

Health service interventions for intimate partner violence among military personnel and Veterans: A framework and scoping review



A recent review conducted by the Atlas Institute for Veterans and Families and the Phoenix Australia Centre for Posttraumatic Mental Health (Cowlshaw et al., 2022) found:



1 in 5 of all active duty personnel and Veterans may report recent exposure to IPV



1 in 8 may report recent use of IPV

These high rates of IPV use and exposure suggest a strong need for programs that respond to violence in intimate relationships among military personnel and Veterans, as well as their Families.

Intimate partner violence (IPV) refers to any behaviour in a current or former intimate relationship that causes physical, psychological or sexual harm. This may include physical or sexual violence, as well as psychological or emotional forms of abuse that can involve coercive control — a pattern of non-physical manipulative behaviour for the purpose of gaining and maintaining control over a partner. Examples of coercive control include isolating a partner from family and friends, and limiting where and when they can access money.

IPV is a concerning issue among military personnel and Veterans. A recent review conducted by the Atlas Institute for Veterans and Families and the Phoenix Australia Centre for Posttraumatic Mental Health found that one in five of all active duty personnel and Veterans may report recent exposure to IPV, while one in eight may report recent use of IPV.¹ These high rates of IPV use and exposure suggest a strong need for programs that respond to violence in intimate relationships among military personnel and Veterans, as well as in their Families.

To improve understanding of IPV-related programs and/or services available in health service contexts for military personnel, Veterans, and their Families, the Atlas Institute has collaborated with researchers at Phoenix Australia to conduct a review of all available studies that have identified ways of addressing IPV in health services for these groups. The review included a comprehensive search of all available scientific literature regarding IPV-related interventions for military personnel, Veterans, and their Families. Results showed 19 studies that had investigated ways to prevent and/or respond to IPV (i.e. “interventions”) in health service contexts for military personnel or Veterans. These studies were all based in the United States, and only three evaluated whether interventions were actually helpful to those who used them.

