

Session 2: Social inclusion in policy and research

Please note: Dr Alexandria Innes' presentation, *Tool to assess the risk of bias when using ethnicity and migration data*, consists of two pdfs: the tool and the companion guide. Both can be found on the VISION website: [New Data Assessment Tool: Mitigating Risk of Bias – Ethnicity and Migration - City Vision](#)





Relatives as victims: Implications for policy and practice

Dr Elizabeth Cook, City, University of London, UK

Sally McManus, City, University of London, UK

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Overview

- Effects of interpersonal violence and abuse are far-reaching and long-lasting
- For every victim, there is in many cases *at least* one relative
- However, very little attention given to families as victims in their own right

- What does it mean to view a family member as a ‘victim’ – and to include them in victim policy, research and practice?



estimates suggest, on average,
a homicide affects **7-10 family
members and friends**
(Redmond, 1989)



Terminology

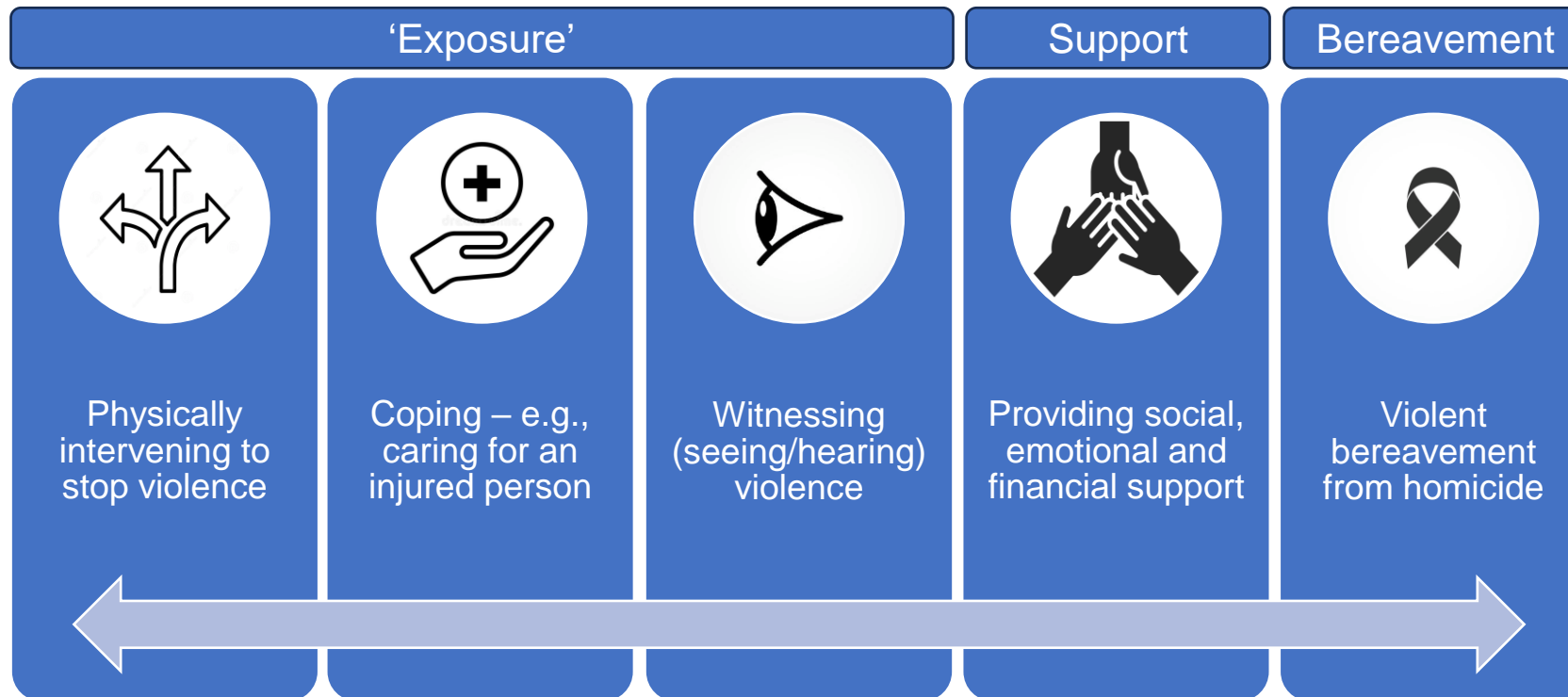
Terms used to position relatives in relation to violence

