

## Violence

Training created for the EnFaNCE Foundation team, partner of Inter Aide in Manilla, Philippines

### Notice

Type of document	Psychosocial "Pratiques" document
Document title	Violence, training course created for the EnFaNCE Foundation team, partner of Inter Aide in July 2012 in Manilla, Philippines
Category	SOCIAL - Family development
Country, Town	Manilla, Philippines
Northern NGO	Inter Aide <a href="http://www.interaide.org">http://www.interaide.org</a>
Southern NGO	EnFaNCE Foundation Inc. <a href="http://enfancefoundation.webs.com/">http://enfancefoundation.webs.com/</a>
Document date	20 September 2012 - revised 27/11/12 - revised 17/01/2013
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Keywords	Family development – social – psychosocial – training – violence – urban programme – Manilla Philippines – EnFaNCE Foundation Inc.
Summary	<p>This training course (prepared in French and delivered in English) was created in July 2012 in Manilla, following a request from the social support team of the EnFaNCE Foundation, a partner of Inter Aide in Manilla, to respond to their highly relevant questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What is violence?</li> <li>- What are the causes of violence?</li> <li>- What factors trigger violence?</li> <li>- Is it possible to halt violence? How? Why is it so difficult?</li> <li>- Does shouting at children or slapping them count as violence?</li> <li>- Does making fun of someone count as violence?</li> <li>- What help can be given to families?</li> </ul> <p>While suggesting answers to these questions, this guide provides a wider view of violence, setting the individual in their life environment to illustrate the fact that the act of violence takes place in an environment which is violent or which is experienced as such: either the current environment of the person or their earlier environment – the family environment of their childhood, for example, in the case of someone who was abused – that the person projects onto their current environment.</p>

### IMPORTANT NOTICE

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September 2012 - Updated 01/2013 – English translation May 2014 1



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## Foreword

*This training course (prepared in French and delivered in English) was created in July 2012 in Manilla, following a request from the team of the EnFaNCE Foundation, partner of Inter Aide in Manilla, to respond to their highly relevant questions:*

- *What is violence?*
- *What are the causes of violence?*
- *What factors trigger violence?*
- *Is it possible to halt violence? How? Why is it so difficult?*
- *Does shouting at children or slapping them count as violence?*
- *Does making fun of someone count as violence?*
- *What help can be given to families?*

*While suggesting answers to these questions, I wanted to provide a wider view of violence, setting the individual in their life environment to illustrate the fact that the act of violence takes place in an environment which is violent or which is experienced as such: either the current environment of the person or their earlier environment – the family environment of their childhood, for example, in the case of someone who was abused – that the person projects onto their current environment.*

## 1. Some definitions

### What violence is:

According to the definition in the *Petit Robert* dictionary, violence is "using force on someone (or on oneself) to make them act against their will by using force or intimidation".

For the philosopher Blandine Kriegel, violence is an "unregulated force that harms the physical or psychological integrity in order to challenge the humanity of an individual with the purpose of domination or destruction"<sup>1</sup>. Violence is thus often opposed to the controlled, legitimate and measured use of force.

There are different forms of violence: physical violence, violence in movements, words, looks and silences. There is social violence, violence at work, on the roads, educational violence, the violence of social injustice...

There is objective violence, which is what the law discusses: nobody has the right to harm another.

And there is subjective violence; in other words violence is connected with the subject who experiences it: what will be perceived as violent by one person may not necessarily be considered as violent by another.

We may perceive as violence:

- The feeling of not being recognised
- A feeling of injustice (which makes me feel that I am not as valuable as someone else)

<sup>1</sup> Blandine Kriegel. *La violence à la télévision. Report of the mission for the evaluation, analysis and provision of suggestions relating to violence on television*, Ministry of Culture and Communication, France <http://www.culture.gouv.fr/culture/actualites/communiq/aillagon/rapportBK.pdf>



- Envy (refers to the feeling of missing out: other people have something I don't have, so I'm not the same, not equal, not whole).

These feelings provoke a perception of violence within us, and may generate violent behaviours that we will use to defend ourselves against this internal feeling. In Maputo, adolescents participating in the ESSOR's educational programmes mention Brazilian *telenovelas* shown on Mozambique television as among sources of violence, and they are correct in this: by means of the violence (including the violence of human relationships) that televised series depict, and by means of the envy or jealousy that they can provoke by showing the material wealth of other citizens of the world (this well-being that other people enjoy is refused to me, as though I was worth less than them, as if I was being treated as less than nothing) they can indeed provoke violent behaviour.

In the case of violence, the other person is no longer recognised as another human being, in their otherness and humanity; they are considered as an object, a thing.

Violence occurs when there is a disconnection of the link between oneself and the other; a loss of contact. When there is a will to eliminate the other (in reality or figuratively). When we no longer take the other person into account, into consideration. (Elisabeth Leblanc<sup>2</sup>).

"The person who enters into the system of violence is a being who feels threatened and for whom everything that is external has for a long time been viewed as threatening. Violence is the final stage in a long crescendo of discontent, whether expressed or not by the individual: this is true of the unemployed as much as those from neglected housing estates, disappointed lovers and teenagers without a future." (Christiane Olivier, *L'ogre intérieur, De la violence personnelle et familiale*, Poche Fayard 1998).

### What it is not:

#### **Anger**

In our Judaeo-Christian culture in which it is one of the seven deadly sins, this emotion is often wrongly confused with violence (in fact, the term used in the Bible is not "simple" anger, but *wrath* which evokes rage or fury).

**But anger is not violence.** Anger is a fundamental human emotion, a "basic" emotion (along with sadness, joy, fear — to which some authors add surprise, disgust, shame<sup>3</sup> — love being something entirely separate of course!<sup>4</sup>) The other emotions — nostalgia, discouragement, jealousy, contempt, hate etc. — are known as secondary or "mixed" as they are formed from a mixture of basic emotions.

According to Darwin, these basic emotions are innate, universal (independent of culture and education) and communicative: they aim to communicate an internal state to the exterior (emotion from the Latin *ex movere*: put in motion towards the exterior).

The message that anger enables to be transmitted is "watch out, you have attacked my territory (my integrity etc.), and I am ready to react if you go any further".

**Anger is thus a message addressed to the other, recognised in their otherness. This is what differentiates it fundamentally from violence, in which the other is no longer recognised as their otherness and humanity.**

<sup>2</sup> *Rencontrer, traverser, dépasser la violence*, conference by Élisabeth Leblanc, clinical psychologist, Jungian psychoanalyst clinical psychologist, director of the Savoir Psy school, <http://www.savoirpsy.com/> à *La Traversée*, September 25th, 2008

<sup>3</sup> *Les sources de la honte*, Vincent de Gauléjac, Desclée de Brouwer, Paris, 1996, reissued 2002.  
On the subject of shame, see also a summary of a conference by V. de Gauléjac (in French): <http://anne-lidia-carpentier.perso.sfr.fr/data/uploads/la-honte-gaulejac-pour-lettre-apsos-15.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> *La force des émotions*, François Lelord & Christophe André, Ed. Odile Jacob 2001



Anger is a kind of warning shot, a message whose aim is to intimidate an adversary without causing physical injury to them. Anger is therefore a very useful emotion, and one which can even allow to avoid violence.

Violent anger is not the same thing as anger: it is anger which is manifested in violent behaviour... What can transform anger into violent anger is the fact of feeling that one is not being heard, of not being listened to in one's needs: "don't go beyond my limits; if you do I will be obliged to attack (and thus to resort to some form of violence)".

### **Aggressiveness**

In ethology (the study of the behaviour of different animal species) **aggressiveness** is understood to be an instinct, which may be related to:

- The survival instinct when it enables self defence;
- The reproductive instinct stimulating competition between males;
- The parental instinct when an animal protects its descendants.

**Aggressiveness seen in this way therefore has a positive aim of the preservation of oneself, of one's progeny and of the species** — while **aggression** is the action of attacking or provoking.

Ethology has emphasised aggressiveness in every animal species as a positive factor in its preservation: like a vital element, a vital force — in opposition to the death drive in Freudian theory.

In human societies, this aggressiveness cannot, however, be understood as a priority given to violence nor even to the latent tensions of power relationships. It is more an energy of which various cultures optimise the forms of expression (in this way, we can consider collective sports as "rites" enabling healthy aggression to express itself in a strict context — the rules of the game and of the refereeing — excluding violence... which some *hooligans* have failed to understand...).

Well before the era of the ethologists, the German psychiatrist and psychoanalyst Frederick Perls, founder of Gestalt therapy, had already understood and analysed aggressiveness as a vital energy in his first book, published in 1942<sup>5</sup>. Gestalt therapy therefore speaks of healthy aggression, giving the individual the energy to take from their environment what they need to survive (to feed themselves etc.) — the term aggression is then closer to its Latin etymology of *ad gressere*: to move towards (which we also find in progress: to move forwards).

In human societies, aggressive attitudes or gestures are more or less tolerated by social codes and their consequences are very variable from one society to another, from one social group to another and from one period to another.

In the general language, the term "aggressiveness" is often used to designate physical or verbal violence manifested with a hostile intention. Without hostility, aggressiveness has no violent character, as in the sexual jousting of passionate lovers or a high intensity intellectual debate. (In contrast, a quarrel characterised by manifest hostility will involve verbal violence). In the same way, aggressiveness in constructive action is called "dynamism".

**In children**, the **reaction of opposition** to those surrounding the child, which we sometimes describe as aggressiveness, is a **normal** component in the mental, emotional, relational and behavioural growth of the young child. The child who wants to obtain an object or to express discontent attacks their parents, throws their toy on the floor... but does not do so to do harm. This behaviour enables the

<sup>5</sup> *Le moi, la faim et l'agressivité*, Frederick Salomon Perls, Tchou 1978 for the French translation, *Ego, Hunger and Aggression: A Revision of Freud's Theory and Method* published in German in 1942 in South Africa, where Perls had emigrated to flee Nazi Germany.



child to express their feelings, to be understood and to test their environment: can my environment (family, educational) meet my needs? Can it protect me? (see Section 3). And to step away from dependency in order to grow...<sup>6</sup>

Finally, **authority** is the action of being heard **without constraint**.

### **A Paradox : violence decreases but is over-mediatised**

Though violence is decreasing, it is covered by the media in such a way that it gives the feeling of living in a world of growing violence<sup>7</sup>. But this is not true, as shown by Mathieu Ricard in his last book (*Altruism, the Power of Compassion to Change Yourself and The World* 2013, English Edition Little Brown 2015<sup>8</sup>)

« Violence has been decreasing throughout history. In England in the XIVth century, there were 100 homicides per year for 100 000 inhabitants, now it's 0,7. In Europe, the rate has decreased by 100 to 50 times compared to 3 centuries ago. The average number of victims during a conflict in the world was 30 000 in 1950. It's 900 today. Of course, there still are wars, but globally it has diminished. Violence against children has decreased, violence against women has decreased. Indeed, a lot still has to be done, but a lot has been achieved already »<sup>9 10</sup>.

## **2. The Different Types of Violence**

When we speak of "violence" we usually think of physical violence, psychological violence and criminal violence. But violence manifests itself in many other ways.

### **Physical Violence**

Physical violence can be defined as an act inflicted on another human being with (or without) intention, perceived or not, to cause suffering and/or a physical injury.

There is the notion of objective violence, which is the one the law deals with: no human being has the right to harm another.

Physical violence is **always also psychological violence**: physical violence always has a psychological dimension. The victim of an injury or an aggression simultaneously makes the painful experience of his/her fragility and of his/her humiliation or powerlessness.

For example, in the area of "**regular educational violence**", a parent spansks their child "for their own good, to teach them the limits": parents use violence for the purpose of domination, so they have the perceived, conscious intention to cause physical pain. They do not necessarily have the intention to

<sup>6</sup> Magazine Cerveau & Psycho, l'essentiel « *Les Racines de la violence* », Nov. 2011 – Jan. 2012, p. 38 *L'enfant violent*

<sup>7</sup> Why are the media giving so much focus on violence?... A study has shown that after seeing violent images, the brain memorize soft and pleasant information, such as the information shown during advertising... **Sources** (Mais d'autres études montrent le contraire ! [http://www.scienceshumaines.com/pub-et-violence-ne-font-pas-bon-menage\\_fr\\_11015.html](http://www.scienceshumaines.com/pub-et-violence-ne-font-pas-bon-menage_fr_11015.html))

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.matthieuricard.org/en/books/categories/written-works>

<sup>9</sup> [http://www.huffingtonpost.fr/2013/09/21/plaidoyer-pour-laltruisme-matthieu-ricard-interview\\_n\\_3954284.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.fr/2013/09/21/plaidoyer-pour-laltruisme-matthieu-ricard-interview_n_3954284.html)

<sup>10</sup> My very imperfect translation, A.Carpentier





cause psychological pain to their child by humiliating it, but still, spanking is always perceived as a humiliation. In the vast majority of cases, however, the intention to inflict psychic suffering is present, although it can be non-conscious.

For Alice Miller<sup>11</sup>, hitting a child is:

1. Perpetuating the old belief that violence is a legitimate means to resolve conflicts;
2. Legitimizing in the heart of tomorrow's young adults the use of force to compel the other to submit;
3. Maintaining the old illusion that one can obtain good by doing evil;
4. Admitting that if we do not manage to get along or to be heard, violence can be used and the other person hit...

Finally, the child understands that they can take their frustration out on others... Children need **limits**, not violence.

## **Psychological Violence**

Mental cruelty, insults, degrading or insulting taunts, non-recognition, making people feel guilty, belittling, systematic denigration, manipulation... (cf. *Appendix 1, the criteria proposed by Isabelle Nazare-Aga to locate the manipulation*) are forms of psychological violence.

And, as we have just seen, physical violence used to affect people in their integrity also causes psychological suffering.

## **Violence Against Oneself**

This is a type of violence aimed against oneself: risky and addictive behaviours are the means used to feel alive because somewhere within oneself is not sure one is alive. (Elisabeth Leblanc, cf. *sources*)

Self-mutilation, addictions, anorexia, bulimia... but also excessive or dangerous sports activities are all forms that violence can take when it is turned against oneself...

