



## Preventing Domestic Violence Through Integrated Community Work



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### Abstract

This study is methodologically based on the qualitative research paradigm, with a descriptive approach. It allowed us to investigate, describe, and evaluate the prevention of domestic violence carried out by the multidisciplinary team in the community of San Justo, in the Guantánamo municipality. The participatory action research method was used to determine the level of preparation of the 12 members of the multidisciplinary team to carry out preventive work through integrated community outreach, from January to July 2025. The empirical methods used were participant observation, in-depth interviews, document review, questionnaires, and triangulation. Shortcomings were revealed in the level of integration of this group in the prevention of domestic violence. The need to enhance their training in socioemotional skills and sociopsychological resources for the most effective development of their work was noted. The viability of psychoeducational interventions was confirmed as a useful alternative for the preventive work carried out by this multidisciplinary team in addressing this social problem.

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## 1 Introduction

Domestic violence is a social problem that requires immediate attention in society. Prioritizing paths aimed at prevention helps mitigate the multiplying effects of the transmission of cultural patterns based on violent power relations between family members. According to Díaz et al. (2020), the type of family in which a child is raised has a great influence on their development.

Walton & Pérez (2019) point out that domestic violence is a public health problem and that it is necessary to address it from a multidisciplinary perspective. Even though much remains to be done in all spheres and levels of society, the transformation of reality, wherever individual rights are violated and methodological tools for modification are available, becomes an ethical responsibility for our committed work through sociocultural management.

Tzoc López (2023) confirms that among the adverse experiences produced by domestic violence are: physical, psychological, and sexual abuse, physical and emotional neglect, domestic violence, divorce or separation, a family member having a mental illness, using illegal substances, or being incarcerated. Therefore, the resulting tensions cause harm to neurodevelopment, leading to cognitive, physical, social, emotional, and behavioral problems, thus complicating the physical and mental health of those who experience this abuse. It is thus warned that it causes neuropsychological and psychosocial deterioration (Silveira & Martins, 2023).

In Cuba, despite the progress and changes in legislation during the revolutionary period, the new penal and constitutional reforms, including a new Family Code, and other measures and programs implemented by the Cuban Revolution, it has not yet been possible to eradicate or mitigate the occurrence of domestic violence. This scourge receives intersectoral attention in every population segment. Integrated community work aims to prevent domestic violence and thereby eliminate its harmful consequences.

Integrated Community Work is the set of planned, organized, and intentional actions in matters of biological, psychological, and social health, with multisectoral participation to respond to specific and general problems of each community (González & Lugo, 2021). However, this group still lacks socio-psychological resources and skills to carry out their work with total success, to which is added the need to further integrate the sectors that jointly carry out this work.

The community of San Justo in the Guantánamo Municipality is not exempt from this problem. Despite social initiatives and efforts aimed at promoting equity and reducing domestic violence, preventive actions with a humane approach persist, as does the insufficient integration of community work team members. This legitimizes the need to propose psychoeducational actions that promote the prevention of domestic violence in the community of San Justo in the Guantánamo Municipality (Poelmans et al., 2011).

## 2 Materials and Methods

This work is part of the qualitative research paradigm, which allowed us to investigate the dynamics of families in the community of San Justo, in the Guantánamo municipality, during the period from January to July 2025, to corroborate the existing deficiencies in the prevention of domestic violence and determine the necessary tools for its treatment from the multidisciplinary team.

The method used was action-participatory research, which allowed for a deeper understanding of the work of the prevention and social care groups in the San Justo community of the Guantánamo municipality, focused on domestic violence.

All 12 members of the multidisciplinary team corresponding to this community were intentionally selected, given that they are responsible for preventing manifestations of violence and its consequences in the community. The defined methods were used, and the analysis indicators shown in Table 1 were established.

Table 1  
Analysis Methods and Indicators

Theorists	Empirical	Indicators
Analysis–synthesis	Scientific observation, questionnaire	Raising awareness among community leaders and residents about preventive activities.
Induction–deduction	Interview	Planning integrated educational actions in schools, public spaces, and local media
Historical–logical	Methodological triangulation (of techniques, information, time)	Mastery of socio-psychological resources to prevent domestic violence. Ways to improve preventive work.

### 3 Results and Discussions

The deepening of the topic of prevention of domestic violence from the work of the multidisciplinary team requires addressing essential elements in this professional practice, such as: the conceptualization of domestic violence, its consequences, and Integrated Community Work in the prevention of domestic violence. Domestic violence is recognized as an act of aggression toward a family member, whether physical or psychological. Regarding the approaches of this project, the primary victims of this situation are children, who may be directly involved (as victims) or indirectly (as bystanders).

