Intimate Partner Violence in Rural, Remote, and Northern populations

Background

Intimate partner violence (IPV) is a serious challenge with long-term adverse impacts. Less focus has been placed on the response to IPV in rural and northern areas.

Methods

To explore the barriers and responses to IPV in rural and northern communities in Alberta, qualitative interviews and focus groups were conducted with 55 service providers (including shelter services, victim services, RCMP, & counsellours)

Results

There are 4 pivotal themes that contribute to women's experience of IPV

1 CONTEXT

2 FORMAL SERVICES

3 INFORMAL SUPPORTS

4 PROTECTIVE FACTORS

CONTEXT

Understanding the sociocultural context of IPV is key.
Indigenous women, women living on farms, partners of men temporarily employed in coal, oil and gas industry, women within immigrant and refugee communities, and members the LGBTQ community may present with unique challenges

FORMAL SERVICES

Service workers emphasized the need for formal services in order to address IPV such as the provision of safe shelters, working together with women experiencing IPV, and an integrated case management approach

INFORMAL SUPPORTS

Informal supports such as social connections, quality of rural and northern life, community values, gender equality, and IPV education can all be leveraged to assist women experiencing IPV

PROTECTIVE FACTORS

Protective factors are actions that women experiencing IPV can leverage to change their situation. Service providers described how they could facilitate problem solving to assist women experiencing IPV to harness protective factors.

CONCLUSION

To reduce IPV in rural and Northern Alberta, knowledge and action should be integrated to understand the sociocultural context of IPV, the need for formal services, the leveraging of informal supports, and the harnessing of protective factors

- This will allow service providers to assist women experiencing IPV better and to facilitate transition from an IPV environment to an IPV free environment