The *repeated* use of cosmetic surgery, apart from a medical need or reconstructive surgery, may also be considered as a form of self-mutilation: my body is a *thing* that I shape, cut and cut again, break and rebuild to resemble a *doll*, making it conform to inhuman aesthetic canons — the photos of the models appearing in magazines are all touched up, their skin smoothed, their legs lengthened... — a social aesthetic constraint that ends up being introjected by many women but also by some men. It is quite likely that there was a parent in these people's past to whom they were a *toy*, someone to be physically abused, to be treated as a *thing*.

The ultimate form of violence turned against oneself is suicide.

"I think that suicide therefore stands for that which characterizes violence in psychopathology: it is not a choice, but a constraint imposing itself, at some point, on an individual who no longer finds any other solution to what they feel is a threat to themselves, to their identity." Philippe Jeammet, *Sciences Humaines*<sup>12</sup>.

However, one can also consider these types of behaviour as attempts to treat oneself with self-medication, attempts to alleviate the suffering and anguish<sup>13</sup>: "Any symptom is an attempt to obtain self-healing" (Joyce MacDougall, *Plea For A Measure Of Abnormality*, Brunner/Mazel, 1992). Self-mutilation is a paradoxical way of making one feel one exists, just like suicide, paradoxically, may be

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.alice-miller.com/>

<sup>12</sup> [http://www.scienceshumaines.com/rencontre-avec-philippe-jeammet-le-suicide-des-jeunes-comme-affirmation-de-soi\\_fr\\_13744.html](http://www.scienceshumaines.com/rencontre-avec-philippe-jeammet-le-suicide-des-jeunes-comme-affirmation-de-soi_fr_13744.html) Sciences Humaines, Hors-série N° 47 - December 2004 / January - February 2005

<sup>13</sup> See also the note on "Addictions", online on Practices <http://www.interaide.org/pratiques/content/les-addictions>



seen as a way to take one's life in one's hand (such as a person who is under the influence of some perverse feeling and who is released from it by suicide).

In the case of suicide, the suffering is perceived as so interlinked with life that the only way to stop the suffering seems to be to stop life... The life force turned against oneself or against the suffering in oneself, so linked to life...

In committing suicide (but also anorexia nervosa, self-mutilation etc. ), the message could be: "Look at how I mistreat this body that you have given me, this life that you have given me, and that you believe belongs to you...". Suicide may also bear the aspect of inflicting violence on people around, to parents, to children, to the family — violence which comes in response to some violence that was received and experienced through inheritance.

Some suicides present a particular form of violence, inflicted on those who discover the body... Some parents commit suicide knowing that it will be their young children who discover their body... the ultimate violence<sup>14</sup>.

"When you are at a total loss, something always remains possible: to do evil. Having fun, succeeding, wanting to be alive is random and makes us dependent on others. By contrast, by destroying yourself are sure to be the strongest. But at what price? There is a fleeting impression of revenge and power at the thought of being able to do oneself harm. This is what accounts for a propensity, not only in adolescence, for resorting to taking one's life, but also to any form of self-sabotage or attack on oneself, be they scarification, self-mutilation, reckless risk-taking, fascination with failure or the refusal to learn or to confront others. One finds a hold in refusal, failure and destruction. This acts like a drug in the minds of many young people, in particular those who are sensitive to disappointments and those who are the most affected by this feeling of powerlessness. Young people full of ambitions and the desire to fulfil themselves and full of a thirst for life turn out to be the most likely candidates to resort to self-destruction or to destruction in general. Those who have enough self-confidence and are relatively indifferent or less sensitive react less." Philippe Jeammet (*ibidem*).

## **Criminal Violence**

Crime, be it impulsive or organized, may have social, economic or psychological (in the case of psychopaths) causes. According to some authors, this form of violence is the opposite of state and/or symbolic violence.

### **Four major causes have been identified as favouring criminal violence<sup>15</sup>**

- Urbanism (which is a political responsibility)
- Conflicts (institutional, structural, systemic, occupational, interpersonal violence...)
- Poverty (economic violence),
- Inequalities (social, economic, religious, cultural...).

Research shows that the physical environment can also contribute to generating violence: violence is more likely to occur in environment where there are noise, heat and human density (overcrowding)<sup>16</sup>.

**Thus the slums and squatter areas where the urban programs of Inter Aide are implemented, accumulate all risks of violence.**

But it is easier for politicians to place the source of violence in the individual, rather than to question their political action...

<sup>14</sup> See Xavier Pommereau's conference on suicide (in French) [http://www.canal-u.tv/video/universite\\_bordeaux\\_segalen\\_dcam/le\\_suicide.1854](http://www.canal-u.tv/video/universite_bordeaux_segalen_dcam/le_suicide.1854)

<sup>15</sup> International report on the prevention of crime and daily security, <http://www.crime-prevention-intl.org/fr/publications/report/report/article/rapport-international-2012-sur-la-prevention-de-la-criminalite-et-la-securite-quotidienne.html> quoted by the magazine Cerveau & Psycho, l'essentiel « Les Racines de la violence »

<sup>16</sup> Magazine Cerveau & Psycho, l'essentiel « Les Racines de la violence », Nov. 2011 – Jan.2012, p. 38





## Family Violence

Violence can be defined as an act inflicted on another human being with (or *without*) intention, perceived or not, to cause suffering and/or a physical injury. This violence becomes abusive, when the probability of causing injury is high. Family abuse — physical abuse, educational neglect, sexual abuse, mental cruelty, etc. inflicted by one or more adults (quite often the parents or grandparents) on a child, causes serious consequences on its physical and psychological development. These manifestations of violence are more or less identifiable if they are expressed in the form of direct acts (physical brutality, sexual assault, psychological cruelty) or indirect acts (neglect, abandonment, laissez-faire, rejection)<sup>17</sup>.

This definition *without my additions in blue italics* “an act inflicted on another human being with intention, perceived or not, to cause suffering and/or a physical injury” omits to make 3 important points sufficiently explicit: 1) physical violence is always also **psychological violence**; 2) **negligence** as a form of violence<sup>18</sup> — indifference pushed to the extreme (the conscious intention may be not to be violent but *it is violent*, and the child, as any human being, will prefer any contact, even poor, to no contact, no relationship at all); 3) finally, it does not mention **educational violence**, i.e. violence perpetrated under educational pretexts: I’ll slap, spank, hit, flog you... “*for your own good*”. Yet this is violence because the educational pretext (expressed by the phrase “for your own good”) is in reality an intent to submit the other by force. It is abuse of authority. It is completely *counter-educational*. The child will grow up under control, integrating the message that its will and its initiatives are bad, that it has little value, that its physical integrity has no value; the child learns that violence is an acceptable mode of coping with human relationships, and also understands that the adult, unable to cope with his/her emotions, uses violence against the other to relieve their own internal tension, see § below. Unfortunately, of the 192 members of the United Nations, only 19 have prohibited the corporal punishment of children so far.

The different types of family violence:

- **Violence and physical abuse** (physical violence, forced labour, sexual violence such as incest<sup>19</sup> or prostitution): physical violence is identifiable by the outward signs (hematomas, bruises, wounds, burns, fractures, alopecia – the loss of hair) it causes. It is, however, also characterized by other symptoms that are less visible: foetal abuse, resulting from intentional blows on the belly of pregnant women, maternal drug addiction or the shaken baby syndrome.
- **Psychological violence**: verbal abuse, mental cruelty, psychological control, as in manipulation or<sup>20</sup> incestuous behaviour<sup>21</sup>, making guilty, belittling, rejection, indifference...
- **Neglect**: serious neglect is characterised by the absence of attention, protection and care a parent manifests towards his/her child. The parents often show symptoms of melancholy or depression and show themselves to be unable to discern the dangers the child runs when left to its own devices. This neglect may have far-reaching consequences, both in terms of the risks it entails

<sup>17</sup> *Comment s'enclenchent les violences familiales* Jacques Miermont, in Sciences Humaines, Hors-série N° 47 - December 2004 / January- February 2005 [http://www.scienceshumaines.com/comment-s-enclenchent-les-violences-familiales\\_fr\\_13746.html](http://www.scienceshumaines.com/comment-s-enclenchent-les-violences-familiales_fr_13746.html)

<sup>18</sup> Just like a driver on the road may not have the conscious intention to maim or kill innocent people, young bikers, children, all human life, but their negligence may generate this kind of violence.

<sup>19</sup> See also the practical psychosocial sheet on Practices: Incest and incestuous behaviour “Hiroshima and Chernobyl”, <http://www.interaide.org/pratiques/content/inceste-et-incestuel-hiroshima-et-tchernoby-fiche-psychosociale>

<sup>20</sup> See the criteria proposed by Isabelle Nazare-Aga to locate the manipulation in Appendix 1

<sup>21</sup> Incestuous means incest without the sexual act. This can have the same devastating psychological consequences as incest on a child and an adolescent. An incest occurs in a family where the climate is already incestuous, i.e. where the prohibition of incest and the limits between the generations have not been determined (perhaps because they were not in the previous generation). Similarly, the next generation risks evolving in an incestuous climate since the adults were not able to integrate the intergenerational limits in their childhood. Incest and incestuous behaviour “Hiroshima and Chernobyl” <http://www.interaide.org/pratiques/content/inceste-et-incestuel-hiroshima-et-tchernoby-fiche-psychosociale>



(scalding, electrocution, and fall from several meters) and of its invisibility, which delays detection: (which can result in development delays or disorders in the long term); **neglect can take the form of malnutrition**. It may be assumed that this is relatively frequent in the shanty towns where we work. **This is why it is essential, in all cases of malnutrition, to focus particular attention on the parent-child relationship.**

Neglect is a serious form of violence which denies the child's existence; it is **ontological violence**. A child (and its brain) develops in human interaction with an adult serving as a reference. Without human contact, a child cannot develop. An infant cannot survive (this is what Spitz called hospitalism). Faced with indifferent parents, **a child may have a provocative attitude in a desperate attempt to draw his parents' attention**, because any human being prefers poor contact to no contact at all. Faced with indifferent parents, the child may also withdraw and become depressed<sup>22</sup>.

Other attitudes, which, seen from the outside, do not really appear to be ill-treatments, are nevertheless toxic and deleterious to a child's development:

- **Fusion**: if the parents are too close, i.e. in a **fusional relationship**, the child is not seen as an individual person, but as an "extension" of the parent and their desires. The parent(s) believe(s) that they know what their child thinks and feels as if they were inside his mind and body: this attitude is only adequate during the first few weeks of a child's life. Beyond that, it is intrusive and toxic. It will be very difficult for the child to take control of his life, to build his identity, to have confidence in his feelings and sensations, i.e. to know what he wants and what he does not want to become an independent adult. The child will neither trust itself nor its abilities. This type of relationship is all the more harmful as it is often very difficult to spot — and often the parent is not aware of it (nor the child, who may even believe that his parent is perfect, without understanding why he himself feels so bad). This type of relationship has all the appearances of love: but it is not love, it is possessiveness, intrusion, abuse of authority, although this is usually not intentional (or maybe the intention exists but it is not conscious. In its perverse form, however, the intention to dominate, to humiliate, to abuse the other is indeed present, as is the case with emotional abusers). It will be difficult for the adolescent and young adult to get rid of it, all the more so as he has not taken control of his life as an individual, separate from his parents. Paradoxically, it is somehow "easier" to rebel against a violent or neglecting parent...<sup>23</sup> but refusing to recognize one's child in his otherness (by considering him as part of oneself, a narcissistic extension) is **existential violence**, or even ontological violence, which denies the other person the right to exist in their own right.

A child who is a victim of violence may, when growing up, identify with the aggressor and become violent.

A child who grows up in a violent environment can also identify with the victim: in adolescence, it may develop self-destructive behaviour (drugs, alcohol, anorexia, bulimia etc.) or destructive relationships (by entering abusive relationships with a violent companion, for example). Faced with rejecting parents, a child does not feel worthy of love. With indifferent parents, a child may develop a provocative attitude, in a desperate attempt to draw his parents' attention, or else withdraw and become depressive; in adolescence the same child may "take refuge" in drugs, preferring to be dependent on a drug rather than on such an empty and uncertain human relationship.

## Educational violence

The German psychoanalyst Alice Miller described in her book *For your own good* the ravages of educational violence — "poisonous pedagogy" which prevailed in the 19th and early 20th centuries in Europe and particularly in Germany (but also in France), repressing entire generations of children.

<sup>22</sup> This can be found in the working environment: the lack of feedback or remarks on one's work results in such a painful loss of energy that individuals prefer to receive negative feedback rather than nothing at all. This explains many types of provocative behaviour at work, where professional harassment may also take the form of "putting someone on the shelf" which in turn may cause *burn-out*.

<sup>23</sup> Sources: *Bien communiquer avec son ado*, Elizabeth Leblanc-Coret et Pierre Coret, Jouvence 2010



According to Miller, this "poisonous pedagogy" explains why the entire German people (and a large part of the French nation under the Vichy regime) submitted without reacting to the madness of Hitler and the genocide of 6 million European citizens.

Alice Miller emphasises the fact that child abuse produces not merely unhappy and disturbed children and destructive adolescents, but also abusive parents. Through her research on childhood, Alice Miller came to an understanding that violence against children leads to global violence which reigns over the whole world, particularly as we begin to hit children in the early years of their lives when the growth of the brain is at its strongest.

Even though the scandalous consequences are obvious, they are not perceived, still less taken into account by society. The situation is easy to understand: children are not permitted to defend themselves against parental violence and are thus forced to repress and suppress the natural reactions to parental aggression, transforming them into the emotions of anger and anxiety. It is only in adulthood that they can unload these strong emotions, onto their own children, or in some cases, onto whole nations<sup>24</sup>.

**"Children and corporal punishment: The right not to be hit, also a children's right:** As part of their daily lives, children all over Europe are spanked, slapped, hit, smacked, shaken, kicked, pinched, punched, caned, flogged, belted, beaten and battered by adults – mainly by those whom they trust the most.

This violence may be a deliberate act of punishment or just the impulsive reaction of an irritated parent or teacher. In every case, it is a breach of fundamental human rights. Respect for human dignity and the right to physical integrity are universal principles. Yet social and legal acceptance of the hitting and other humiliating treatment of children by adults persists in most countries across the world.

