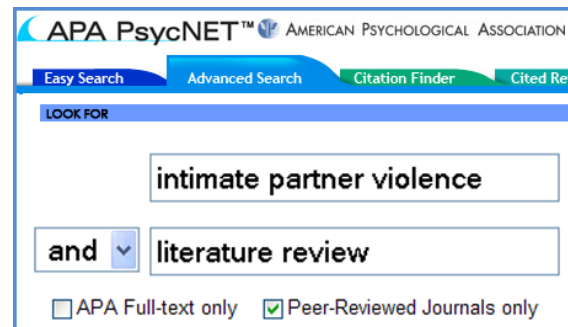


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LOOK FOR

intimate partner violence

and literature review

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Paragraph Theme:
rates of IPV in
cases of divorce/
separation

Paragraph Theme:
mediation programs
report problems when
screening for IPV

Although detected rates of IPV vary, it is common to find reported violence rates as high as 50% to 60% in cases presenting for divorce or separation mediation (Pearson, 1997). Newmark, Harrell, and Salem (1995) found that 68% of women and 55% of men reported being the victim of physical violence from their intimate partner. Mathis and Tanner (1998) found that 60% of the cases in their study had some violence, and half of the violent couples reported "incidents" such as beating up or using weapons. In a third study, the rate of intimate partner abuse was expanded to include emotional abuse and psychological abuse (Beck, Walsh, Mechanic, & Taylor, 2010). With this broader definition, 77% of wives and 77% of husbands reported abuse, and only 10% of couples reported no abuse whatsoever by either party.

Many mediation programs report that they screen for violence, but there are concerns that screening protocols may not be adequate to reliably detect IPV. In a survey of 149 mediation programs, 70% reported that mediators received IPV training and 80% reported screening for IPV in some way (Thoennes et al., 1995). However, only 50% of these programs reported separate screening for each party and using screens that ask directly about violent behaviors. In a similar study

of community mediation clinics, 60% of clinics reported IPV training and 70% reported a level of IPV screening (Clemants & Gross, 2007). However, only 30% of clinics reporting screening used formal, standardized screening instruments (questionnaires or interviews). Questioning parties about violence in mediation can be problematic; if one person is intimidated by the other, he or she may be hesitant to report accurately. Also, research has shown that behaviorally specific screening measures (e.g., the Conflict Tactics Scale, CTS; Straus, 1979) detect more violence than general questions about assault or victimization (Langhinrichsen-Rohling, 2005). Thus, relying on conjoint interviews or only on general questions to detect IPV may not be sensitive measures.

Excerpt from:

Ballard, R. H., Holtzworth-Munroe, A., Applegate, A. G., & Beck, C. J. A. (2011). Detecting intimate partner violence in family and divorce mediation: A randomized trial of intimate partner violence screening. *Psychology, Public Policy, and Law*, 17(2), 241-263.
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