



Barriers to Help-Seeking Among Orthodox Jewish Victims of Intimate Partner Violence

Nessia Ahava Ferneau; Bianca Bersani, PhD
University of Maryland, Department of Criminology/Criminal Justice

Background

- Intimate partner violence (IPV) affects 1 in 3 women and 1 in 4 men in the US.¹
- Typical help-seeking follows a three-stage model of problem recognition, deciding to seek help, and selecting a service provider from whom to seek help.²
- Victims of IPV face a wide variety of barriers that interfere with this model and impact their help-seeking and reporting behaviors.²
- IPV victims in minority populations face community-specific barriers that create additional challenges that victims must overcome.
- The Orthodox Jewish community in the United States is a group with unique cultural and religious considerations that may impact victims who are a part of this population.³
- Orthodox Jewish women stay in abusive relationships twice as long as their non-Jewish counterparts, indicating differences in this population's help-seeking behaviors.⁴

1: Characteristics of Help-Seeking for Orthodox Jews

- IPV occurs broadly within this community, but many help-seeking victims are married women under the age of 40.
- The experiences of Orthodox Jewish victims widely differ depending on what Orthodox Jewish subgroup they belong too, ranging from Hasidic to Modern Orthodox.

3: Barriers to Help-Seeking

- Community-specific barriers are more salient for Orthodox Jewish victims than general barriers that affect all victims.
- Cultural barriers include stigma from within the community, as well as from outside providers.
- Religious barriers include Lashon Hara, the Jewish prohibition against slander, and the unique Jewish divorce process.

4: Promoting Help-Seeking

- Education is necessary within the general community, and among clergy.
- Culturally specific providers are best able to support Orthodox Jewish victims.

"If you start to understand all the customs that are guiding an everyday life of an Orthodox Jew, it kind of makes sense like why it is harder to seek services from like secular organizations or even Jewish nonprofits that don't understand Orthodoxy because there's so many aspects that literally guide every single thing that you do every day."

Implications and Future Directions

- Cultural considerations are highly salient for Orthodox Jewish victims, and therefore should be taken into consideration by service providers.
- Efforts should be made to ensure that upon help-seeking, these victims have access to culturally sensitive care, as well as more practical necessities, such as kosher food.
- Culturally-specific preventative education will go a long way in providing Orthodox Jews with an understanding of the dynamics of IPV as well as the language to describe it.
- Increased education is likely to improve help-seeking behaviors, particularly in the problem recognition stage.

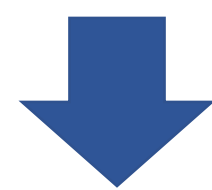
Future Directions

- The three-stage model of help-seeking was shown to have a unique presentation in this community; further research should assess if this is the case in other minority and/or marginalized communities.
- Direct qualitative research with Orthodox Jewish victims will allow for their experiences and needs to be best understood, to better inform practice.

Problem Recognition



Decision to Seek Help



Selection of Service Provider



Figure 1. The three-stage model of help-seeking.²

Methods and Materials

RQ: What does Orthodox Jewish help-seeking in response to IPV look like? What are the barriers that interfere with the stages of this process?

- Semi-structured qualitative interviews were conducted with three professionals who worked closely with Orthodox Jewish victims of IPV.
- Participants were all located in the Northeastern United States. All three were Jewish women under the age of 50. Two participants identified as Orthodox, one did not.
- Data was analyzed using thematic analysis. After analyzing data from the interviews, four major domains were identified. Themes and sub-themes were categorized by relevant domain.

2: The Process of Help-Seeking

- The three-stage model of help-seeking differs in this population, particularly in the problem recognition stage.
- Victims often seek help before fully recognizing and labeling their situation as IPV; this stage frequently only occurs with education and guidance from a service provider.
- Informal help-seeking is typical, and formal help-seeking is often only engaged in when absolutely necessary.
- Victims prefer to seek help from culturally-specific services, such as Jewish social service agencies.

References

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Contact

Nessia Ahava Ferneau
Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice, University of Maryland
2220 Lefrak Hall, 7251 Preinkert Dr., College Park, MD, 20742
ferneau@umd.edu