



Family Violence

Recognize It, Support Better

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Course Outline

1. Understanding Domestic Violence
2. Recognizing the Warning Signs
3. Supporting Without Causing Harm

Understanding Domestic Violence



Defining Domestic Violence

"Intimate partner violence is defined as a pattern of control in which one partner uses various strategies to gain or maintain control over the other person."

It can occur in current or former intimate relationships, in any type of relationship, and at any age.

It creates a power imbalance within the relationship.



Intimate Partner Violence ≠ A Couple's Argument

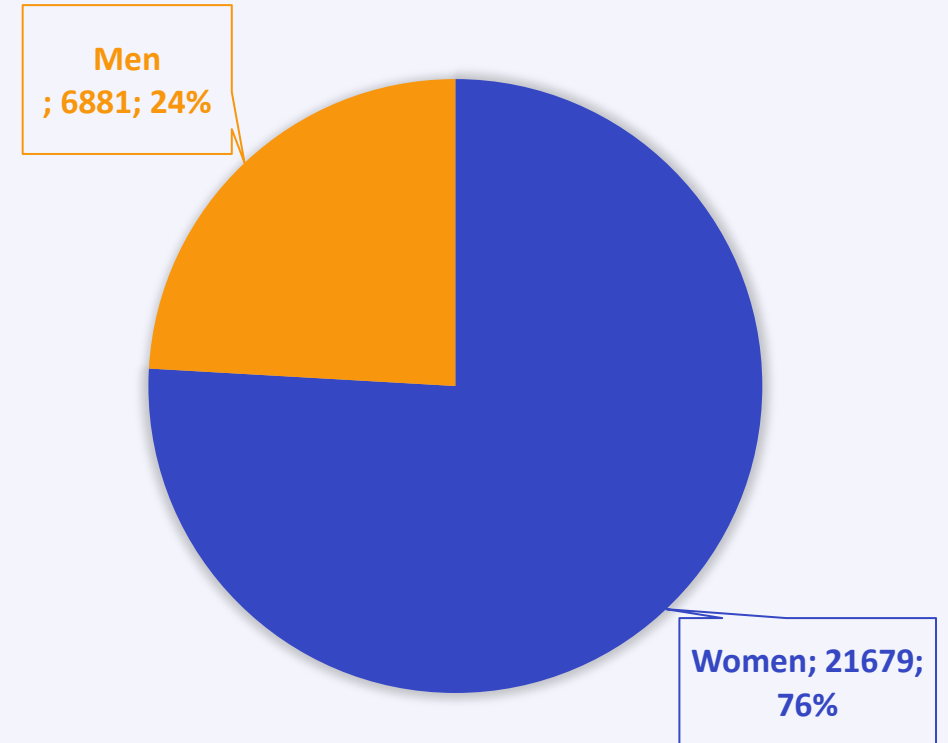
Relationship Conflict	Intimate Partner Violence
• Disagreement between two people • Relatively equal relationship dynamic • Both partners can express their point of view • A search for compromise	• A pattern of domination and control • A power imbalance within the relationship • One partner seeks to control or dominate the other • The victim changes or limits their behaviour out of fear of the consequences