Corporal punishment of children often becomes inhuman or degrading, and it always violates their physical integrity, demonstrates disrespect for human dignity and undermines self-esteem. Furthermore, the existence of special exceptions for violence against *children* in otherwise universally applicable laws against assault breaches the principle of equal protection under the law.

The invention of concepts such as 'reasonable chastisement' and 'lawful correction' in the law arises from the perception of children as the property of their parents. This is the modern equivalent of laws in force a century or two ago allowing masters to beat their slaves or servants, and husbands to beat their wives. Such 'rights' are based on the power of the stronger over the weaker and are upheld by means of violence and humiliation. *Council of Europe, Commissioner for Human Rights*<sup>25</sup>.

**"If you think a slap can do someone good, imagine what you would feel like if you were the one receiving it"**<sup>26</sup>.

## Ritual violence

**Where do we classify ritual violence? As educational, social, psychological, religious or sexual violence?**

"Initiation rites often include violent and painful episodes. For what purpose? Symbolic, educational or psychological? Tattooing, scarifications, painful ordeals, humiliations, floggings, beatings, removal of teeth, cruel surgical interventions... Violence is an ingredient

<sup>24</sup> For Your Own Good, Alice Miller, and all her other books: <http://www.alice-miller.com/>

<sup>25</sup> Children and corporal punishment: "The right not to be hit, also a children's right" *Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights* CommDH/IssuePaper(2006)1REV updated 2008  
<https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=1237635&Site=CM>

<sup>26</sup> oriental master quoted by A.Lipschitz in "L'un n'empêche pas l'autre", J'ai Lu



of many rituals, especially those that fall under the collective term 'initiation rites', and which in fact cover very different situations: transition to adulthood, entry into a brotherhood or profession etc.

In reality, there is no simple answer to this question: depending on how it is applied, violence can take on a variety of functions and meanings. These include sexual surgery (circumcision or subincision), in which the scarification is not only intended to be a painful ordeal but a lasting mark of the difference between the sexes, a demonstration of the superiority of men, and an attempt to satisfy a particular aesthetic. In 1977, Pierre Clastres estimated that these lasting marks inflicted on the body were the symptoms of the physical (rather than mental) manifestation of social rules in 'stateless' societies, which thus remained external to the individual.

(...) Finally, various authors have emphasised the humiliating and sometimes absurd role of violence inflicted upon novices: facing ordeals that they will never encounter in real life, eat disgusting food, take unnecessary risks etc. (...)

Along the same lines, other authors have since argued that ritual violence perhaps plays the role more of an experience than a symbol. It embodies the arbitrary nature of the secrets that are provided to initiates and which are the basis of the power of the elders over the novices: according to Maurice Godelier, in the Baruya of New Guinea [for example], it is essentially the arbitrary nature of the power of men over women that is at stake." *Sciences Humaines*, Special issue no. 47 <sup>27</sup>

Western societies are not without violence; violence inflicted on the body – and especially on the female body – is present, and all the more perverse because it is insidious. The constraint of the social bodily norm is internalised to the point where some women resort to cosmetic surgery – sometimes to the point of self-mutilation – to resemble the aesthetic canons of magazines; unattainable canons since all of their photographs are retouched using image processing software: wrinkles erased, legs lengthened, breasts rounded etc. forming bodies whose measurements are, strictly speaking, inhumane (this is the case in Brazil, for example, where an "epidemic" of cosmetic surgery seems to be taking place: women have remodelled their cheekbones, lips, breasts, buttocks... and sometimes more: the iconic attributes of femininity are operated upon, inflated with silicone). The influence of these changes is still more perverse: self-mutilation so that you comply with the canons of beauty is for your own good... The constraints of the corsets of yesteryear are now internalised... surgically. These aesthetic canons and this internal constraint also play a role in eating disorders such as anorexia, bulimia which affect mainly (but not exclusively) women.

## **Domestic violence**

Physical, psychological, financial, religious, sexual, abuse of power, manipulation, control... All forms of violence can take place within the domestic setting.

In the vast majority of cases, domestic violence is inflicted by the man on his female partner (WHO World Report 2002: "Violence by intimate partners")

The WHO provides this definition of domestic violence: *"any behaviour within an intimate relationship that causes physical, psychological or sexual harm to those in the relationship"*. The forms of serious violence concern 70% of women reporting physical assault. Studies carried out in Australia, Canada, Israel, South Africa and the United States also estimate that this violence is the source of a significant number of deaths: *"40–70% of female murder victims were killed by their husbands or boyfriends, frequently in the context of an ongoing abusive relationship"*, according to the authors of the report. This contrasts starkly with the situation of male murder victims. In the United States, for example, only 4% of men murdered between 1976 and 1996 were killed by their wives, ex-wives or girlfriends.

<sup>27</sup> "Violences rituelles, l'effet de la douleur" *Sciences Humaines*, special issue no. 47 - December 2004/January-February 2005 [http://www.scienceshumaines.com/violences-rituelles-l-effet-de-la-douleur\\_fr\\_13732.html](http://www.scienceshumaines.com/violences-rituelles-l-effet-de-la-douleur_fr_13732.html)



In the same WHO report, 48 international surveys reflect quite well the extent of the phenomenon: depending on the country involved, *"between 10% and 69% of women reported being physically assaulted by an intimate male partner at some point in their lives"*. But this violence inflicted on women by husbands or intimate male partners is not merely anecdotal. It is one of the most common forms of violence and concerns all countries and all social, economic, religious and cultural groups without exception.

"This domestic violence is fed by several sources, beginning with culture. Some traditional societies tolerate it, and justify it in the name of the strict distribution of sexual roles and of a particular image of honour and virility. The author of a study carried out in Pakistan explains thus that *"beating one's wife to correct or punish her is justified from a cultural and religious point of view... Because men are considered as the owners of their wife, they must show them who is the master in order to discourage future transgressions"*. This cultural foundation is tenacious, and there are many testimonies from women who accept the idea that men have the right to beat their wives. Some countries still believe that violence against women is not necessarily a bad thing in itself, but that, depending on the circumstances and the degree of expression, it can be "fair", "unfair" and acceptable to a greater or lesser extent.

And what of the role of the woman in this dynamic so lethal to intimate relationships? The majority of abused women adopt active strategies to reinforce their safety and that of their children. Resistance, flight and submission are, in fact, stratagems intended to ensure their survival and the ability to protect themselves and their children. The apparent passivity of battered women is in fact not passivity... But how can we explain the difficulty that the majority of them have in ending the relationship (six years on average)? Researchers have identified the barriers that prevent separation, such as fear of reprisals, lack of financial support, concern for the children, emotional dependence, lack of support from family and friends, the constant hope that the man will change. Women are also aware that leaving an abusive relationship is not always a guarantee of security; violence may continue, or accelerate after separation... In Australia, Canada and the United States, a significant proportion of murders committed by intimate partners where the victim is a woman have occurred in connection with the woman attempting to leave an abusive partner.

But domestic violence is universal, and beyond this cultural dimension other factors contribute to its occurrence. There is every reason to believe that domestic violence is the result of a combination of personal, circumstantial, social and cultural factors, the importance of which – due to a lack of data – we are unable to evaluate. The only risk factors identified to date relate to the North American countries: individual factors, such as youth, low income, personality disorders, a family history of violence and alcohol consumption among men (we do not yet know whether alcohol promotes violence or if it triggers it); relational factors, such as marital conflict or discord; community factors such as low socioeconomic status and the lack of legal and social support for abused women; societal and cultural factors, such as the financial and decision-making power of the man in the household, war and other social disturbances, structural inequalities between men and women, and the rigidity of the roles assigned to the sexes." *Sciences Humaines, special issue no. 47*<sup>28</sup>

See also the ELVICA study carried out in 2007 in Madagascar by Enda and the IRD: **Survey on domestic violence against women in Antananarivo**<sup>29</sup>.

<sup>28</sup> [http://www.scienceshumaines.com/les-femmes-victimes-de-la-violence-conjugale\\_fr\\_13749.html](http://www.scienceshumaines.com/les-femmes-victimes-de-la-violence-conjugale_fr_13749.html) Sciences Humaines, Hors-série N° 47 - Décembre 2004 / Janvier - février 2005

<sup>29</sup> <http://sgdatabse.unwomen.org/uploads/Etude%20ELVICA%20-%202007.pdf>





## Sexual violence<sup>30</sup>

According to the WHO, "Sexual violence is a serious public health problem affecting millions of people each year worldwide. It is driven by many factors operating in a range of social, cultural and economic contexts."

Sexual coercion can be for the purpose of the abuser's sexual gratification, but it is most often the expression of an underlying desire for power and domination over the victim.

The exact extent of the problem is not known, but it would appear from the data available that almost one in four women experience sexual violence by their partner at some point in their lives.

For many young women, this violence begins during childhood or adolescence. In some countries, up to a third of adolescent girls report having experienced forced sexual initiation.

Every year, hundreds of thousands of women and young girls are bought or sold into prostitution. Many of them are promised work in the services sector or as domestic employees but in reality they are taken to brothels where they are beaten, locked up, stripped of their identity papers and forced to pay off their purchase price by prostituting themselves.

Female genital mutilation<sup>31</sup> is an extreme form of sexual violence that is carried out in the name of culture, health or religion and is an example of pressure exerted on women by society. Depending on the type of mutilation, it can actually lead to infections, pain and increased risks during childbirth...<sup>32 33</sup>).

Tens of thousands of women are subjected to sexual violence every year in health care settings including sexual harassment by staff, genital mutilation, sexual violence, forced gynaecological examination and virginity testing. The current lack of access to modern contraceptive methods can be considered as a contributing factor to violence against women.

The use of rape as a weapon has been documented during numerous conflicts: Algeria, Bangladesh, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Indonesia, Liberia, Uganda and Rwanda are a few examples. It is estimated that between 10,000 and 60,000 women were raped in Bosnia-Herzegovina alone.

**The consequences of sexual violence (WHO):** Sexual violence has a profound impact on the physical, emotional, mental and social well-being of the victim. There are also certain health implications:

- Unwanted pregnancies: abortion (25% of terminations could be linked to sexual violence in France<sup>34</sup>)
- Gynaecological complications: vaginal bleeding, fibroids, chronic pelvic pain, urinary tract infections and sexually transmitted diseases including HIV/AIDS
- Depression, post-traumatic stress and suicidal thoughts and behaviour

Victims may also find themselves rejected by their family, friends and community.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>30</sup> See also the psychosocial fact sheet on the Pratiques network: Inceste et incestuel "Hiroshima et Tchernobyl" <http://www.interaide.org/pratiques/content/inceste-et-incestuel-hiroshima-et-tchernobyl-fiche-psycho-sociale>

<sup>31</sup> Violences rituelles, l'effet de la douleur (Ritual violence, the impact of pain), Sciences Humaines, Hors-série N°47 - December 2004/January - February 2005 [http://www.scienceshumaines.com/violences-rituelles-l-effet-de-la-douleur\\_fr\\_13732.html](http://www.scienceshumaines.com/violences-rituelles-l-effet-de-la-douleur_fr_13732.html)

<sup>32</sup> (*Mutilations génitales féminines, mariages forcés et grossesses précoces* (Female genital mutilation, forced marriage and early pregnancies) Roger HENRION *Bulletin de l'Académie Nationale de Médecine*, 2003, 187, n°6. [http://www.academie-medecine.fr/Upload/anciens/rapports\\_135\\_fichier\\_lie.rtf](http://www.academie-medecine.fr/Upload/anciens/rapports_135_fichier_lie.rtf)

<sup>33</sup> *Changing a harmful social convention: Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting*, UNICEF <http://www.unicef-icdc.org/publications/pdf/fgm-gb-2005.pdf> - Available in several languages on the UNICEF website

<sup>34</sup> Fréquence M, 23.11.2012

<sup>35</sup> **Sources:** WHO fact sheet on sexual violence

[http://www.who.int/violence\\_injury\\_prevention/violence/world\\_report/factsheets/en/sexualviolencefacts.pdf?ua=1](http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/world_report/factsheets/en/sexualviolencefacts.pdf?ua=1)





The consequences of incest and sexual abuse: Sexual abuse and incest have a detrimental effect on the development of the individuals concerned and can potentially lead to serious long term risks (Amblard<sup>36</sup>):

- Chronic depression
- Crime
- Failure or dropping out of school, work
- Sexual and affective disorders
- Anorexia, bulimia, any type of addiction
- Prostitution
- Suicide attempts and/or suicides
- Anxiety
- Delirium, psychosis
- Severe body image issues
- Obsessive cleaning rituals
- Repetition of abuse in the next generation (8%)
- Compulsive sexuality or lack of sexuality
- Tendency towards being in abusive relationships (emotional, sexual or professional...)
- Inability to maintain relationships based on both love and sex...

**To combat systematic violence against women** (sexual, domestic, intimate partner or ritual violence...), support must be given to women, mothers, girls and young girls. They must be told that they have the right to say no and that their bodies belong to them and no one else; not to their fathers, mothers, grandmothers, grandfathers, brothers, uncles, step-fathers or husbands but to them alone. It is important to boost women's self-esteem and with it their education, abilities and skills as well as their responsibility and participation in society, politics and the economy...

**But men, young boys, young men and fathers must also be educated**, and they must be taught that they don't have the right to someone else or to someone else's body or mind. Parents must be educated so that they raise their children in dignity and fairness whether they are boys or girls.

All these messages must reach every level of society: communities, schools, religious communities, businesses and all levels of government both national and local... an urgent and huge task after thousands of years of patriarchal domination worldwide.

## **Social, sanitary and economic violence**

### **The violence of wealth**

After the subprime crisis in 2008, countries poured more than **3,000 billion dollars** into the financial system — while 2000 of the wealthiest countries were unable to find the **400 billion dollars** needed to eradicate world hunger, provide universal access to drinking water and education, and fight against malaria and AIDS... The failing financial sector received 8 times more funding than the "Millenium Goals"<sup>37</sup>. The world therefore has effective means to eradicate world poverty... and yet it has chosen not to do so. An extreme act of violence by the richest countries against the poorest... (J.-F. Gravoil<sup>38</sup>).

