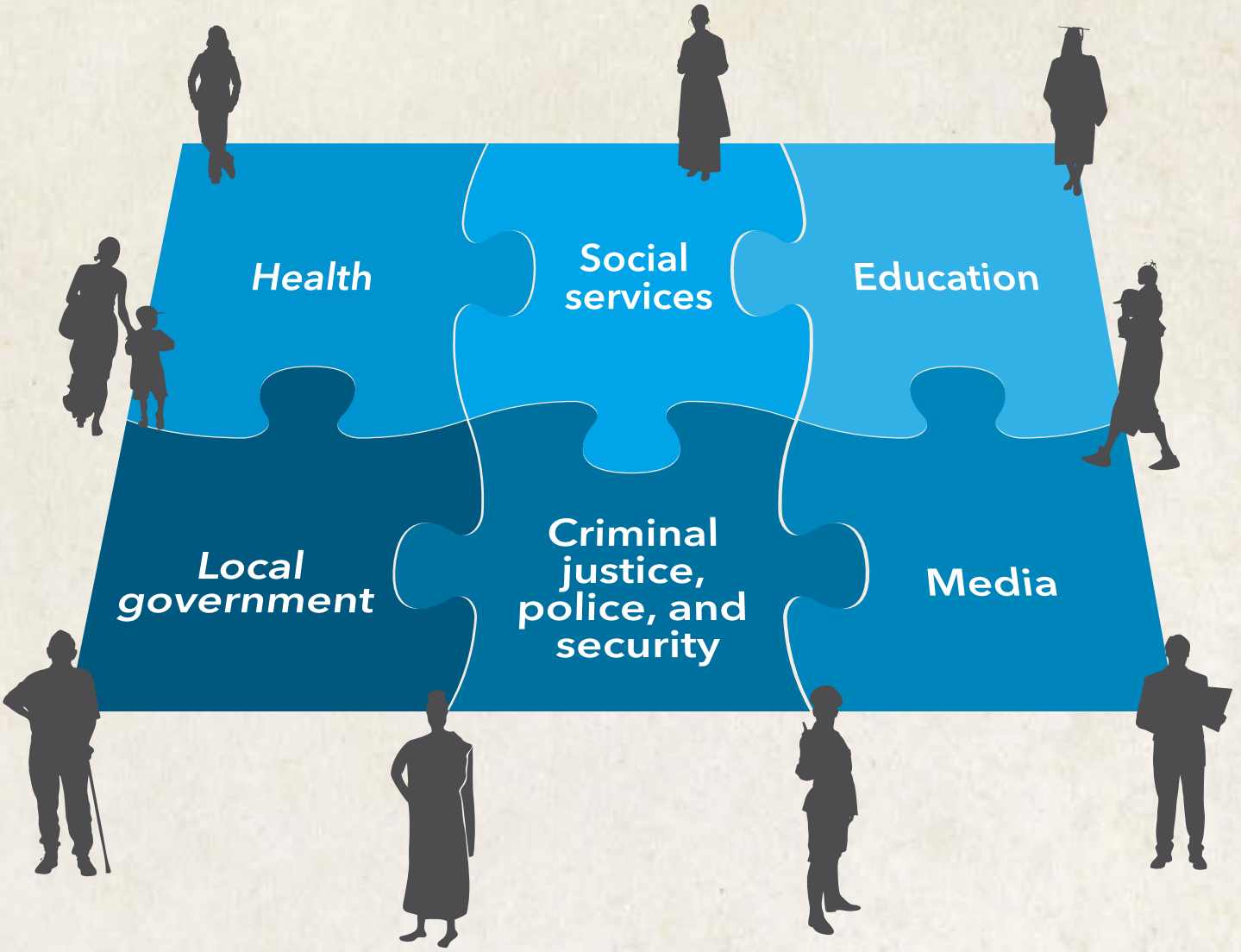
Violence against women is **rooted in gender inequality**.

Programs to reduce intimate partner violence **need to address risk factors at multiple levels.**

Level	Risk Factor	Intervention
Individual	**History of violence** in childhood	**Parenting programmes** to prevent child maltreatment
Relationship	**Male control** over women	Programmes targeting men and boys to **promote gender equitable attitudes and behaviours**
Community	**Unequal gender norms** that condone violence against women	**Programmes promoting equitable gender norms** through media, community mobilization, schools, and religious institutions
Societal	Male partner's **harmful use of alcohol**	**Reducing availability and access** to alcohol
	Women's lack of access to **education and employment**	**Laws, policies, and programmes** that promote women's access to employment and microcredit, girls' access to education, and that ban or prohibit violence against women

Everyone has a role to play in addressing violence against women.

To prevent and respond to violence against women, **multiple sectors of society must work together**.



The health sector plays a key role in preventing and responding to violence against women.

Stop violence against women.

A role for the health sector:

Provide
comprehensive health services for survivors

Collect data
about prevalence, risk factors, and health consequences

Inform policies
to address violence against women

Prevent violence
by fostering and informing prevention programmes

Advocate
for the recognition of violence against women as a public health problem

Web Resources

http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/
http://www.who.int/reproductivehealth/topics/violence/en/

WHO Resources

WHO (2005). Multi-country study on women's health and domestic violence against women.
http://www.who.int/gender/violence/who_multicountry_study/en/

WHO (2010). Preventing intimate partner and sexual violence against women: Taking action and generating evidence.
http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/activities/intimate/en/

WHO (2013). Responding to intimate partner violence and sexual violence against women. WHO clinical and policy guidelines.

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