Bernal Tapia (2021) states that: "It is a problem that manifests itself in various forms, from psychological aggression to physical and sexual abuse, which leads to a variety of effects following irreparable damage to integrity, privacy, and violations." The authors adopt this definition as a warning about the importance of understanding that children are in the process of development, and that each situation they experience generates new learning that can be beneficial or traumatic for the development of their personality.

#### *Consequences of domestic violence*

According to the WHO's 2024 World Report on Violence and Health, the consequences of domestic violence negatively impact the victim's mental health, causing psychological and behavioral imbalances. The victims may develop various disorders related to eating, sleeping, trauma, and somatization; worry about future situations; feelings of shame, guilt, and inferiority; suicidal thoughts; and self-destructive behavior (Gagne et al., 2018).

Other consequences of domestic violence are the incorporation of machismo, low self-esteem of women generating dependence on men and/or authority figures; stress, feelings of inferiority and guilt causing submission, subordination, and fear causing disorders such as anxiety, depression, sleep, eating (anorexia or bulimia) and alcoholism, violence in the home generates disorientation in the victim, lack of communication with their loved ones or with people in their closest environment generating isolation, also inability to decide since they lack authority (Gamarrá Saldivar, 2019).

In a study conducted by Corro (2020) in Ventanilla, a correlation was established between depressive symptoms and the presence of domestic violence in students aged 10 to 12. A high degree of correlation was found between girls who were victims of psychological violence and the presence of depressive symptoms. In boys, the consequences have a greater impact on the cognitive level, as they experience difficulties with attention and concentration, causing poor academic performance.

### *Legal framework against domestic violence in Cuba*

Cuba has taken significant steps at the regulatory level to address this structural problem. The Constitution of the Republic (2019) establishes an important framework for protection when, in Article 85, it emphasizes the adoption of measures to prevent and punish all forms of gender-based violence in any setting, including the home, the community, and the institutional environment: “Family violence, in any of its forms, is considered destructive of the individuals involved, of families, and of society, and is punishable by law.”

In turn, the Family Code, approved by popular referendum in September 2022, expressly defines and condemns gender-based violence, domestic violence, and violence against children and adolescents, people with disabilities, and older adults.

In this sense, the criteria used by Briñas (2020) are interesting when he states that prevention is: “A systematic, systemic, multifactorial and contextualized process, aimed at the comprehensive development of the personality of children, adolescents and young people, so that they can face different environmental situations, both positive and negative, where the different socializing agents must be involved, in a specific socio-historical context.. (p. 64)

According to various authors, prevention can be classified into levels, which allows for differentiating the recipients of preventive actions based on the presence or absence of the effects, as well as their severity, once incorporated: Ortiz-Díaz, (2020); Briñas (2020); Regueira (2016); Mayo (2017); Mayo et al. (2018). In line with the above, these criteria serve as a starting point, and some clarifications are made based on the subjects under study. These levels are described below.

Primary prevention is aimed at taking measures before deficiencies arise, through actions that can inform, educate, teach, or suggest. These are measures and rules to avoid negative situations or dysfunctions in the individual's development.

Secondary prevention is characterized by the adoption of measures aimed at diagnosing and treating existing deficiencies early to prevent their development, with the clarification that these deficiencies are not considered disorders due to their severity and permanence. Tertiary prevention aims to develop a set of measures aimed at preventing the establishment and development of dysfunction, such as behavioral disorders in their various categories.

This research is primarily aimed at prevention at the secondary level. Its objective is to identify and address a problem as quickly as possible, or partially remedy it. To this end, it is deemed necessary to train the multidisciplinary team through psychoeducational interventions that enable their integration and preparation for addressing domestic violence.

The essence of the proposal derives from the successful application of psychoeducation in the educational process of society. In this regard, Fernández et al. (2019), state that: “Psychoeducation suggests the idea of two areas (health, education). Every practice in the field of education is a socio-health practice. Education involves providing information, explaining a certain situation in a coherent, precise, and simple way, presenting the elements necessary for understanding a certain topic, and stimulating appropriate behaviors” (2019, p.25).

### *Analysis and integration of results*

The analysis of the different techniques applied revealed that, in terms of raising awareness among community leaders and neighbors about preventive activities, 8 of the 12 members of the multidisciplinary team reported having conducted awareness-raising activities with local leaders. However, only 4 managed to generate sustained participation, so the approach used lacks systematization.