The tools used for measuring wealth are inadequate. For example, the spending on cleaning up an oil spill is included in a country's GDP. The fact that destruction is seen as an asset when measuring

<sup>36</sup> *Panser l'impensable : Vivre pleinement sa vie d'adulte malgré un abus sexuel dans l'enfance*, (Healing the unthinkable: Living a full life as an adult despite suffering sexual abuse in childhood), Fernande Amblard, Jouvence, 2003 - See also "Inceste et incestuel: Hiroshima et Tchernobyl" on the Pratiques network

<http://www.interaide.org/pratiques/content/inceste-et-incestuel-hiroshima-et-tchernoby-fiche-psychosociale>

<sup>37</sup> <http://www.un.org/french/millenniumgoals/>

<sup>38</sup> Jean-François Gravoil "La psychothérapie dans la société instrument ou ferment ?" (Psychotherapy in society: Instrument or catalyst?), *Gestalt* 2/2005 (n° 29), p.11-19. [www.cairn.info/revue-gestalt-2005-2-page-11.htm](http://www.cairn.info/revue-gestalt-2005-2-page-11.htm).



wealth is a travesty. It is an extreme act of violence to equate destruction with creation, and to give them equal *value*... If environmental costs were included, China's GDP growth would be negative. New tools for measuring wealth are currently being developed but these are not yet reliable enough<sup>39</sup>.

### Replace GDP with Gross National Happiness?

The Kingdom of Bhutan recently put forward a resolution voted on by 193 members of the United Nations to assess development in a holistic way<sup>40</sup>.

In fact, according to sociological studies, "Growth does not reflect citizens' well-being. Justice, equality and the sense of freedom are more important. Money significantly increases the happiness of the poorest people as it allows them to satisfy their **basic needs (food, safety and accommodation)**. After that, it becomes less and less important. (...) Increasing happiness involves personal efforts (...): limiting stress, savouring the moment and building relationships with others... It is also based on socio-economic factors, which point to an overall trend: **Democracy makes people happier** (...): being free to express one's own opinion and feeling that it counts (...) facilitates happiness. (...) Everyday perceptions of **justice, equality and trust** between individuals play a major role in people's sense of happiness. This is also the case when there are fewer inequalities and disparities in income as well as the presence of **solidarity** in everyday life<sup>41</sup>."

Violence is often described as "gratuitous" and as a result of boredom (as observed during riots in ghettoised suburbs ignored by public policy and excluded from private entrepreneurial initiatives in France and elsewhere in the West). It may seem gratuitous from the outside, but what about on the inside? What is this feeling of emptiness inside these young people that means an apparently ordinary event can trigger so much violence? **It's the feeling of not existing, of being invisible and worth nothing** that generates violence as a result of "boredom", so it isn't about boredom at all! It is linked to the feeling of non-existence. It is the desperate human reaction to a serious form of political and social neglect. It is a desperate attempt to make contact with and reconnect to society. To feel like they exist, these young people say (and put these words into actions): "Let us do whatever we want", which can be understood to mean "Notice us so we feel like we exist, look at us existing and let us exist". But doing nothing is another way of making them feel worthless and ignoring their needs. (Elisabeth Leblanc, see *Sources & biblio*).

Social and economic violence include "sanitary violence", the fact that children, women, men die more (at a younger age, in higher numbers) if they are denied access to health because of their economic situation.

### School violence

When we talk about school violence, violence among pupils is often the first thing we think of rather than institutional violence. But this problem exists all over the world, albeit unnoticed, including sexual discrimination (even when boys and girls have the same access to education, more subtle inequalities still exist: boys are encouraged more to participate in class, girls are encouraged more to be quiet and obedient), various forms of humiliation and corporal punishment that is still tolerated or permitted in certain countries.

The chief form of violence is undoubtedly the lack of universal access to education.

There is also "everyday" violence or contempt: "This is when a teacher in a school says to a child 'You'll never amount to anything' or 'You're always so dirty!'" The anathema has a profound effect on

<sup>39</sup> Jean-François Gravouil "Planète-awareness" (Planet awareness) *Gestalt* 1/2004 (n° 26), p.11-22.

[www.cairn.info/revue-gestalt-2004-1-page-11.htm](http://www.cairn.info/revue-gestalt-2004-1-page-11.htm).

<sup>40</sup> A UN resolution recognized that "the pursuit of happiness is a fundamental human goal" and "the gross domestic product [G.D.P.] does not adequately reflect the happiness and well-being of people..."

"Happiness: Towards a holistic approach to development," <http://www.2apr.gov.bt/>

<sup>41</sup> Christophe André *Une économie du bonheur (The Economics of Happiness)*, article published in *Cerveau & Psycho* n° 52, July-August 2012



the child, who internalises it and becomes self-conscious. The child's body will grow rigid and become paralysed. It will lose its resilience, the back will tense up and the child's mouth will hang open in an idiotic way. Breathing will quicken or stop, the stomach will gurgle and the child's mind will go blank. The body is under stress and the child cannot escape. Suzanne Robert-Ouvray, *Les violences psychologiques et le corps souffrant (Psychological Violence and the Suffering of the Body)* <http://s.robertouvray.free.fr/articles.htm>

## **Violence in the workplace**

Violence in the workplace is far from new! Slavery is undoubtedly the most abusive form and an example of both social and workplace violence — in the same way as servitude. A person is considered as a commodity that can be purchased, sold, raped, exploited to the point of illness or death or killed with impunity...

With the industrial revolution came the exploitation of the masses and violence against workers who were considered as tools for production, but also the protection of workers and paid work ensuring that they could provide for their own basic needs (food, safety and accommodation) and achieve greater freedom. It was in the context of the industrial revolution that the first workers' movements came about.

**Child labour, pimping and child prostitution** are extreme forms of workplace violence.

**Workplace harassment:** For more than a year in France, there have been stories in the media about the considerable suffering of employees and dozens of suicides among executives working across different industries including banking, the car industry and telecommunications. How does such suffering come about? How can we explain (if at all) what causes distress in the workplace to lead to suicide? **Burn-out** victims (a form of **depression as a result of exhaustion** in the workplace that can lead to suicide) are often model employees who are highly committed, conscientious and have high expectations of themselves. Paradoxically, they are also the victims of these qualities. Far from being encouraged or validated by their superiors, they are put under extreme pressure by manipulative or even perverse management techniques so that they are always required to do more (they receive emails and phone messages day and night...) until they sacrifice their personal lives — and sometimes even their actual lives by committing suicide — for their careers<sup>42</sup>.

"The problem of **psychological harassment** tends to be focused on people's behaviour rather than the processes behind it" (de Gaulejac, 2009), and therefore saves having to look at the management of the company and, more generally, the processes which engender workplace violence. The disintegration of collectives and the individualisation of professional relationships contribute to the psychological causes of suffering in the workplace. Workers have to deal with the consequences on their own. Stress, anxiety and *burn-out* are treated on an individual level in terms of the psychological or psychosomatic effects, with the help of a psychiatrist. "In this way, the company offloads the problems caused by the violent professional relationships it has created" (de Gaulejac, 2009<sup>43</sup>). Action taken against the harassers creates scapegoats and strengthens the stability of the system so that it becomes trapped in a vicious circle.

**Exclusion from the workplace** is also a form of violence faced by a number of families in urban areas where Inter Aide and its partners are active. Access to a source of regular income is crucial to a family's well-being... And by improving quality of life, it also plays a part in reducing domestic violence.

<sup>42</sup> See "Formation sur le management (à partir d'une formation de CSF)" on the Pratiques website <http://www.interaide.org/pratiques/content/formation-sur-le-management-%C3%A0-partir-d'une-formation-de-csf>

<sup>43</sup> DE GAULEJAC V. (2009 [2005]), *La Société malade de la gestion : idéologie gestionnaire, pouvoir managérial et harcèlement social* Paris, Éditions du Seuil ; *Travail, les raisons de la colère* Seuil, Paris, 2011 <http://www.vincentdegaulejac.com/ouvrage3.php?page=32>



## **State violence, political violence**

"Many philosophers, from Montaigne to Kant, have regarded political violence, including war, as a failure or an abdication of reason. It is true that political assassinations, civil unrest and armed conflicts have led to consequences that their initiators were sometimes far from having planned or desired. It suffices to mention the devastating record of two world wars, the battles fought in the name of revolution, ethnic nationalism or religious fanaticism; consider the frenzy of angry crowds, the desolation following a bombing or a riot tornado. Hence, political violence does not arise randomly ; there are always reasons detected as a result of a « distanced » analysis based on a thorough discussion of the facts and sequences » Sciences Humaines Hors N° 47<sup>1</sup>.

**State Violence:** States quietly practice or claim, according to the famous definition of Max Weber, a "monopoly of legitimate violence" to execute court decisions, maintain public order, or in case of war or threat of war, they attempt to legitimize the doctrines of "just war" as we saw again recently for the second Iraq War of the Bush Jr. administration). State violence can escalate into state terrorism or other forms of more extreme violence such as genocide. (Wikipedia).

All dictatorships - and sometimes other political regimes ... - impose their domination by force, violence and by the restriction of freedom.

**Political violence** includes all violent acts their authors justify in the name of a political objective: terrorism, torture, war, genocide, etc.

**Symbolic Violence:** Pierre Bourdieu refers to several kinds of violence: verbal (possible first step before committing the act); or invisible, institutional, including structural violence which individuals experience as a sense of powerlessness. The term refers to different phenomena that promote the domination of one group over another and stigmatization of people, which may escalate to the creation of a scapegoat (Wikipedia).

Racial segregation, as it prevailed legally in the United States until the 1960s, or in South Africa with apartheid until 1991, constitutes state violence, as much as political violence and symbolic violence.

**Religious violence:** Discrimination, pogroms, massacre of St. Bartholomew, genocide, Jihad, Holy War. History is filled with violent crimes in the name of religions that preach love and tolerance in the name of God. As it is the case with family trauma, community trauma impacts future generations through a historical, cultural and communitarian transmission, but also through an unconscious trans-generational transmission of the impact of trauma<sup>2</sup>.

## **Violence in the Media**

We no longer ask whether violence on television increases violent behavior; the fact is proven by numerous studies<sup>3</sup>. This statement is all the more undeniable as it is not dependant on local cultural variations. The effects of media violence are the same in all societies, as reported by an impressive transnational UNESCO study<sup>4</sup>. In Filipino slums, a large proportion of families have a TV, sometimes on all day, in the single room which serves the whole family, and so, children of all ages, even toddlers are overexposed.

There is evidence that exposure of children, but also teenagers and adults to images, games and movies, and violent television programs reinforce violent behavior. But because of the economic interests at stake, policymakers continue to schedule violent movies to primetime, and expose children to violent contents. 60 % of American TV programmes contain violence. Conséquently, by the end of primary school, a child may have seen 8 000 murders and 100 000 other violent acts on television<sup>44</sup>.

<sup>44</sup> [http://www.scienceshumaines.com/pub-et-violence-ne-font-pas-bon-menage\\_fr\\_11015.html](http://www.scienceshumaines.com/pub-et-violence-ne-font-pas-bon-menage_fr_11015.html)



Only political decisions could force the leaders of television channels to take into account the scientific results.

Violent video games, actual "violence schools", have a greater impact than violent television programs/films, due to the required active participation.

There is also violence, which involves manipulating in the guise of information. The more television news talk about violence, the more viewers tend to perceive the world as violent, and the more they will tend to have violent behavior themselves. The media have a strong social responsibility which not only they do not meet, but ultimately even betray.

In recent years in France, but also elsewhere, there has been much talk of "youth violence" and "violence in the suburbs"; the violence of children, even of kindergarten-age. As if violence were innate, rooted in the individual and the individual alone, especially when the individual is young, poor, and from the suburbs. But this violence is the response of young people to economic, social, institutional, political violence: neighborhoods made into ghettos by policies (or lack of policies) which are absurd and discriminatory; inequalities in access to healthcare, education, water, sanitation and employment, and economic inequality and social discrimination. Violence is always born in an abusive, violent environment.

To all of that, we must add the misuse of corporate assets, bank embezzlement, VAT scams, tax fraud and tax evasion, corporate crime, corruption (all aspects of economic and political violence). Status crimes do not have the same coverage and are therefore regarded as exceptional; Gold is the currency of the day. Studies show that there would be 10% of crime in ALL walks of life, from the poorest societies to the heads of state and of big business.

## **Food violence**

The first and worst food violence is undoubtedly the violence of hunger in periods of famine and starvation. Hunger pushes the individual and communities into a state of survival where anything is justified to survive. Hypoglycemia is both, a cause of aggressive behavior and also a mechanism that ensures the survival of the species.

Here again, let's note that hunger has decreased significantly. The violence is in fact keeping 870 million people hungry (while crops are reserved for biofuels, 1.4 billion adults are overweight and 42 million children)...

Another form of violence emerges during the second half of the twentieth century with the development of the agro-food industry, which violently mistreats livestock, considering animals as things rather than living beings, and producing meat products and foods of poor quality: "junk food" generates diseases, it is now proven (cardiovascular disease, diabetes, cancer, hyperactivity, and even asthma, allergic rhinitis and eczema<sup>45</sup> addictive behaviours<sup>46</sup> and of course obesity, which now kills more than three times the number of people killed by global malnutrition, according to a study published in *The Lancet*<sup>47</sup>). In the same manner certain foods reduce depressive tendencies (fruits, vegetables, essential fatty acids<sup>48</sup>). Other foods have an influence on violent behavior. Several studies show a link between the consumption of sugary foods (soda, candy), hyperactivity, and violent behavior.

<sup>45</sup> <http://thorax.bmj.com/content/early/2013/01/03/thoraxjnl-2012-202285.abstract?sid=8b422e1b-abd1-4347-b403-c38d80d2f8ce>

<sup>46</sup> Dietary triglycerides act on mesolimbic structures to regulate the rewarding and motivational aspects of feeding – Nature, Molecular Psychiatry <http://www.nature.com/mp/journal/vaop/ncurrent/full/mp201431a.html>

<sup>47</sup> <http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736%2812%2961719-X/fulltext> décembre 2012

<sup>48</sup> *Cerveau & Psycho, l'essentiel* « Les Racines de la violence », nov. 2011 – janv.2012, p.23.