- Indirect or vicarious victims
- Collateral victims
- Secondary victims
- Co-victims
- Corollary victims
- Included in policy as a victim, **if**:
 - They are persons who have “seen, heard, or otherwise directly experienced the effects of, criminal conduct at the time the conduct occurred” (*Victims and Prisoners Bill, 2023*)
 - They are “a close relative (see glossary) of a person whose death was directly caused by a criminal offence” (Ministry of Justice, 2015 - *Code of Practice for Victims of Crime*)



What do we know?

Relatives of victims



Evidence gap

- Differentiating between levels of exposure (intervene, see/hear, being harmed by violence targeted at another, increased caring responsibilities)
- How 'exposure' to violence can co-occur alongside other major adversities
- The association of being a relative of a victim with mental health outcomes



Methodology

- Secondary analysis of the 2014 Adult Psychiatric Morbidity Survey (APMS)
- Aims:
 - To establish an estimate of what proportion of the population was closely related to a victim of a serious assault; and,
 - To assess whether this is associated with higher rates of feeling unsafe, depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress, self-harm and suicidality.



Results (I)

Who are the relatives of serious assault victims?

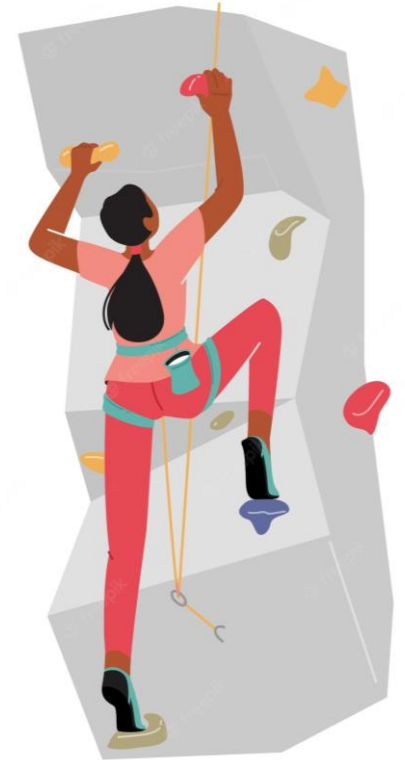
- In 2014, around 1 in 20 adults (4.5%, 95% CI: 4.0-5.2, n=345) was closely related to a serious assault victim
- Relatives of serious assault victims were more likely to be:
 - younger
 - live in social housing
 - live in the most deprived neighbourhoods
 - **to be a victim of serious assault themselves**
 - experience multiple types of adversity in their lives (60% experienced three or more)



Results (II)

What is the association between being a relative and mental health outcomes?

- Relatives of serious assault victims were:
 - 4x more likely to feel unsafe in their neighbourhood
 - 2x as likely to:
 - have depression or an anxiety disorder;
 - screen positive for post-traumatic stress disorder;
 - report having suicidal thoughts, self-harmed, or made a suicide attempt in the past year.
- After adjusting for relatives' **own** experience of serious assault:
 - the association with PTSD and suicidality was *no longer* significant
 - the association with feeling unsafe, depression, and anxiety *did* remain significant



However...

How people interpret 'serious' assault matters

- Reliance on subjective interpretations of:
 - **'serious assault'**:
 - Likely to be gendered (echoes absence of DVA from Serious Violence Strategy)
 - Likely to be interpreted as physical rather than non-physical incidents (absence of coercive and controlling behaviour)
 - **'close relative'**:
 - By blood, law, extended kinship (also fictive kin)
- Initial disclosure of the assault to a family member



Implications

For support services:

- Relatives of victims likely to have had their own experiences of serious assault *and* already experiencing heightened stress, anxiety and depression in a context of reduced resources
- Inclusion means likely increased demand and scale, as well as adapting services to cope with poly-victimization

For policy makers:

- Inclusion in economic estimates of the costs of violence?
- Current proposed legal definition of a 'victim' (i.e., Victims and Prisoners Bill) excludes relatives (with some important exceptions)





Questions?

Contact

- Elizabeth.cook@city.ac.uk
- Sally.mcmanus@city.ac.uk