

Treatment for Domestic Violence Perpetrators – Abstract

Domestic violence against women is among the most severe, yet persistent, social phenomena. On the individual level, this phenomenon constitutes a severe violation of a woman's human rights; on the societal level, it entails dramatic socio-economic implications. Thus, a systemic and comprehensive framework is needed in order to respond to the sources and manifestations of domestic violence against women.

In recent years, studies have yielded that the long-term impact of criminal corrective procedures, even of enhanced punishment, on perpetrators, is limited at best. They do not deter nor do they rehabilitate. Thus, more and more studies conclude that any attempt to develop a comprehensive system for long-term, sustainable action to fight against domestic violence against women requires attention to the issue of rehabilitative programs for the perpetrators. This aspect emerged due to a growing consensus about its viability when addressing cases which fall short of the criminal justice system's threshold, as well as in cases when women do not file complaints.

In Israel, this issue has been gathering momentum in recent years, a process which can be attributed to the formation of the Inter-Ministerial Committee for the Prevention and Treatment of Domestic Violence. This paper reviews the development and implementation, in Israel and worldwide, of treatment programs for perpetrators of domestic violence against women, and proposes recommendations for change in the Israeli context.

Historically, the main – if not exclusive – emphasis with regards to responding to domestic violence was on treating and protecting the victims and punishing the perpetrators. In the 1970s, in the United States, a paradigm shift emerged: criminally punishing perpetrators is not effective in terms of recidivism and in terms of preventing the phenomenon's widespread.

This paradigm shift facilitated the emergence of several treatment models, grounded in Feminist theory; the most prominent of which was the Duluth model. Since then, a number of models have materialized; a meta-analysis of these models, implemented in the United States and in Europe, identified several recurring elements: applied therapy practices and approaches; moderated meetings for men-only; the existence of a pre-defined protocol; and a referral by the justice system. In recent years, new models have emerged, addressing previously unattended aspects, such as fatherhood.

However, Europe-based and North-America-based studies have challenged the effectiveness of these models as well the measurement and evaluation methodologies used in assessing them. And yet, there is sufficient research that indicates that there is at least some positive moderate impact on reducing the severity and/or frequency of violence (at least physical violence) towards women, and therefore many countries and entities see the potential contribution of these programs.

In Israel, the main treatment of the phenomenon of domestic violence against women until the 1990s was by providing protective solutions to the women and their children. The enactment in 1991 of the Prevention of Domestic Violence Law (5751-1991) was the first attempt to create a framework for treatment programs for perpetrators. However, perpetrators' rehabilitation has yet to become mandatory. Furthermore, the limited data in existence with regards to the utilization of rehabilitation frameworks indicates that only a minority among perpetrators attend such treatment; it is safe to conclude that there are not enough incentives

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or sanctions to encourage participation. An additional significant difficulty emerges from the absence of communication and coordination among the various existing treatment frameworks, making it difficult to tailor the treatment to the individual perpetrator's characteristics, to maintain treatment continuity and to monitor its results. The most disconcerting finding is that among perpetrators who have been imprisoned – including those who are defined 'dangerous' – the majority are released without being placed in a rehabilitation program and/or expressing commitment to enroll in such a program.

Based on the literature and reports that have been reviewed, the paper summarizes and presents a number of points which should be considered when designing and expanding treatment programs for perpetrators in Israel, including: allocating more funds to such programs, while introducing standards for evaluation; creating a uniform and integrated framework for treatment of perpetrators; adjusting programs to the various types of participants in terms of personal needs, criminal profiles and various types of violence; taking steps towards encouraging full participation in the programs and preventing drop-out; guaranteeing and financing high quality and suitable training for the professional staff; and supervision, documentation and monitoring by means of evaluation research throughout and after the treatment processes.

Data from the Report:

- According to global assessments of the World Health Organization, almost one in every three women (30%) who were in an intimate relationship with a man experienced some kind of physical and/or sexual violence by her partner during her life, and approximately 38% of murdered women in the world were murdered by their partner.
- Global assessments estimate that the economic price of violence against women is approximately 2% of the global GDP, amounting to approximately \$1.5 trillion.
- Research by the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) estimated that the cost of violence by intimate partners towards women in the European Union exceeds EUR109 billion, and of gender violence towards women in general at approximately EUR226 billion; at the same time, public spending on services to reduce and prevent such actions amounts to a mere 3% of the cost of the former.
- According to the Israeli Knesset's Research and Information Center, as of the month of September, 2019, approximately 1,000 prisoners who were tried for domestic violence offenses were being held in the Israel Prison Service's facilities, 270 of them were recidivists.
- According to the Israel Women's Network, over 25% of Israel's 6,000 criminal inmates were convicted of domestic violence. However, in about two thirds of these cases, domestic violence was neither the main nor the sole offense; furthermore, many of these cases were addiction-related.
- A 2017 Adva Center study concluded that State of Israel invests more on the incarceration of individuals charged with violence and sexual offenses (NIS389 million) than on eradicating the phenomenon of domestic violence.

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- According to the Prisoner Rehabilitation Authority, increasing rehabilitation budgets will lead to future savings for the State, since the annual cost of treating a released prisoner in the community is NIS 28,000, while the annual cost of a prisoner in jail is approximately NIS 121,000, more than four-fold (as of 2017).