Studies meeting the criteria of reliable scientific research and published in The Lancet<sup>49</sup>, show that symptoms of hyperactivity (a variable often linked to aggressive behavior) in children are also correlated with the consumption of sweets and drinks containing preservatives (including benzoates) and food dyes<sup>50</sup>.

Studies involving prisoners have also shown a link between diet and aggressive behavior (dropping from 35% for those who received essential fatty acids supplements). Other studies conducted in school show that the level aggression decreases, the pupils' concentration and their grades increase when they eat fresh food, vegetable and fruit (instead of industrial meals).

This "food violence" goes hand-in-hand with economic and sanitary violence<sup>51</sup>. In Europe, the most overweight people are also the poorest, and we begin to see the same thing in intermediate countries (like the Philippines) where "junk food" arrives together with the typical American diet rich in dairy products, which Asian and African populations do not digest<sup>52</sup>, and white bread (whose glycemic index value is equivalent to sugar). Eating "American bread" is equivalent to eating white sugar, it has no nutritional value and it contains bad fats.

## **A new form of violence? Ecological violence**

When we destroy our environment, our planet, pollute the land where we grow what we eat, contaminate drinking water supplies of the planet and future generations (if they can still survive), we cut the tree branch on which we sit. Consumer society cut off the branch with a chainsaw, not a wood saw. We are not separate from our environment, we are intrinsically linked, we cannot survive without air, without water, without the food provided by our environment. All violence against our environment, against living things, is violence against ourselves (and against our children and our children's children).

Modern agriculture has not saved the world from hunger. This would require political decisions, not just economics dictated by a profit motive which is no longer in touch with the work and product provided nor with human needs. Western modern agriculture pollutes the soil, the waters, contaminates vegetables, and puts biodiversity at risk, abusing and killing animals in intensive farming industries (if you can even call it farming), it endangers the health of farmers (overexposed to pesticides) and eventually, if nothing changes, the health of the whole planet and its inhabitants. Who benefits from the crime?

If the use of hybrid plants and the chemical fertilizers they need is justified for boosting crop yields in crisis situations, their use does not allow a sustainable agriculture and the required pesticides contaminate and destroy the environment (plants from hybrids may not be reused for the next season or they have much lower yields than traditional varieties, while requiring more chemical fertilizers without which they do not grow). Nutritional values of hybrid varieties are also often less (such as

<sup>49</sup> *Food additives and hyperactive behaviour in 3-year-old and 8/9-year-old children in the community: a randomised, double-blinded, placebo-controlled trial*, The Lancet, Volume 370, Issue 9598, Nov. 2007  
<http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140673607613063/abstract>

<sup>50</sup> Benzoates = E210 à E215 and food dyes (E102, 104, 110, 122, 124, 129...).

<sup>51</sup> « The present level of production is enough to feed the planet. The equivalent of 4 972 calories per inhabitant is produced daily in the world in the form of vegetal production, but only half (an average of 2 468 calories per day and per inhabitant) gets into the consumers' plates. A large part of the production is used to feed cattle, or transformed in bio-fuel or just wasted either during crop, or by the supermarkets or at home »  
[http://www.liberation.fr/monde/2012/10/18/la-faim-dans-le-monde-alibi-pour-le-developpement-des-ogm\\_853892](http://www.liberation.fr/monde/2012/10/18/la-faim-dans-le-monde-alibi-pour-le-developpement-des-ogm_853892)

<sup>52</sup> Almost 100% of Asian population and 90% of sub-Saharan African population cannot digest lactose (the sugar found in milk and dairy products). Lactose intolerance generates digestive disorders and diarrheas and can provoke overweight and obesity in case of overconsumption.

Most mammals normally cease to produce lactase, becoming lactose intolerant, after weaning, but some human populations have developed lactase persistence, in which lactase production continues into adulthood. It is estimated that 75% of adults worldwide show some decrease in lactase activity during adulthood. The frequency of decreased lactase activity ranges from 5% in northern Europe through 71% for Sicily to more than 90% in some African and Asian countries. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lactose\\_intolerance](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lactose_intolerance)





hybrid maize monoculture promoted during the 30 years of the dictatorship of Banda in Malawi, eaten as porridge, the *n'sima*, whose nutritional value is almost equivalent to that of white sugar, which causes a glycemic peak followed by hypoglycemia).

## **GMOs – the ultimate violence to animals, plants and humans?**

In the medium term, GMOs do not have a higher yield than traditional varieties (which they contaminate and destroy). They rely on toxic pesticides without which they cannot grow. The plants are sterile, that is to say they cannot be replanted the following season, but farmers (including the poorest) must buy plants again, each season, and pesticides, too expensive for the poorest peasants. (And cost does not include environmental damage). For whose benefit? Certainly not small farmers' (see the article "Malawi, Monsanto's captive fields").

Finally, also note that what we eat impacts our DNA by inhibiting or activating certain genes (Science and Life No 1134, March 2012), certainly, that is the case with GMOs; consequences are unpredictable. Studies to the contrary have been manipulated by the lobby of the food industry (Sciences et Avenir No. 782, March 2012). The research provides conflicting results (according to sponsors and funders), or at least, controversial. As a minimum, the consequences of GMOs are unpredictable. Can we continue to feed GMOs to livestock with impunity - as is the case today - and use GMOs for human consumption (in meat and milk from animals fed with GMOs and in additives such as soy lecithin)?

"The destruction of the environment by humans is morally wrong and places a heavy responsibility on them because it alters forever (...) the path of evolution. It is an affront to the achievement of what is possible — all that is unpredictably possible." Jacques Blondel, Archipelago life, Buchet-Chastel Coll. Ecology, 2012

"The most pathetic and sad aspect of the decline of biological diversity is that it devalues the perception that man has of himself in his relationship with nature" (ibid.): when man destroys biodiversity, he attacks the creative function of the planet, and his own life. Half of all living species on the planet are parasites. Perhaps man has become a parasite, the most destructive one. But unlike other parasites, man has the choice to exercise his conscience and responsibility.

"In our contemporary world ruled by extreme interdependence, individuals and nations cannot solve most of their problems by themselves; We need each other. We must therefore develop a sense of universal responsibility. It is our collective and individual responsibility to protect and nurture the global family, to support its weaker members and to take care of the environment in which we all live". Dalai Lama, A policy of Kindness.

I presented this panorama of different forms of violence, setting the individual in their life environment, to illustrate the fact that the act of violence takes place in an environment which is violent or which is experienced as such: either the current environment of the person or their earlier environment (the family environment of their childhood, for example, in the case of someone who was abused), from which the individual forms a model representation of the world, he will select in its current environment all elements or signs potentially violent or threatening, confirming its perception of the world and its position as a victim, or will reproduce as an adult the violence suffered during childhood.



### 3. Violence and the Child<sup>53</sup>

**a. At the beginning of life, the baby explores his environment with his mouth** (from which the Freudian term "oral stage" comes) and spans the first 6 months of life <sup>54</sup> (It is not solely a search to satisfy hunger, but a way to become familiar with the world, since the baby stores in his memory textures and shapes of objects that he puts in his mouth that he will recognize later by sight without touching them). **If the object is good, the baby swallows it; if not, he spits it out.**

The good mother who nurses is introjected, "placed inside" with the milk that she feeds the baby. Now everything is good: the baby herself, the physical sensation of being satisfied, muscular relaxation, the mother, the world. But if the mother is unavailable because she is busy taking care of other children, a husband, household tasks, or if she is too tired ... — or because she has destructive fantasies about her baby (which can happen to any mother "*good enough*" according to Winnicott's term: "he screams so much that it would give me great pleasure to throw him out of the window." It is indeed a fantasy, it is not a death wish), then, everything is bad but the bad is not qualified and the baby is flailing his arms and legs around because she feels irritable all over because of muscle contractions, hunger, anxiety, helplessness...: the mother is bad, the whole world is bad.

"In reality the infant is neither good nor bad, but through the effect of what is granted to the infant or refused by the caregiver, the infant experiences extremely powerful emotions (...) The oral phase is as extreme for the child as it is for the parent who feels the child, in turn, is so good 'that you would eat the child' or so annoying that you would kill the child.'" (Christiane Olivier, *L'ogre intérieur, De la violence personnelle et familiale* Poche Fayard 1998).

In fact, when the exhausted mother senses this ("I could throw the child out of the window ") through a process of corresponding introjective identification (projective identification of the baby internalized by the mother in the same tone) she feels something of a force analogous to what her baby feels and what he projects into her: everything is bad, she is bad, she is such a bad mother that she could even think of throwing her baby out of the window (but she does not do it, and this is why she is a "*good enough*" mother !).

By recognizing that her strong feelings mirror the violence her baby feels, she can distance herself from her own feelings, and resume a compassionate relationship with her baby in order to regulate his rage and eliminate it.

But the baby's anxieties make us revisit our own outdated anxieties. If no one came to us when we were babies to regulate these anxieties and help us eliminate them, then we are at risk that these experiences may alter our capacity for self-regulation, and therefore, our capacity to help our children regulate their anxieties.

The baby's rage aims at both driving away personal evil and protecting him from external evil that could enter his body. But at that stage, without external help, he is unable to regulate himself, except to fall down in exhaustion. Once or twice, the baby will pull through. But if he is regularly left alone in a rage, a lasting imprint will remain in his psyche and body.

This rage, this early aggression is normal and appears from the first year of life. It grows as the baby child discovers herself dependent on her mother: she loves her (and the mother loves her baby too, if everything is going well...) and she hates her at the same time for being so dependent on her. This is the time when ambivalence toward this preferred attachment figure builds — everything is good when

<sup>53</sup> This paragraph is based on the article *L'Enfant violent* du n° spécial « *Les Racines de la violence* », Magazine Cerveau & Psycho, l'essentiel: nov. 2011 – janv.2012, p. 28 et suivantes

<sup>54</sup> The "mouthing stage" spans the first 6 or 12 months of life according to psychoanalytic theories of child development: see § 4 p.15 of the document " The stages in child development: from conception to... » Anne Carpentier, "Pratiques" Network

[http://www.interaide.org/pratiques/sites/default/files/Etapes\\_du\\_developpement\\_Anne\\_Carpentier\\_2011-2012.pdf](http://www.interaide.org/pratiques/sites/default/files/Etapes_du_developpement_Anne_Carpentier_2011-2012.pdf)



the mother gives in to the baby's desires, everything is bad when she impedes her, or when she prohibits<sup>55</sup> — in order to grow in the process of separation-individuation.<sup>56</sup>

"In the oral object relation,<sup>57</sup> subject and object merge and everything including the object and the subject can become "bad," in a moment. Thus, it is understood that *the exact adult violence route* on which, in a moment, all that is external, all that is surrounding can be felt like "bad objects" to destroy or scream at... Adult violence is the source of monstrous acts because the man who is out of control is capable of beating, slashing, and killing, while the baby who is *vulnerable to the same feelings* can only scream, "deafening our ears," and nestle uncomfortably at the bottom of his cradle, helpless to reach the Other. But the two aspects of behaviour, the baby's and the adult's, are expressions of the same internal structure." (Christiane Olivier, *L'ogre intérieur*, 1998).

If the adult never comes (either rarely, or randomly, or inadequately) to respond to the baby's request for contact or needs, then this **helplessness to reach out to the other will be imprinted in the muscular hypertension and the neural network of the baby planting the seeds of future violence**, whether geared towards the external or self-aggression, [directed] towards the self.

b. "The violence of the anal stage [from 1 to 2 years<sup>58</sup>], is both to domineering and separating with the need to keep the Other in his power, unlike the violence of the oral stage, that wants to destroy everything, including the self" (Christiane Olivier, 1998). It is this form of oral violence, geared towards the self that we find in all addictive and eating behaviour complaints (the bulimic-vomiter spits out the "bad object," the anorexic does not allow the bad object in the body).

**In older children** (1 to 2-3 years), the **adverse reaction** to the environment, that we sometimes call aggression, is a **normal component** of the psychological, emotional, relational, and behavioural growth of the small child.

The child who wants to obtain an object or express displeasure, assaults his parents, throws his toy on the ground ... He does not do it to hurt anyone. This behaviour allows him to focus on his feelings, express his needs and test his environment: is my relational environment (familial, educational...) able to respond to my needs? Able to teach me how to defer my needs in a constructive and nourishing way? Able to protect me and to give me boundaries for my protection without destroying my determination? The child's identity develops through these interactions with his environment; his sense of self and worth, basis of self-confidence and self-esteem is strengthened.

**Environmental responses to these aggressive actions are essential for the child's psychological construction.** Reactions adapted to the child are necessary so that "the aggressive test" may be transformed, so that it serves as a coherent vision of self and the world. If, when faced with aggressive behaviour such as the child violently throwing his toy, the parents do not react or react improperly, the risk is that this kind of aggressive and sterile behaviour increases. The parent or educator must recognize the aggressive sign and show his/herself moved, angry or hurt, **so that the child understands that his actions have an effect of the surrounding world.**

<sup>55</sup> We find examples of this totally good / totally bad mother in fairy tales, with the good mother of early childhood (who was guessing and responding with love to all our needs) who dies, and the evil stepmother who arrives (the mother who sets limits with authority, who scolds and prohibits): the "good" and "bad" polarities are represented in two distinct personas — but each parent indeed has both in herself, which is not always easy to accept (for the child, *and for the parent* !!!).

<sup>56</sup> As for the attachment, see also "The Stages of Child Development from conception to..." » at Pratiques [http://www.interaide.org/pratiques/sites/default/files/Etapes\\_du\\_developpement\\_Anne\\_Carpentier\\_2011-2012.pdf](http://www.interaide.org/pratiques/sites/default/files/Etapes_du_developpement_Anne_Carpentier_2011-2012.pdf)

<sup>57</sup> The theory of object relations describes the process by which the mind grows up in relation to others in the environment. The "objects" of the theory are real people and the image that we have internalized of these people and of the relationship that we have with them.