Intimate Partner Violence by the Numbers

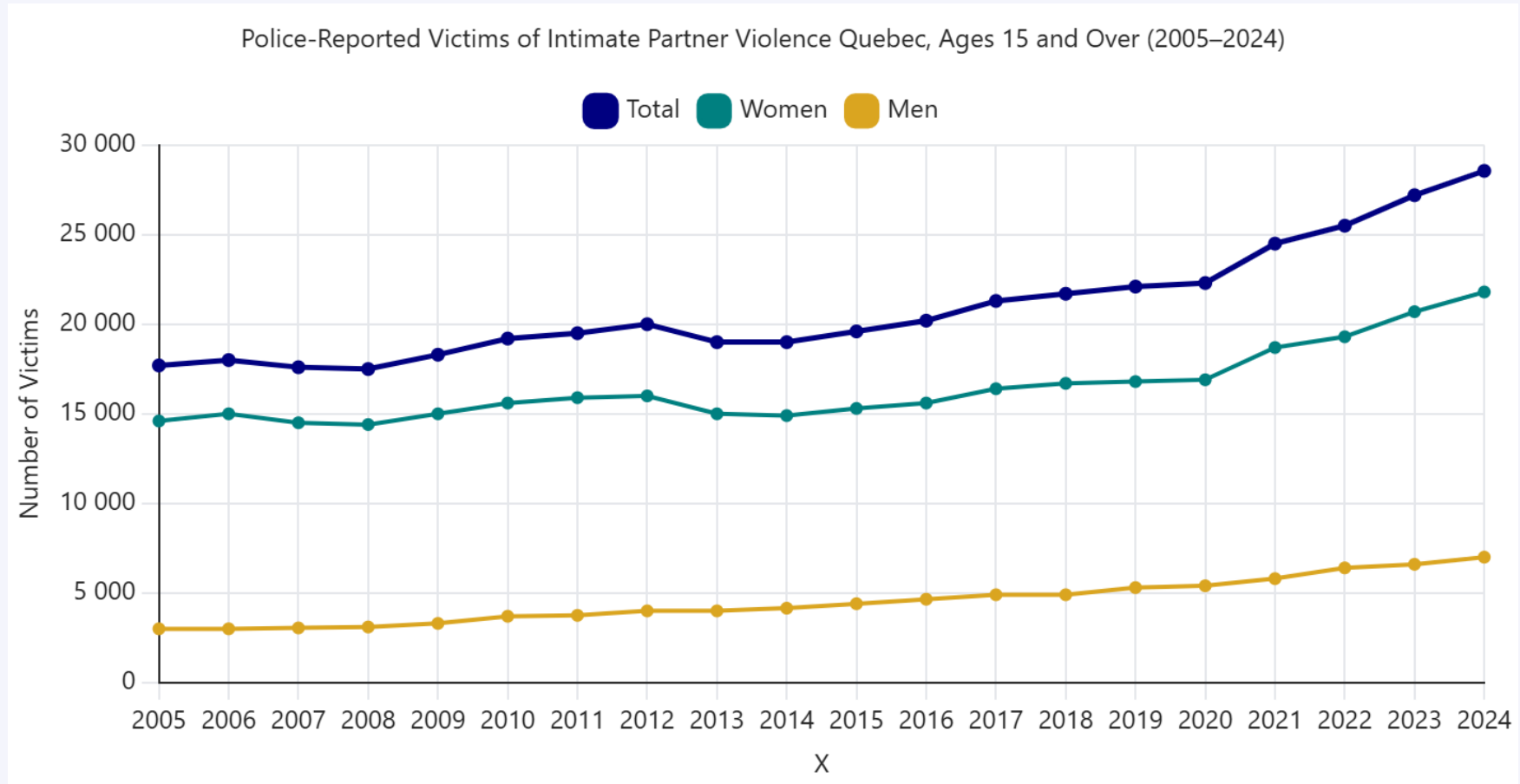
In 2024, 28,560 people in Quebec were victims of offences against the person committed in the context of an intimate relationship.



Source : Ministère de la Sécurité Publique, *Programme de déclaration uniforme de la criminalité*; Institut de la statistique du Québec, *Estimations de la population selon l'âge et le sexe*.



A Significant Increase



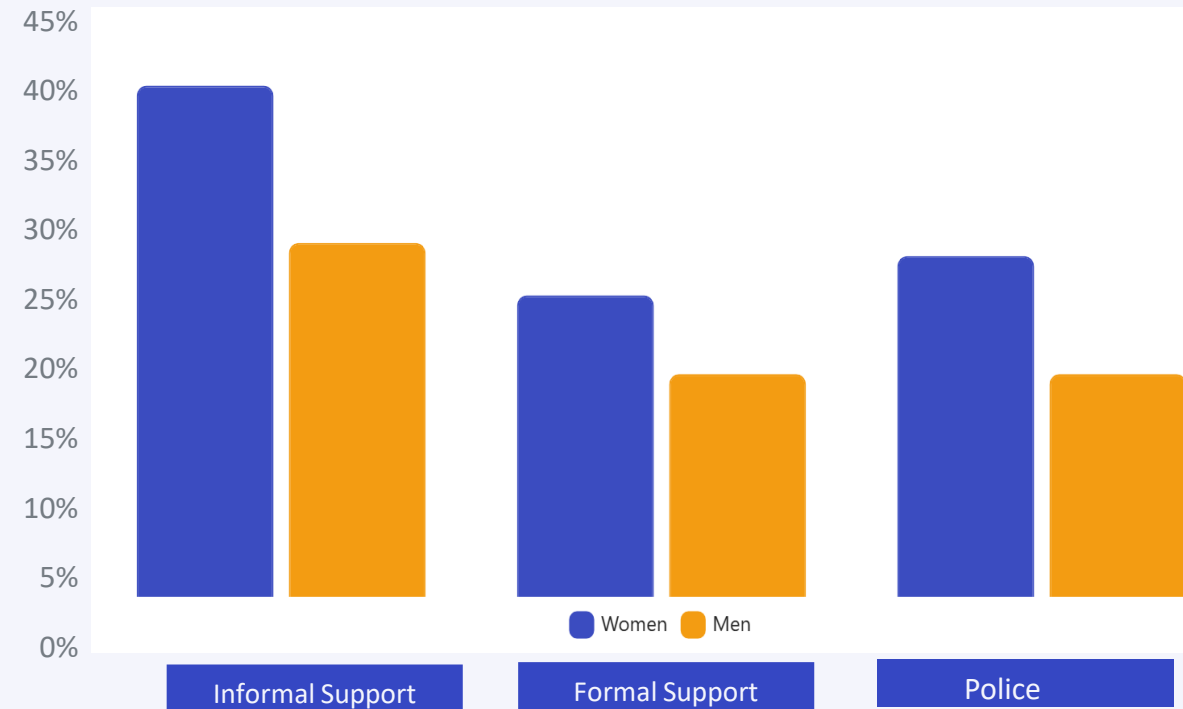
Seeking Help

Only a minority of individuals will disclose or talk about their situation.

