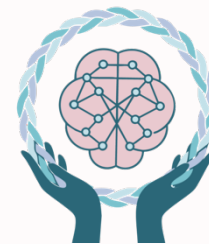


Mothers

Mothering in the Context of Partner-Inflicted Traumatic Brain Injury



Definitions

Mothering

Mothering involves the everyday practices of caring for children through responsibilities, emotional labour, and daily support. In intimate partner violence (IPV) contexts, mothers often prioritize their children's safety over their own health and well-being. This dynamic significantly shapes how mothers experience, respond to, and navigate IPV, particularly when experiencing a partner-inflicted traumatic brain injury (TBI).

IPV-TBI and Mothering

Although research is limited, existing studies identify **women's fear of child apprehension as a significant barrier to TBI disclosure and access to care** (Fitts et al., 2023; St. Ivany & Schminkey, 2016).

Perpetrators may directly threaten children, compelling mothers to prioritize their children's safety at the expense of their own health and well-being (St Ivany et al., 2021).

Negative Impacts of IPV-TBI on Mothers

- IPV-TBI in mothers can be associated with negative psychosocial outcomes and cognitive challenges (Kwako et al., 2011). This can include anxiety, depression, insomnia, and issues with memory.
- Mothers worry about their children's safety, well-being, and emotional health, which can feel even more overwhelming when dealing with the effects of TBI (St Ivany et al., 2021).
- Mothers may experience symptoms such as migraines, fatigue, tinnitus, vision problems, insomnia, chronic pain, and permanent disability. These symptoms may limit mothers' ability to parent in the ways they wish to, reflecting the profound impact of TBI rather than a lack of parenting capacity or desire (Kwako et al., 2011; Toccalino et al., 2023).

Key Themes and Challenges

Isolation and Support Networks

- Abusers often isolate mothers, and some mothers self-isolate to manage symptoms or avoid further violence. This isolation reduces access to support, increasing safety risks and hindering recovery (St. Ivany, Bullock, et al., 2018; Wills & Fitts, 2024).

Indigenous Mothers

- Indigenous mothers are disproportionately impacted by partner-inflicted TBIs, especially in the Canadian Prairies, underscoring the need for trauma-informed, culturally grounded care (Statistics Canada, 2024b; Wills & Fitts, 2024).

Screening and Legal Considerations

- Screening for TBI can pose risks for mothers in custody disputes, where others may use injuries and symptoms to challenge a mother's parenting capacity (Boyle et al., 2022).
- IPV-TBI should never be weaponized against mothers; with the proper tools and support, mothers should be able to continue parenting effectively (Boyle et al., 2022).

This document was developed with the assistance of AI (OpenAI's ChatGPT) for drafting and phrasing, based on our literature review findings.

Scan the QR code to learn more about our project!



Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada

[Click here for full reference list!](#)