



## International Association of Forensic Nurses

### **The Forensic Nurse Working with Interpersonal Violence**

Providing services to individuals, families and communities affected by interpersonal violence is diverse and complex. Patients may present with a variety of issues ranging from care and documentation of injuries to mental health counseling and substance abuse treatment. If efforts to end interpersonal violence are to succeed, individuals working within clinical programs must be able to identify intentional injury, support and assist victims, understand the factors that enable violence to continue and work with individuals and communities in prevention efforts. Healthcare professionals' recognition and treatment of interpersonal violence ultimately strengthens the well being of individuals, families and communities.

The specialty of forensic nursing is evolving and encompasses many diverse roles. The role of the Interpersonal Violence Specialist can be considered an essential part of any health care team providing comprehensive, holistic care to patients. The Forensic Clinical Nurse Specialist is one example of an Interpersonal Violence Specialist, defined as a master's prepared nurse (MSN) with a clinical focus in forensic science. However, Interpersonal Violence Specialists can be found in a variety of clinical capacities and arenas, including Emergency Departments, Trauma Centers and Primary Care clinics.

The role of the Interpersonal Violence Specialist may include: screening for, and assessment of intimate partner violence, development and implementation of individual care plans; evaluations of children, vulnerable populations and the elderly; development of evidenced based programs to serve children effected by abuse and trauma; development of community programs to address violence against women and children; and provision of education, outreach and information for health care providers, community members, and policy makers. This is truly an area of forensic nursing which has limitless possibilities, and is a natural complement to other areas of forensic nursing, including Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners (SANEs) and Forensic Psychiatric nurses.

*Submitted By: Mary Pat DeWald RN, MSN, APN, CCRN, SANE-A [4nsicrn@denver.net](mailto:4nsicrn@denver.net)*