To people in their immediate circle (family, friends, neighbours, coworkers).

To formal sources of support (healthcare professionals, crisis centres, helplines, and support services).

To the police



Source: Québec National Institute of Public Health (INSPQ) – Intimate Partner Violence Statistics



Recognizing the Warning Signs





Why Is It Difficult to Recognize ?

- Violence often occurs behind closed doors and in private settings.
- Many victims do not seek help or disclose their situation.
- Fear, shame, and guilt can prevent victims from speaking out.
- Victims may fear retaliation or an escalation of the violence if they disclose what is happening.





Recognizing the Signs

Family and Financial Signs

Difficulties with children
Frequent conflicts
Unusual financial difficulties

Psychological Signs

Anxiety
Hypervigilance
Low self-Esteem

Physical Signs

Injuries
Fatigue
Sleep disturbances

Behavioural Signs

Isolation
Withdrawal
Substance use
Unusual changes in behaviour



Signs in the Workplace

Workplace Signs

Reduced
performance

Frequent calls or
text messages

The partner
frequently appears
at the workplace.

Avoidance of social
activities





Activity – Recognizing the Signs

“Sergeant X has been serving in the CAF for several years. Usually cheerful and punctual, you have noticed some changes over the past few months. Sergeant X often appears tired and says that sleep has been limited. Sergeant X receives numerous calls and text messages during work hours. When responding, Sergeant X moves away from coworkers and appears uneasy. Sergeant X now declines most team-building activities and no longer joins colleagues for meals at the mess. Sergeant X frequently works overtime, even when it is not necessary. Despite this, a supervisor has noticed a decline in performance and an increase in mistakes.”

What do you notice? What signs might lead you to offer support?



When the Violence Targets the Social Network

- Sabotaging communication and relationships between the victim and their loved ones
- Discrediting the victim
- Manipulating how family members, friends, or coworkers perceive the situation
- Using family members, friends, or coworkers to gather information about the victim
- Appropriating the victim's family and friends by creating alliances or turning them against the victim





Vulnerable Populations

- Women
- Older adults
- Members of the LGBTQ+ community
- Immigrants and individuals from ethnocultural minority groups
- People living with disabilities
- Men experiencing mental health or substance use problems



Supporting Without Causing Harm



Why Does the Victim Stay?

Safety

- Fear of retaliation
- Escalation of violence
- Post-separation violence

Psychological Consequences

- Loss of self-confidence
- Exhaustion
- Confusion
- Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)



Practical Barriers

- Housing
- Financial constraints
- Lack of awareness of available resources
- Limited access to services

Children and Family

- Children
- Commitment to the partner
- Hope for change
-





Activity: Myth or Reality?

Why Don't People Intervene?

- It's none of my business.”
- “I could make the situation worse.”
- “It's not serious enough to involve the police.”
- “I don't think the victim really wants to leave because they always go back.”
- “It's better to wait until the victim asks me for help.”



Possible Concerns

"I don't know what to say."

"If the abuser wanted help, they would ask for it. If the abuser wanted to stop the behaviour, they would."

"They are both my friends."



"I am afraid the abuser may become violent toward me or my family if I intervene."

"Isn't what happens within a household a private family matter?"

"It's not serious enough to warrant police involvement."



How to Support

Facilitating Attitudes

To Do:

- Listen
- Believe the person
- Maintain the connection
- Respect their pace
- Offer support
- Refer them to available resources

To Avoid:

- Judging the person
- Telling them what to do
- Forcing them to report or disclose
- Minimizing the situation
- Playing detective





How to Support?

Helpful Phrases

- “I believe you.”
- “You did the right thing by telling me.”
- “Thank you for trusting me.”
- “I'm here for you.”
- “This is not your fault.”



How to Support?

Available Resources

If you witness a situation that requires immediate assistance, call 911.

- SOS Violence Conjugale
- Women's Shelters
- IVAC (Crime Victims Assistance Program)
- CAVAC (Crime Victims Assistance Centres)
- CALACS (Sexual Assault Support Centres)
- Éducaloi
- Psychosocial services
- Military resources
- Financial assistance for victims of violence
- Legal support organizations (Rebâtir)





How to Support?

The Role of the Workplace

- Identifying risks
- Strengthening safety measures
- Implementing a prevention policy
- Raising awareness and providing staff training
- Making support and assistance resources available to employees
- Providing support and reasonable accommodations





Additional Resources

- CFMWS Training: [CFMWS Online Courses and Webinars](#)
- Employer Responsibilities Training: [Domestic Violence – Roles and Legal Obligations in the Workplace \(illuxiCampus\)](#)



Any Questions?

In Summary

- Intimate partner violence is often invisible.
- However, we can recognize warning signs and take action.
- Our role is not to rescue the person.
- Our role is to listen, support, and connect them with appropriate resources.

