

# Intimate partner violence is not all the same

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Credit: Alena Darmel via Pexels

Reducing instances of intimate partner violence is not a one-size-fits-all solution, however Griffith University researchers have identified four common "scripts" that could help understand the stages of a crime event and lead to development of better preventative measures.

The study looked at 40 [intimate partner violence](#) incidents that had been recorded by the Queensland Police Service, identifying the prominent themes of escalating jealousy, persistently possessive, controlling victim agency, and enduring argument. The [research paper](#), "Different Scripts, Different Casts: A Crime Script Analysis Indicating Intimate Partner Violence Is Not All the Same," is published in the journal *Violence Against Women*.

In a novel approach, the research looked at the actions of offenders as well as victim responses, identifying different ways victims attempted to protect themselves, de-escalate the situation or remove themselves from the situation.

Lead researcher and Ph.D. candidate Christine Carney from the Griffith Criminology Institute first got involved in the study when working in the domestic and family [violence](#) field, supporting frontline police and other individuals coming into contact with people experiencing intimate partner violence.

She said it can often be difficult to identify who the person most in need of protection or assistance is when issues have generally been ongoing for so long and both parties are at a point of crisis.

"By looking through police data, we gained a better understanding of what actually happens and the different roles the perpetrator and victim play, as well as the role of bystanders in terms of how the incident is resolved at the end," Carney said.

"Much of the time we're talking about arguments that have escalated to violence and there could be a range of factors that cause that.

"The data also showed 50% of incidents police attend could potentially have high-risk indicators, so having a better understanding could help

inform [police](#) and other employees of these risk levels and allow for a more considered approach."

Three of the four themes also featured substance misuse with a history of domestic violence or violence in general also seen across the four groups.

Co-author Professor Mark Kebbell from the School of Applied Psychology said one of the clearest ways to prevent violence or improve relationships would be to address and reduce the use of and addiction to alcohol and illicit substances.

"We do need more services for people who have problems with alcohol and other drugs," Professor Kebbell said.

"These individuals clearly have difficulty negotiating in arguments and communicating effectively within their relationships, but when you add alcohol, cannabis or amphetamines into the mix, things are only going to go downhill from there.

"A lot of the time we don't even need to tell these people they've got a problem with alcohol—they're aware of it, they want help and they are actually quite motivated to change themselves, there's just not very much there for them."

Further studies by the team will look further into victimization and offending history to better understand influences, as well as potentially identifying intervention or prevention points.

**More information:** Christine T. Carney et al, Different Scripts, Different Casts: A Crime Script Analysis Indicating Intimate Partner Violence Is Not All the Same, *Violence Against Women* (2023). [DOI: 10.1177/10778012231153361](https://doi.org/10.1177/10778012231153361)

Provided by Griffith University

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