

# ECONOMIC ABUSE FACT SHEET

## What is the impact of economic abuse?

**Economic abuse impacts all levels including individual, family, and community. When the abuser has control over finances, he traps her in the relationship, making it more difficult for her to leave.**

*“Economic abuse creates a home environment where the victim is continually anxious about material or financial issues. This stress is related to depression, anxiety, and parenting problems.”<sup>2</sup>*

### Individual Impact

*Economic abuse decreases the psychological well-being of the victim.*

Mothers who experience economic abuse are **1.9 times** more likely to experience depression than those who have not.<sup>6</sup> Economic abuse is more predictive of depression over time than physical and psychological abuse. Having a partner control access to money or preventing independence through work or school may leave a lasting impact on women’s mental health, especially when experienced over time.

### Family Impact

*Within the family, economic abuse permeates each relationship.*

According to the spill-over hypothesis, hostility and conflict in one family system (i.e. the parental unit) negatively influences other family systems (i.e. the parent-child unit). Mothers who experience economic abuse are less likely to engage in parent-child activities and they are **1.5 times** more likely to use spanking than mothers who did not experience such abuse.<sup>6</sup>

*“Witnessing abuse has been associated with problems among children including difficulties with temperament, social competence, and internalizing behaviors and aggression.”<sup>6</sup>*

*“Economically abusive tactics may propel survivors toward poverty, if not already trapped by it. The combination of abuse and poverty may force women to remain in their abusive relationships as well as keep their focus on basic economic survival.”<sup>7</sup>*

### Community and Societal Impact

*Economic abuse impacts women’s and society’s economic well-being.*

The costs of IPV against women in 1995 exceeded **\$5.8 billion** and included nearly **\$4.1 billion** in the costs of medical and mental health care and nearly **\$1.8 billion** in the costs of lost productivity.<sup>4</sup> Survivors lose nearly **8 million days of paid work**—the equivalent of more than **32,000 full-time jobs**—and almost **5.6 million days** of household productivity each year.<sup>4</sup> IPV is a primary cause of homelessness among women, which is a major barrier to their workforce participation.<sup>5</sup>

#### References

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- <sup>2</sup>Huang, C.C., Postmus, J.L., Vikse, J.H., and Wang, L.R. (2013). Economic abuse, physical violence, and union formation. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 35, 780-786.
- <sup>3</sup>Mathisen-Stylianou, A., Postmus, J.L., and McMahon, S. (2013). Measuring abusive behaviors: Is economic abuse a unique form of abuse? *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 28(16), 3186-3204.
- <sup>4</sup>National Center for Injury Prevention and Control. (2003). *Costs of intimate partner violence against women in the United States*. Atlanta, GA: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
- <sup>5</sup>NOW Legal Defense and Education Fund. (2002). *Surviving violence and poverty: A focus on the link between domestic violence and sexual violence, women’s poverty and welfare*. Washington, DC.
- <sup>6</sup>Postmus, J.L., Huang, C.C., and Mathisen-Stylianou, A. (2012). The impact of physical and economic abuse on maternal mental health and parenting. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 34, 1922-1928.
- <sup>7</sup>Postmus, J.L., Plummer, S.B., McMahon, S., Murshid, N.S., and Kim, M.S. (2012). Understanding economic abuse in the lives of survivors. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 27(3), 411-430.