<sup>58</sup> From the anal stage (from 1 to 2 years) according to psychoanalytic theories of child development : see § 4 p.16 of the document "The stages of child development: from conception to . . . » Anne Carpentier, Pratiques [http://www.interaide.org/pratiques/sites/default/files/Etapes\\_du\\_developpement\\_Anne\\_Carpentier\\_2011-2012.pdf](http://www.interaide.org/pratiques/sites/default/files/Etapes_du_developpement_Anne_Carpentier_2011-2012.pdf)



Gradually the child considers his influence on the world: **his actions and his words have meaning and an effect on others whose feelings are, in turn, mutual**, (or sometimes guilty). **Thus empathy is born.** The child will try then to make amends for the pain or wrong that he has caused.

**“Normal” aggression** is structured therefore around constructive interactions in a familial and educational environment. It calms down after 3 years when the child is sufficiently secured in terms of the construction of stability and his identity (of his narcissism). Sense of self and self-esteem of the child has been built around "good enough" interactions in a caregiving environment that has sufficiently held, rocked, not forced fed, respected the child's pace, responded to his needs with gentleness or firmness ... The way in which the adult interprets and responds to signs from the baby is therefore essential so that the small child may build a solid and stable sense of self. He knows then who he is and has confidence in his relational and physical environment; he can explore the world and deal with the ups and downs of daily life, supported when necessary by his preferred attachment figures, the primary caregiver.

## **Child Abuse**

Suzanne Robert-Ouvray definition of 'violence against humans' is based on needs:

"The fundamental human needs are: 1. Physiological - water, sleep, elimination (of air, urine, and feces), stimulation, and calm. 2. Psychological - affection, safety, recognition, worthiness, respect, verbal and non-verbal communication, points of references, pleasure, play, dreams, laughter, consistency, expression, success, accomplishment, and creativity...

When these needs are often too overwhelmingly frustrated, the subject experiences violence and begins to suffer.

**Each time I impose my needs on another person without concern for his well-being by treating him like he is a mere object, I am being violent. Each time I hinder or trample someone's basic needs, I am being violent.**

"From this understanding of violence, it seems to me that symbolic violence that does not directly strike the body is going to nevertheless hamper the person's need for respect and safety and lead to anxiety that changes form according to the degree of the subject's body-mind organization. (...)

When the child grows up, symbolic violence can change forms. Because most often what had not been drawn up to give meaning turns into value judgments, worthlessness, humiliation, and verbal abuse.

There are families who never lay a hand on their children. There is neither physical violence nor affection. Violence involves conditioning, emotional blackmail, accusations, more or less insidious guilt, brainwashing, limitations, or premature and excessive demands. (...)

Symbolic violence involves language. The abusive person uses words like blows or weapons to humiliate, destroy, or enslave another. (...)

Symbolic violence involves language, but also the absence of language. Violence of silence: "I am no longer talking to you," a common threat to children who know the pain of premeditated silence. The break in communication gravely impedes the basic human need for relationship. Silencing the child is to kill him psychologically. To kill his speech that it is verbal, emotional, and physical, is to deny his existence. Being still faced, indifferent to the other's emotions: it's the law of silence. It generates suffering, the pain of an emotional void, of being cut from human relationship. (...). Cutting off the words of a child, speaking for him, never having a conversation with him: it is a form of symbolic violence which the child will experience in his body (...). It is the whole child that is undermined, because every level of human organization (tonic, sensorial, emotional, representative, language - all derived from psychomotor skills) is then dislocated. (...) "Non-recognition, guilt, worthlessness, and systematic denigration cause the person to become inhibited. If reactions are sometimes violent in the hours, days or years that follow, the result is that the subject will basically remain emotionally insecure, lacking in self-confidence and sometimes imprisoned by mistrust towards others."

Suzanne Robert-Ouvray, *Les violences psychologiques et le corps souffrant*  
<http://s.robertouvray.free.fr/articles.htm>

September 2012 - Updated 01/2013 – English translation May 2014 24



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## **The violent child**

But aggression can turn into violence if the child does not find an appropriate response. For Winnicott, a British paediatrician and psychoanalyst (1896-1971), the two most inappropriate responses are the lack of response and the violent response.

- In the first case, "the aggressive attempt" which is really an attempt to make contact with the environment, remains without response: this is a kind of cry into the void. This void is a form of violence, because without a response the child feels that their need for contact (which is a vital need) has been denied.

- In the second, the child receives only a violent response as a reflection that allows him no differentiation between his act and that of the adult. When the normal aggression of the small child is managed by the parents in an inappropriate or pathological manner (non-response or violent response) it creates the foundation for a later inclination to violent learning.

The child's violence indicates an uncertainty about one's own identity, which has its origin in a failure of early relationships.

"The birth of a child forces the parents to relive (even unconsciously) their own arrival in the world. And if they did not receive suitable care, or worse, if they were neglected, mistreated or abused, it may be difficult for them to become "good enough" parents without external support.

To become a good enough parent, one must be able to internalise the qualities of a "good enough" caregiver (that is to say, be able to be a good enough 'mother' for oneself: to be able to regulate one's own emotions, to tolerate stress and frustration, to tolerate one's own negative emotions and those of close relatives; to regain inner balance following a negative interaction, and to comfort oneself)<sup>59</sup>.

Generally, the parents of children who become violent were not capable of perceiving that the signals – crying, looks, expressions, gestures, etc. – emitted by the baby are the expression of what he feels as a person different from his parents. The parent only projects his/her own feelings onto their baby and when the parent is distressed by the crying baby, s/he thinks that the baby is crying because she is anxious – they do not understand that she cries because she is hungry, for example, or because she is tired... The parent will then rock the baby for hours, or reprimand her, before thinking of feeding her. Conversely a mother can feed her child regardless of the signal the baby produces (being tired, feeling discomfort etc.).

Babies have six different types of crying that "good enough" parents learn to decipher and to which they respond in an appropriate manner in the majority of cases<sup>60</sup>. Here, on the contrary, the response of the parent is consistently inappropriate. The discomfort of the child is transformed into distress, to the extent that the response of the parent becomes less and less appropriate.

Parents who behave thus have often themselves experienced in their childhood distress or intimate violence, even if they are not conscious of this. They have grown up under difficult conditions and are not conscious of their inappropriate attitude to their baby. This form of abuse does not leave traces of blows on the baby's body, but can have tragic consequences, if there is not a family or educational environment that can compensate for parental failure (and nurture the resilience of the child). But there may be a bodily effect: we see infants with motor hyperactivity and muscular contractions which are probably painful and at least uncomfortable, constituting a muscular self-grasping, the first manifestation of the lack of a relationship that supports and helps them to develop.

A single, even intense, trauma may be less mutilating for a "self" in the process of construction than the accumulation of micro-traumas suffered by the child in a situation of early parental failure (parental

<sup>59</sup> The stages in the development of the child: from conception to..., Practices Network <http://www.interaide.org/pratiques/content/stages-child-development-conception-onward>

<sup>60</sup> The baby cries differently depending on whether he is hungry, in pain, suffering discomfort or boredom, whether he is tired or stressed. cf. Brazelton, *Touchpoints 0 to 3 years*.





failure may also have a other causes, and be induced by depression<sup>61</sup>, mourning or external circumstances (beaten women), or environmental circumstances such as living during a war etc.).

It is the parent-child dyad which suffers, even if the parent is not conscious of this suffering (or perhaps considers that the baby is responsible for their own malaise: "she cries all the time...", "he is unbearable" etc.).

This parental inadequacy does not allow the small child to construct his identity or points of reference. He is unable to clearly identify his own internal experiences – physical, emotional and affective – as they have been constantly misidentified by the environment. The impulses are intense, non-adjusted and non-adjustable as they have never been appeased by a satisfactory response. The child will then permanently seek the sense of self and security that she does not find from her parents.

"The child who does not hear the verbal or bodily words of his parent confirming what he feels remains in a psychological vacuum. Even if the parent's desire is not to hurt the child, the child suffers unthinkable violence due to a lack of access to the symbolic."

Suzanne Robert-Ouvray, *Les violences psychologiques et le corps souffrant*  
<http://s.robertouvray.free.fr/articles.htm>

Violence may be a means of reaction to this early parental failure – it is a possibility among other possible reactions such as depression<sup>62</sup>, hyperactivity and later, addictions, eating disorders<sup>63</sup> etc. Violence can also be a defence, the only one that the child would have found in this non-protective environment, against the collapse into depression. In feeling pain, the child can also seek proof of her own existence: we then see children collide with things, fall or hurt themselves more than is usual for children of the same age. She can thus seek through pain, a physical boundary, the limits that are not found elsewhere. When older, she may have explosive rages in which the child strikes or hits without perceiving that she is causing pain or hurting herself. Violent children rarely cry, and when they do it is from rage and impotence; but they are inconsolable because their anxiety is not due to the fear of being abandoned, but the fear of nothingness – a nothingness that they have sometimes felt from their earliest infancy in the face of a psychologically absent parent or in a completely unbalanced and maladjusted early relationship.

In preadolescence, the child's violence becomes explosive. The injuries he inflicts do not relieve him or reassure him as to his own existence, because he does not feel them. As in the earliest infancy, he then turns against his environment. The child's violence is impulsive, irrational, random, unpredictable, with a disregard of the consequences of his acts and an indifference to the suffering of others: we have seen above that this has developed into failed, maladjusted early interactions, providing the natural aggression of the child with inappropriate responses which did not allow him to understand that his actions have an influence on the other and on the environment, nor to develop empathy.

Once again, if a family or educational environment compensates for parental failure (and/or if therapeutic support can mitigate or resolve the issue), then the child can once again begin to make progress in its development.

Reducing the time spent watching television and playing video games and improving the diet (no sweets or soda, no aspartame, no products containing dyes or preservatives, more fruit, vegetables, legumes and essential fatty acids) will also have a positive effect in reducing aggression and hyperactivity and improving attention and concentration. A Canadian study also shows links between food insecurity in childhood and hyperactivity and attention disorders<sup>64</sup>.

<sup>61</sup> On perinatal depression, see the file "Depressions over the course of life" Anne Carpentier, (in French) <http://www.interaide.org/pratiques/node/214>

<sup>62</sup> On depression in the baby and child, see the file "Depressions over the course of life". (in French) <http://www.interaide.org/pratiques/node/214>

<sup>63</sup> See also the file on "Addictions", Practices Network <http://www.interaide.org/pratiques/content/les-addictions>

<sup>64</sup> Food Insecurity and Children's Mental Health: A Prospective Birth Cohort Study, Maria Melchior et al. <http://www.plosone.org/article/info%3Adoi%2F10.1371%2Fjournal.pone.0052615>





## **The effects of abuse on the child – the adult of the future**

All relational disorders and psychological trauma (including, we should recall, the chronic micro-traumas that can pass unnoticed by the majority of people; we should also remember that physical violence is a physical and psychological trauma) can generate long-term problems both on the emotional and psychological level and in physical, behavioural and cognitive areas.

**Indeed, childhood abuse modifies the regulation of the genes involved in stress management.**

<http://www.medecine.unige.ch/actualites/details/media.php?id=P1603>.

It therefore has a long-term impact on the life of the individual, as well as a generational impact, especially as this vulnerability to stress can be transmitted to subsequent generations (research by the same team from the University of Geneva shows that the "scar" left on the DNA by trauma is transmitted from generation to generation, and that the trace on the DNA is even more pronounced in the third generation<sup>65</sup>).

The work of Allan Schore shows a direct relationship between abuse and the traumatic attachment that it generates, and the regulatory functions of the right brain and psychological distress during childhood and adulthood:

"Because early abuse negatively impacts the developing brain of these infants, it has enduring effects. There is extensive evidence that trauma in early life impairs the development of the capacities of maintaining interpersonal relationships, coping with stressful stimuli, and regulating emotion. A body of interdisciplinary research demonstrates that the essential experiences that shape the individual's patterns of coping responses are forged in the emotion-transacting caregiver–infant relationship. We are now beginning to understand, at a psychobiological level, specifically how beneficial early experiences enhance and detrimental early histories inhibit the development of the brain's active and passive stress coping mechanisms." (Allan Schore<sup>66</sup>)

Growing up in an insecure/violent/abusive environment can generate

- little or no internal security,
- very low self-esteem,
- hyper-sensitivity,
- sensitivity to depression,
- constant inner tension or anxiety,
- low resistance to stress,
- difficulty to regulate one's emotions (the ability to regulate emotions is built from early childhood through interactions with a "good enough" maternal environment)
- difficulty in managing inter-personal relationships,
- constant hyper-vigilance doubled with a permanent state of muscular tension,
- mental hyperactivity (a constant, generally negative flow of "self-disparaging" thoughts); this very high mental activity can be seen as a consequence of the lack of emotion regulation (hyper-intellectualisation can also serve as compensation for the lack of emotional regulation)
- people having been beaten or abused (psychological abuse, sexual abuse etc.) who may develop a tendency to self-punishment, self-destructive or addictive behaviours;
- socialisation problems and a tendency to oppose social legislation (often associated with addiction, particularly in the case of addiction to illegal products).
- ...

<sup>65</sup> <http://www.rts.ch/video/info/journal-19h30/3745896-des-chercheurs-de-l-unige-ont-decouvert-que-les-abus-laissent-une-trace-biologique-dans-l-adn-des-victimes.html>

<sup>66</sup> <http://www.allanschore.com/pdf/SchoreIMHJTrauma01.pdf>



#### 4. Domestic violence and poverty?<sup>67</sup>

We have seen above that a **specific link** between parent and child, usually consisting of **negligence, excessive severity, violence or abuse of power**, promotes the appearance of aggressive behaviour, or even of later delinquent behaviour (Aggressive due to a Lack of Security, A. Guédeney<sup>68</sup>).

But it is not only the parent-child relationship which is in question, and here again we must look at the individual and the family unit in relation to its environment.

**"A mother cannot be "good enough" unless she is herself supported by a "good enough" environment.** Winnicott said that a baby without a mother does not exist; I could say that a good enough mother without a sufficient supporting environment does not exist either. A "good enough mother" (to use Winnicott's phrase) is therefore a mother who is surrounded and supported, materially (this helps, but is not sufficient) and emotionally, by the father, because the children also have a need for his presence, by her own parents, by the family and by society, which also bears a considerable share of responsibility... (Does it provide access to high quality pre- and post-natal care, to mother and child welfare services — but also to sufficient parental leave for working women<sup>69</sup>, to high quality nursery facilities which are accessible to all<sup>70</sup>, to sanitary housing conditions, to family benefit etc.?)