Regarding the planning of integrated educational activities in schools, public spaces, and local media, 10 subjects were identified as having participated in educational planning processes, but only 6 systematically included actions in local media and public spaces. There is a lack of methodological approaches, primarily due to the limited specialization in the topic of domestic violence (Maciosek et al., 2006).

Regarding the mastery of sociopsychological resources to prevent domestic violence, seven team members demonstrated adequate use of psychosocial techniques such as active listening and mediation. The remaining five require strengthening, primarily in strategies to address cases of family resistance.

Regarding the paths to improvement in preventive work, only 5 of the 12 subjects have participated in updated training programs in the last 6 months. There is a clear need to create a continuing education system adapted to the local context.

Considering the above, the following proposal is presented for psychoeducational actions to be developed with the multidisciplinary team in the community, to promote awareness and prepare them for preventive work focused on domestic violence.

From a theoretical and methodological perspective, psychoeducation relies on the tools provided by behaviorism and humanism, which are valid for effectively addressing problems of adaptation, adjustment, and personal development. Its application must be tailored to the patient's sociocultural level, personality, pathology, and prior information. Table 2 below lists the activities. Psychoeducational conception.

Table 2  
Lists the Activities Psychoeducational conception

No.	Actions	Aim	Responsible	Participants	Date	Resources
1	Conducting an advisory meeting with the Integrated Community Working Group.	Report on the results of the diagnosis and the proposed actions for the prevention of domestic violence.	Psychologist	Integrated community working group	1 week of September 2025	Computer, paper and pencils.
2	Implementation of three workshops on community intervention skills for the prevention of domestic violence in the community (mediation, active listening, emotional management).	Develop as a team alternative for the treatment of domestic violence through community self-management	Psychologist	Integrated community working group	2nd week of September 2024	Computer, paper and pencils.
3	Systematic training of the work team according to diagnosed needs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Socio-emotional skills workshop (assertive communication, emotional self-regulation, empathy)</li> <li>● Ethics and professionalism workshop (values and code of ethics)</li> <li>● Conference on the specific functions of the group members in the TCI function. (Agreement 9151)</li> </ul>	Strengthen the preparation of the integrated group in prevention work.	Psychologist	Integrated community working group	November 2025	Computer, paper and pencils
4	Training of community leaders	Train community leaders (CDR, FMC, social workers) in the early detection of domestic violence	Psychologist and Psychologist Family	Integrated community working group	December 2025	Computer, paper and pencils

No.	Actions	Aim	Responsible	Participants	Date	Resources
		and courses of action.	Guidance Center.			
5	Training course on Social Communication and community awareness.	Prepare group members to conduct social welfare campaigns and disseminate educational messages to prevent domestic violence in the community.	Psychologist and Communication Specialist, Art Instructor	Integrated community working group	Enero2026	Computer, paper and pencils
6	Strengthening the community network	Identify allies in the community	Psychologist and Family Guidance Center	Integrated community working group	February 2026	Computer, paper and pencils

The following premises are raised:

- Awareness raising should be informative and reflective. Four meetings are being organized—two in person and two online—where experts in psychosocial development will share relevant information on the importance of this aspect in childhood. Topics will include the formation of emotional bonds, the impact of the environment on child development, and strategies to promote a caring and safe environment.
- The training will include informational materials consisting of brochures and visual infographics that clearly and easily summarize key concepts related to psychosocial development in childhood.
- The workshops are participatory, experiential, and interactive, allowing members of the integrated working group, along with community leaders and family members, to share their experiences, concerns, and questions about their children's psychosocial development and encourage reflection on the impact of domestic violence on them.

#### 4 Conclusion

It was confirmed that the lack of psychoeducational tools among members of the community-based working group hinders the effectiveness of their prevention efforts against domestic violence. This is further reflected in the lack of consensus among them regarding how to implement integrated actions and strengthen family awareness and engagement to eradicate these forms of domestic violence. The weakness of the family-community bond in addressing situations particularly related to this phenomenon was evident. The viability of psychoeducational actions for more integrated and effective preventive work was also confirmed, in pursuit of the main objective: to reduce and eradicate acts of domestic violence through integrated community work.

##### *Conflict of interest statement*

The authors declared that they have no competing interests.

##### *Statement of authorship*

The authors have a responsibility for the conception and design of the study. The authors have approved the final article.

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