

Intimate Partner Violence Among Youth in the Northwest Territories



Article Link

What we know from other research:

Intimate partner violence (IPV) is rising in Canada and disproportionately affects the Northwest Territories. ^[1]



Key Terms

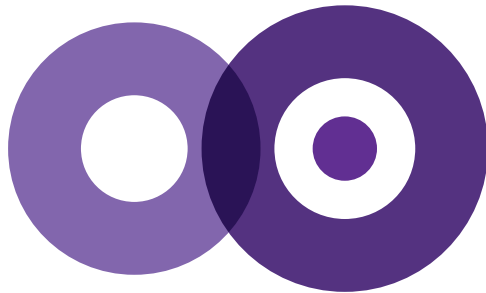
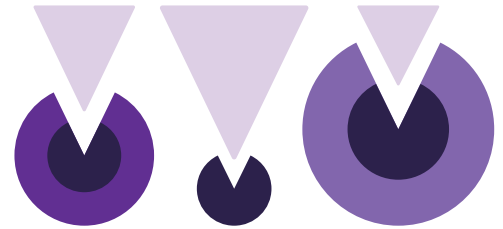
Intimate Partner Violence (IPV): physical, sexual, or psychological aggression by a current or former intimate partner (boyfriend/girlfriend, dating partner, or sexual partner)

Depression: a type of mental illness that negatively affects how a person feels, thinks, and acts

Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD): a mental health condition that can develop as a result of experiencing trauma

Decolonization: identifying colonial systems, structures, and relationships and working to challenge those systems

This pervasive violence is connected to the historical contexts of settler colonialism and heteropatriarchy, which undermined traditional Indigenous values, customs and gender relations. ^[2]



Adolescents and young adults are particularly at risk for IPV as they navigate intimacy and boundary setting within relationships for the first time. ^[3]

Our Research Questions:

- What are the prevalence and determinants of IPV among Northern and Indigenous youth?
- What factors are important for building context-specific and youth-tailored IPV prevention strategies in NWT?

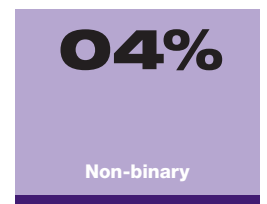
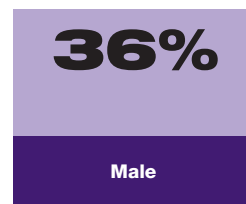
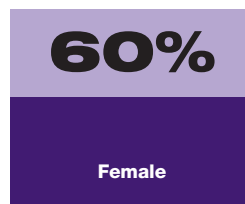
How We Conducted This Research:

- 240 youth aged 12-19 attended Indigenous-led land-and arts-based retreats designed to promote resilience, empowerment, sexual and mental health, and cultural connectedness.
- Participants completed surveys exploring their experience with IPV.

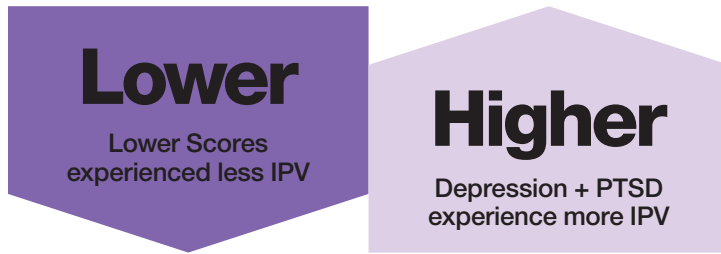
What We Found:



70%
of participants
were Indigenous.



Those with higher scores for depression and PTSD were more likely to experience and perpetrate IPV than participants with lower scores.



The incidence of both experiencing and perpetrating IPV was higher among female participants.

62% reported experiencing IPV, and 55% reported perpetrating IPV.



Depression scores were especially notable. For every 1% increase in depression severity, participants were 30% more likely to experience IPV and 24% more likely to perpetrate IPV.

What this means:

- The high prevalence of IPV, linked to depression among youth in our study, calls for integrated mental health and violence prevention programming.

Recommendations

- Although FOXY's land- and arts-based peer-led programming has improved individual-level characteristics such as empowerment and leadership skills [4], multi-level approaches are needed to address the social factors that impact IPV.

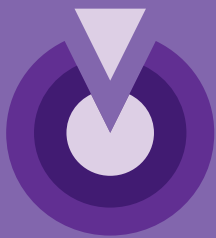
Violence prevention programs for NWT youth must be:



1. Strengths-based (focused on strength and resiliencies, not deficits).



2. Community-based and culturally relevant.



3. Informed by historical and cultural contexts and present day effects of colonization.



4. Attentive to wider determinants of mental health such as food insecurity, gender inequity, and intergenerational trauma. [5]



5. Participatory (meaningfully engage youth and other key stakeholders such as Elders and traditional leaders from the earliest stages of program development).

References

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