As we know, this is not the case in the slums where our partners work... Mothers do not necessarily have their family around them (they have often remained in the provinces, while the youngest, with no prospect of work in the countryside have come to try their luck in Manila... or have fled their families), their spouses are struggling to earn a living as *scavengers* (collecting rubbish) and are not always there to help. In addition, many couples become parents at a very young age (16, 17, 18...). At this age, the growth of the brain is not complete (it ends between 20 and 25 years depending on the individual), and the ability to tolerate stress and frustration is still being built... Teenage parents can therefore have a great deal of difficulty adjusting to their new role as parents... Teenage mothers are also at risk of depression, with 1 case in 4 (25%), and this is irrespective of any socio-economic criterion"<sup>71</sup>.

In the 1940s and 50s, American psychologists, Sheldon and Eleanor Glueck<sup>72</sup> carried out studies with 1,000 boys from disadvantaged neighbourhoods in Boston, half of whom were young offenders. They found that the families of these young people had moved more often, lived in homes of poorer quality, had a more unstable financial situation and that the absence of fathers was more pronounced; in some neighbourhoods up to 80% were single parent families. In these families, a form of indifference seems to exist between parents and children. The mother supervises her children very little and the father is usually absent. On a daily basis, discipline is either lax or overly harsh, even violent.

Is it poverty and marginalisation that generates this educational indifference? According to research carried out in 1993 by two Harvard psychologists<sup>73</sup> crime and **violence arise when the link that**

<sup>67</sup> This paragraph is based on the article by A. Guédeney entitled "*Agressif par manque de sécurité*" (Aggressive due to a lack of security), in "*Les Racines de la violence*", Magazine Cerveau & Psycho, l'essentiel: Nov. 2011–Jan. 2012, p. 34 ff

<sup>68</sup> "*Agressif par manque de sécurité*", in "*Les Racines de la violence*", Magazine Cerveau & Psycho, l'essentiel: Nov. 2011–Jan. 2012, p. 34 ff

<sup>69</sup> This is not the case in the United States...

<sup>70</sup> This is not the case in Germany...

<sup>71</sup> Stages of Child Development: from conception onward, Pratiques Network [http://www.interaide.org/pratiques/sites/default/files/Etapes\\_du\\_developpement\\_Anne\\_Carpentier\\_2011-2012.pdf](http://www.interaide.org/pratiques/sites/default/files/Etapes_du_developpement_Anne_Carpentier_2011-2012.pdf)

<sup>72</sup> This paragraph is based on the article by A. Guédeney entitled "*Agressif par manque de sécurité*" (Aggressive due to a lack of security), in "*Les Racines de la violence*", Magazine Cerveau & Psycho, l'essentiel: Nov. 2011–Jan. 2012, p. 34 ff

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

Robert Sampson and John Laub (Ibid.) in "*Agressif par manque de sécurité*", in "*Les Racines de la violence*", Magazine Cerveau & Psycho, l'essentiel: Nov. 2011–Jan. 2012, p. 34 ff



**connects the individual to society is too strained or broken:** the link with public institutions (school, police, legal authorities) but also with neighbours, parents and the extended family or family of origin.

In the 1940s, John Bowlby, a pioneer in the field of attachment theory, noted among young offenders a proportion of young boys deprived of any emotional capacity and focusing only on material goods. In these children, he had noted that frequent exposure to domestic violence and separations in early infancy blocks the development of the child's emotional capacities. One of his students, Mary Ainsworth, demonstrated experimentally three types of attachment relationships: secure (child displays sadness at separation from its mother and joy at reunion), insecure (no apparent emotion at separation; indifference, no seeking of contact at reunion) and, more rarely, insecure ambivalent: the child, affected by the departure of its mother, seems to struggle against its distress; on her return, it displays anger, seeming to both attract and repel the mother. Finally another sub-type of **attachment is called "disorganised"**, in which the reactions of the child are inconsistent. This is the case of children with violent parents or parents who do not pay attention to the child because they are absorbed by depression or bereavement.

Children having an insecure attachment type to their parent(s), and in particular the disorganised type, are those who are most likely to display behavioural disorders and delinquency at a later date. Writing of these children, J. Bowlby wrote that, becoming wary at an early age of their emotions as a result of painful separations, they see the world as unpredictable and lacking security and sources of comfort: they react either by escaping (running away, addiction etc.) or aggression.

For American psychologist Mark Greenberg, "when an insecure child gets angry, attacks his family, systematically opposes or disobeys, it is a form of unconscious strategy to attract the attention of people by whom he wants to be loved. It is a form of call for help, a way of signalling to the parents that something in the way they are acting does not work and does not respond to the child's needs for attachment, closeness, sensitivity and security. As the parents are not taking care of the child, the child rings an alarm bell: if the parents do not respond quickly, the child will eventually transpose its transgressive behaviour to any situation involving an authority. According to him, the world is bad, there is no possibility of attachment and no confidence: you get nothing if you don't have power"<sup>74</sup>.

In fact, underprivileged populations usually, but not always, suffer from cumulative risk factors (unemployment and discrimination on the one hand; single parenthood, and little or no social or family support, which can lead to a type of insecure attachment on the other). Studies of poor populations who have become rich (such as the Indians in the United States) show that **when a population extracts itself from poverty, it is the behavioural disorders in the children that are reduced first, as the parents can take back their role as providers of security (both material and emotional)** as they themselves are released from misery). The contrary demonstration also seems convincing. In 1985, psychologist Martha Erickson demonstrated that a secure attachment in a population of low financial means is a protective factor against delinquency, even if this protection is not complete<sup>75</sup>.

While inadequate or failed parenting behaviours are observed in **all** social layers, it is in situations of social isolation and exclusion that the family link is most threatened — **not because the parents are less good, but because they must face more problems, and that they are alone while doing so:** they are not surrounded by a social, educational or familial environment (family, extended family, community, school, social services etc.) able to alleviate their difficulties, and on which they can rely.

We have also seen above the influence of junk food and television on aggressive behaviour and hyperactivity and we know that the socially disadvantaged are the most vulnerable. A Canadian study also shows links between food insecurity in childhood and hyperactivity and attention disorders<sup>76</sup>.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> Food Insecurity and Children's Mental Health: A Prospective Birth Cohort Study, Maria Melchior et al. <http://www.plosone.org/article/info%3Adoi%2F10.1371%2Fjournal.pone.0052615>



## 5. To conclude with hope: preventing violence

I wanted to provide a wider view of violence, setting the individual in their life environment to illustrate the fact that **the act of violence takes place in an environment which is violent or which is experienced as such**: either the current environment of the person or their earlier environment – the family environment of their childhood, for example, in the case of someone who was abused – that the person projects onto their current environment. From this it follows that to prevent and stop the violence, we must act both with people and the environment.

Indeed, we live in a world that can be violent (economic violence, political, environmental, military, religious, sexual etc.) It is absurd to think that the prevention of violence can be based only on individuals. Societies and the individuals that they contribute to form are co-responsible, and vice versa: individuals and the societies to which they belong and which they contribute to build, are co-responsible.

### Dialogue, Education and Non-Violent Communication (NVC)

"The only way out of the cycle of violence is dialogue, a dialogue that really seeks to recognise each other's differences". (Elisabeth Leblanc, *see Sources*)

**Educating to non-violence** from nursery to adulthood. This also means not accepting violent behaviour to children: **the educational message must be embodied in action!**

**Removing television violence**, at least during prime time and during the periods when children watch television, together with violent video games, would have a decisive educational impact on violent behaviour. But this would require both **family decisions and also strong political decisions** unaffected by financial considerations.

**Supporting parenthood**, supporting parents to help them to recognise, rather than reproduce, the violence that they have suffered (through parenting schools, support groups etc.).

To prevent and fight against sexist and sexual violence, women **and men** must be accompanied and educated to non-violence. Legislation and application of the law and punishing transgressions must support and confirm prevention and education.

**Non-violent communication (NVC) should be taught everywhere.**


What creates violence in communication:

- mockery, sarcasm
- insults
- contempt (humiliating or hurtful comments etc.)
- accusation, judgement, blame etc.

To summarise very briefly, the principles of NVC are:

1. Start from the behaviour in the other person which affects us (and not the nature of their **personality**)
2. Then talk about my own feelings (instead of talking *about* the other person)
3. Then make a clear demand (which is not the same thing as demanding).



 <b>Violent communication</b>	<b>Non-violent communication</b>
<b>You</b> never listen to me, You egotistical swine, <b>you</b> always ignore me I demand that you listen to me	① When I talk to you and you don't listen to me ② I feel sad, as if I didn't exist for you. ③ When I speak to you, I want you to listen to me, to show that you are listening to me. If you haven't got time just now, tell me so with respect.

See some examples in the document "*Success in domestic quarrels, practical guide*"<sup>77</sup> (in Appendix 3) — the reference being from the book by Marshall Rosenberg ***Words are Windows, or They're Walls: A Presentation of Nonviolent Communication***, preface by Arun Gandhi and Charles Rojzman (the book was given to the EnFanCE team in July 2012).

It is still necessary to be able to identify and name one's own inner feelings, to be capable of recognising and naming one's emotions: education and culture sometimes encourage us to repress emotions and their expression to such an extent that we no longer know how to recognise what is happening inside us. Addictions, including behavioural addictions, are often aimed at silencing the first signs of emotions that we have not learned to tolerate, regulate and name<sup>78</sup>.

Make a request — not a demand — means that the other person is free to accept or not accept responding to this request ... And that one is not destroyed by a refusal ... This requires sufficient confidence and self-esteem.

### Conflict as an end to violence

In Chinese calligraphy, the Chinese ideogram for "conflict" is composed of two signs, one meaning "potential danger" and the other "driving force, opportunity".

Paradoxically, the conflict can be a stimulating form of dialogue that enables us to avoid violence without avoiding the confrontation of ideas and values. This is the theory of psychologist Charles Rojzman (*Sortir de la violence par le conflit*, éditions La Découverte, 2008)

Conflict enables us to emerge from the fusion in which the self and the other are combined, or from avoidance. This is a way of creating genuine contact between a separate *me* and a *you*: I exist even if you don't agree with my ideas and values; you exist even if you don't agree with my ideas and values. My ideas and values don't mean that I should ignore or destroy the other person.

"Violence is the last stage in a long crescendo of discontent, whether expressed or not by the individual". (*L'ogre intérieur*, Christiane Olivier, Fayard 1998)

To avoid arriving at this final stage, we must learn to express discontent, to observe the causes of our discontent, because often, we are not even aware of what has hurt us: and it is an insignificant incident (a child dropping an object) that makes us explode, after a succession of unidentified frustrations or hurts (our child's teacher who treats us with contempt, the employer who shouts at us, the husband who didn't keep his word, the driver who nearly ran us over, the brother-in-law who didn't give us back the money he owes, the shop-keeper who won't give us credit any more... And my child does something stupid and quite trivial and I come down hard on him...).

<sup>77</sup> "Success in domestic quarrels, practical guide", 2009, attached to this document, and also online on the Practiques Network <http://www.interaide.org/pratiques/content/success-domestic-quarrels-technical-guide-english-translation-twb-2014?destination=content/success-domestic-quarrels-technical-guide-english-translation-twb-2014&language=en>

<sup>78</sup> On emotional regulation, see *The stages in the development of the child: from conception to...* on [http://www.interaide.org/pratiques/sites/default/files/Etapes\\_du\\_developpement\\_Anne\\_Carpentier\\_2011-2012.pdf](http://www.interaide.org/pratiques/sites/default/files/Etapes_du_developpement_Anne_Carpentier_2011-2012.pdf) and for more information, the articles by Allan Schore <http://www.allanschore.com/>





**We must be able to feel that our existence does not depend on the other person seeing us** – although being seen (recognized) by the other continues to nourish our feeling of existence; to feel that we continue to exist even if the other person does not agree with us. But this means having enough self-confidence, enough internal security and self-esteem, which is not the case when you grew up in an abusive or neglectful environment: arriving in the world, a child feels her existence confirmed by the way her parents look at her; a secure attachment will allow this to be internalised and to create the basis of internal security. But if we did not receive this quality of "good enough" contact, **we remain dependent on the other person's recognition to feel that we exist:** this is why all human being will rather being treated badly than being neglected, than a complete lack of contact. But this vulnerability that will be affected, hurt again each time we feel violated, abused. It is then that psychological support may be necessary, as the "rules of healthy communication" remain useful but are not sufficient to restore self-esteem.

People who have been abused do not all become abusive; far from it: **it is only a minority who repeat that violence.** But abusive people have always been abused, even if the abuse was not visible (as in the case of psychological violence, perverse control, neglect, incest etc.).

"Once can see violence as a way to manage the pain we feel when, for one reason or another, we are no longer linked with the other person (the parent, friend, family, group etc.). Violence is then an attempt to restore this link, desperately, in any possible way..." (Elisabeth Leblanc<sup>79</sup>) But this is not a good way of acting, because in violence I exist by destroying the other person... and when destroying the other I am also destroying the possibility of relationship. For people who exhibit violent behaviour, therapeutic support is required to help them come out of this toxic repetition.

## **Psychological support**

We have seen that the violence of an individual always takes place in contact with a violent environment or one perceived as violent: either the current environment of the person or the environment of the past (the family environment of her childhood, for example, in the case of a person who has been abused), on the basis of which the individual formed his representation of the world: he will select from the current environment all of the potentially violent or threatening elements and signs, thereby confirming his perception of the world. He will then repeat the violence that he suffered, or confirm his position as a victim.

Each experience of violence brings us back to another situation, perhaps a situation from our childhood or infancy. When someone commits violence, at the time of carrying out the act, he is not connected to himself – he denies himself. And we thus make ourselves (and the other person) suffer what we have suffered: it is a repetition, an attempt doomed to failure, to repair in the present an unfinished situation from the past.

We can find repair from what we have suffered before, but not in repetition (because "whatever is not conscious will be experienced as fate" C.G. Jung). We can only "repair" from past suffering through awareness and recognition.

Behind the violence, there is therefore suffering: suffering caused by loss of the link which causes the desire to restore it at any price. Violence is then a desperate attempt to restore this link, the desperate attempt to ensure that the other person sees us and that we have thus, through their regard, the feeling of existing. We must therefore regard this violence directly in order to understand the message it contains. The only way out of the cycle of violence is dialogue, a dialogue that really seeks to recognise each other's differences.

But when education and communication techniques are not sufficient to break the cycle of repeated violence (the cycle that we suffer and perpetuate on a global scale...), on individual and family level

<sup>79</sup> **Rencontrer, traverser, dépasser la violence** conference by Élisabeth Leblanc, clinical psychologist, Jungian psychoanalyst clinical psychologist at <http://www.savoirpsy.com/> at [La Traversée](#), 25.9.2008



therapeutic support can be necessary. By means of the emotional regulation that the therapeutic relationship enables, and the increase of self-consciousness and awareness — violence being "the last stage in a long crescendo of discontent, whether expressed or not by the individual" (C. Olivier, 1998) — resorting to violence can gradually be prevented and avoided.

Moreover, **victims of violence** also need psychological and therapeutic support in order to live again, and not just to survive, following the experience of trauma or repeated micro-traumas.

The brain is plastic, and we can create new neural connections throughout life; in this way the therapeutic relationship, allowing the identification and regulation of emotions, can repair or at least mitigate the effects of past trauma and create new ways of being in contact with one's environment, without repeating the old mechanisms.

## **A social policy**

This requires political and social decisions, **because we must remember that good enough** parents, according to D.W. Winnicott's expression **are parents who benefit from support**; family, community ("it takes a village to raise a child", says an African proverb...) and social: the society to which they belong must enable them to have access to affordable, high-quality healthcare, to childcare services, then to high-quality schools for their children... to have access to a job that enables them to live in decent quality housing and access to health and healthcare coverage...

Isolated parents therefore accumulate risks; more than any other they need social support (health, education, care, benefits, childcare system and access to employment...).

## **Legislation: the law**

Violence is systemic, and takes place in the contact between an individual and a violent environment or one perceived as such. Prevention at the individual level is not sufficient. **We must act on the political and legislative societal level.**

Repressive policies, when they use violence (which they call "power") generate violence in return.

Some societies maintain, authorise or tolerate violence towards women, children, a segment of the population (homosexuals, migrants, nomads etc.) or to all of its citizens (sexual, religious or political violence or dictatorship...). **International law** then provides a "standard" which may act as a reference for denouncing and **combating social and political violence.**

The Law designates what is considered by a given society to be violent, and condemns those who commit violence. The threat of punishment is intended to prevent violence. When it nevertheless occurs, the punishment is useful, but not sufficient alone to counter violence. **Dialogue, education and social support are the first steps in preventing violence.**

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*19/09/2012 - 15/11/2012 - 21/02/2013*

*Translation by **Translators Without Border** April 2014 – Reviewed A.Carpentier 13-05-2014*



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## APPENDICES

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## **Appendix 1: Criteria in manipulation**

For Isabelle Nazare-Aga, (*Les manipulateurs sont parmi nous*, Les Editions de l'Homme) here are **30 criteria to recognize a manipulator. 14 of these 30 criteria are sufficient to categorise a manipulator.**

1. He blames others in the name of family ties, friendship, love or professional conscience
2. He shifts his own responsibility to others, or resigns his own
3. He does not clearly communicate his demands, needs, feelings and opinions
4. He very often responds in an unclear fashion
5. He changes his opinions, behaviours or feelings according to the surrounding people or situations
6. He relies on logical reasons to disguise his demands
7. He makes others believe they must be perfect, that they should never change their minds, that they must know everything and respond immediately to demands and questions
8. He questions the qualifications, competence and personality of others: he criticises without seeming to, judges and devalues
9. He has his messages passed on by others
10. He sows discord and creates suspicion, divides to conquer
11. He knows how to play the victim in order to be pitied
12. He ignores demands even if he says he is dealing with them
13. He uses the moral principles of others to satisfy his needs
14. He threatens covertly, or practices open blackmail
15. He changes the subject completely during a conversation
16. He avoids or escapes interviews or meetings
17. He relies on the ignorance of others and makes them believe in her superiority
18. He lies
19. He preaches false knowledge to gain true information
20. He is egocentric
21. He can be jealous
22. He cannot stand criticism and denies the evidence
23. He does not take into account the rights, needs and desires of others
24. He often waits until the last moment to order or make others act
25. Her speech seems logical or consistent while her attitudes demonstrate the opposite
26. He flatters to please you, gives presents; suddenly makes great efforts to please you
27. He produces a feeling of discomfort or lack of freedom
28. He is perfectly effective in achieving his own goals but at the expense of others
29. He makes us do things that we would probably not do of our own volition
30. He is constantly the subject of conversations, even when he is not there.

Isabelle Nazare-Aga, *Les manipulateurs sont parmi nous*, Les Editions de l'Homme



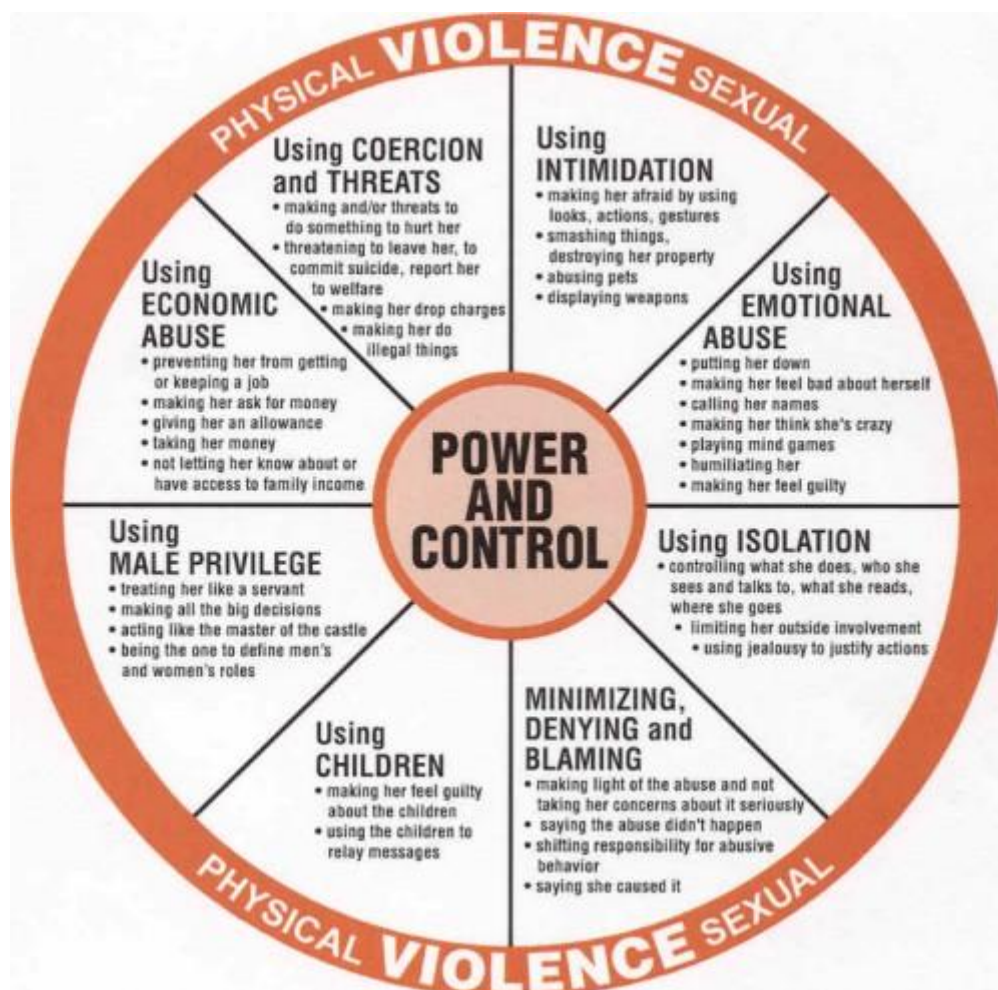
## Appendix 2: “Power & Control Wheel”

Power & Control Wheel (<http://www.theduluthmodel.org/training/wheels.html> )

Sources: [http://www.lfcc.on.ca/HCT\\_SWASM\\_5.html](http://www.lfcc.on.ca/HCT_SWASM_5.html)

This "wheel of violence" can help victims to name the treatment that they suffer – they may be in denial, or manipulated by their aggressor to such an extent that they cannot determine what is a result of violence.

This model helps some women put names to the behaviour of an abusive partner.



See E&D's Workshop in Cambodia 2011: Uma Panse's (Inter Aide India) summary on the group work on **Violence and Family Development on the Pratiques website**

<http://www.interaide.org/pratiques/content/enfants-et-d%C3%A9veloppement-atelier-sur-l'accompagnement-familial-phnom-penh-novembre-2011>





## Appendix 3: Success in domestic quarrels? Practical Guide

Practice guide inspired by the experience of workshops for couples set up by the Family Support Project in Manila: *"Husband & Wife workshop" Inter Aide/EnFaNCE partnership*

### A few words about the context

The EnFaNCE team (Encourage Families in Need and Care for Education<sup>80</sup>, a small Philippine NGO created with the support of Inter Aide) implemented workshops for couples in 2008, in the area of the "Dumpsite" in Tondo, Manila, after having seen through the launch of the "PPI" project for the promotion of micro-savings that conflicts in couples were one of the main obstacles to saving. After an evaluation carried out by the team in early 2009, and work to improve content with Violeta Bautista, PhD, Philippine psychologist and supervisor of the team, EnFaNCE decided to resume this activity in 2009.

The first series of 2009 workshops began in April and had to be interrupted because of the demolition of part of the housing adjacent to the landfill site.

A new series of *Husband & Wife workshops* was launched in August, still on the *Dumpsite*, with the first of three sessions on 26 August.

Each session has a specific theme:

- 1<sup>st</sup> session = encounters
- 2<sup>nd</sup> session = conflicts
- 3<sup>rd</sup> session = the marital/familial project.

Here are some ideas for the content of the 2<sup>nd</sup> session.

### Success in domestic quarrels?

To illustrate the conflict, social workers can present a small skit. To ensure that this sequence does not end on an overly negative note, and to give the participants some ideas, it would be interesting to play out a negative "domestic quarrel" (but with a little humour...) and then to replay the scene using the same issue of disagreement but without it degenerating into a "domestic quarrel". Take as an example, a fairly typical scene found, with minor variations, throughout the ages and across the world... (and alcohol abuse is quite common among the male population of the Philippine slums).

For example: 1<sup>st</sup> skit, domestic quarrel version:

"You've been off getting drink with your mates again, (judgement) you're really good for nothing (contempt + unfounded insult), you've spent all the housekeeping money and we're going to starve because His Lordship prefers to drink with his mates rather than take care of his family (reproach + criticism + sarcasm)"...

To this explosive cocktail (judgement + insult + reproach, criticism and irony - the perfect recipe for a domestic quarrel, and in large doses an excellent route to separation...) the other person can only respond by counter-attacking... ("you're always shouting and complaining, you shrew. It's because of you that I have to go out and drink with my mates"... ) or by fleeing the scene (*fight or flight*)...

Then the team can replay the scene in a "non-violent communication" style, for example:

<sup>80</sup> EnFaNCE Foundation <http://enfancefoundation.webs.com/>



"I understand that you need to distract yourself after your working day (she shows that she understands her husband's needs), but when you go out at night with your friends (objective observation, she is not judging), I feel lonely and neglected and I worry (she is talking about her own feelings and not at her husband) that I haven't enough money to buy food for the children. I need you to come home first and to give me money to buy food (she makes a clear demand), before going out with your friends".

It can also be interesting to **start from the viewpoint of the man** (as the programme most often works with women, because when social workers visit the families in their homes, it is generally the women who are at home to look after pre-school age children — there are no childcare facilities that can look after children under 3 in these slums):

"When I get home, you're always yelling at me, like some kind of hag! (insult/contempt) I've worked like a madman to make money for Mrs-complains-all-the-time (sarcasm), and you just sit there all day doing nothing (reproach + unfounded criticism + contempt). It's me that earned this money, I can spend it as I want and go out with my friends. At least they understand me. You're always feeling sorry for yourself, that's all you know how to do (judgement). I'm the boss here, it's me who decides. So shut it, otherwise I'll shut it for you (threat). And if you're not happy, all you've got to do is go back and live with your mother and the kids! "

**To replay in a non-violent manner**, for example:

When I get home after a long day at work and you shout at me, I feel despised and mistreated (he is talking about his own feelings, not at his wife) and I only want one thing; to go out with my friends and spend all the money I've earned. When I get back to the house after a tough day, I would like you to greet me nicely (he makes a clear demand). If you want me to give you money for you and the kids (he shows that he is thinking of his family), that's OK, but I need some consideration.



...and remember that men and women really do come from the same planet...



Anne Carpentier - 28/12/09

#### **For more information:**

GOTTMAN John-M & Nan Silver *The Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work*, Three Rivers Press 2000 <http://www.gottman.com/>

In French: *Les couples heureux ont leurs secrets - les sept lois de la réussite*, Pocket 2001.

A summary of this book can be found at

<http://tecfa.unige.ch/tecfa/teaching/UVLibre/9900/bin71/conflit.htm>

#### **See also:**

ROSENBERG Marshall B. *Non Violent Communication, a Language of Life*, Puddledancer Press 2003 (provided to the EnFaNCE Manila team in July 2012)

French translation: *Les mots sont des fenêtres (ou bien ce sont des murs)* Introduction à la communication non-violente (CNV) Editions de la Découverte, 2004

#### **And what about love?**

ALBERONI Francesco *Le choc amoureux*, Pocket 1993 (the English version can be found at <http://www.alberoni.it/pdf/Falling-in-love-and-loving.pdf>) *Je t'aime*, Pocket 1998: love viewed by a sociologist

FROMM Erich *L'art d'aimer*, Edition Desclée de Brouwer 2007: love from a more philosophical point of view (extracts can be found at <http://www.erichfromm-blog.com/>)

VINCENT Lucy *Comment devient-on amoureux*, Edition Odile Jacob 2007: love seen by the neurosciences

