



## WHAT IS CHILD-TO-PARENT VIOLENCE AND ABUSE?

Recognizing the complexity of the problem and its implications for policy and practice

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# OVERVIEW

1. What is CPVA?
2. Impact of CPVA
3. (Barriers to) Seeking help
4. Responding to CPVA
5. Conclusions

# 1. WHAT IS CHILD-TO-PARENT VIOLENCE AND ABUSE

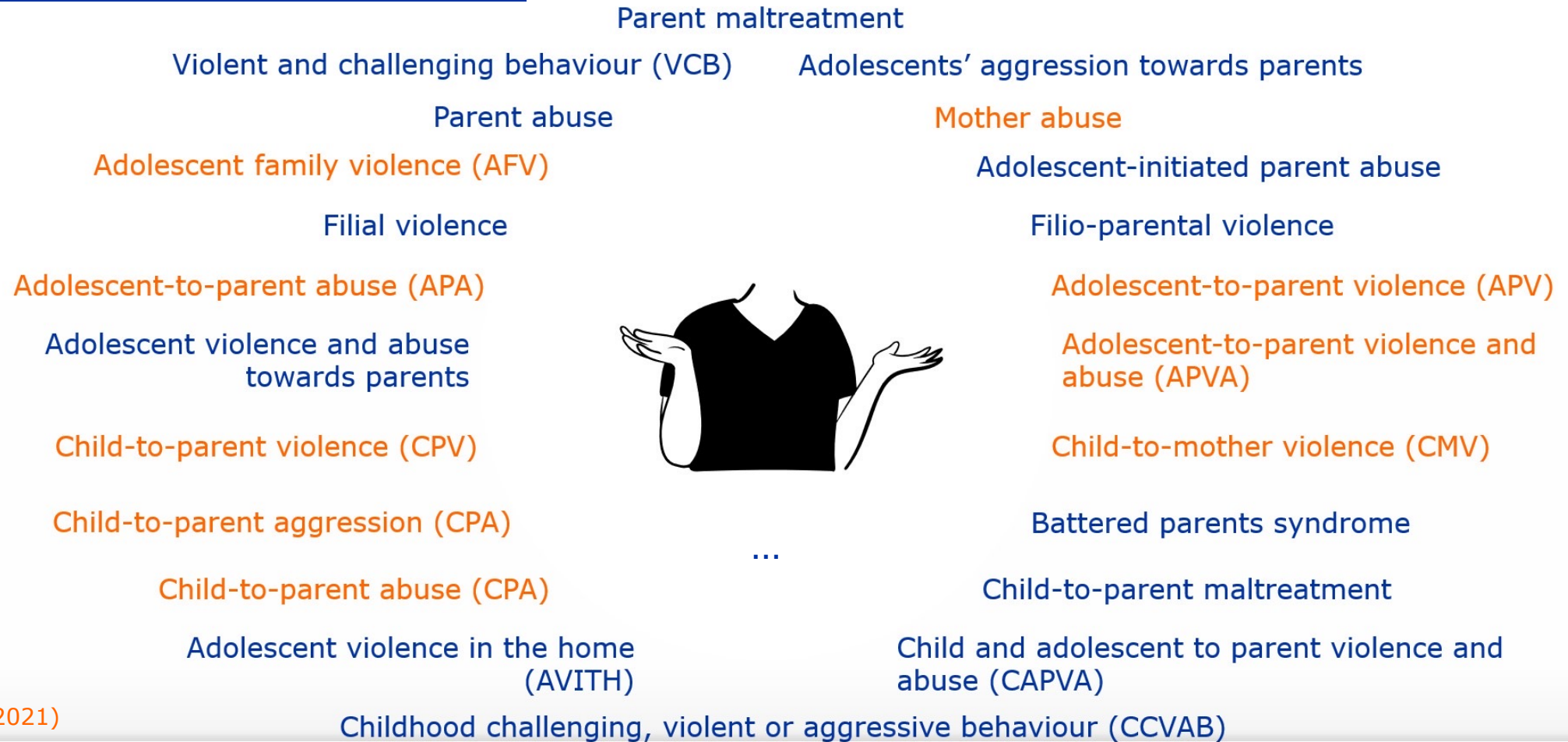
## DEFINITION AND TERMINOLOGY

Child-to-parent violence and abuse can be defined as (personal adaptation of Holt, 2015):

- A pattern of harmful & controlling behaviour
- Instigated by a minor or adult child
- Abusive behaviour: verbal, emotional/psychological, financial, sexual, physical
- To some extent intentional & control achieved through fear (Baker & Bonnicksen, 2021)
- Parents unhealthily adapt own behaviour to accommodate child
- Parents are not dependent on the care of their child (vs. elder abuse)
- ≠ 'typical' adolescent behaviour (Paterson et al., 2002)

# 1. WHAT IS CHILD-TO-PARENT VIOLENCE AND ABUSE

## DEFINITION AND TERMINOLOGY



(Baker & Bonnick, 2021)

# 1. WHAT IS CHILD-TO-PARENT VIOLENCE AND ABUSE

## IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY AND PRACTICE

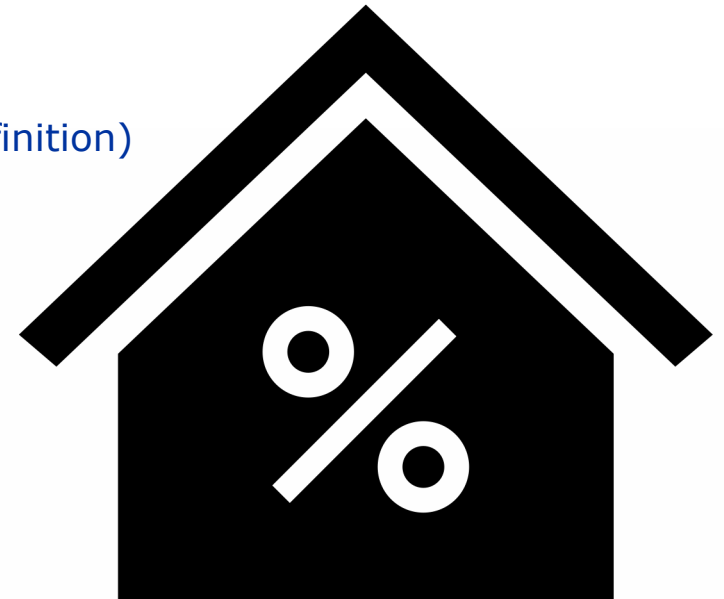
- Talking about the same thing?
- Hard for families to understand their situation & ask for help
- Might hinder campaigning and policy development
- Difficulties for research & gathering data
- Inconsistent and sometimes inadequate responses from services

# 1. WHAT IS CHILD-TO-PARENT VIOLENCE AND ABUSE

## HOW COMMON IS IT?

### 1. Prevalence

1. Frequency estimates (community samples)
  1. Serious physical violence 3-5%
  2. Verbal, psychological & emotional abuse 33-93% (depending on definition)
2. Underreporting
  1. Don't want to criminalize their child
  2. Feelings of shame, denial, social isolation & self-blame
  3. Fear of estrangement from their child or other children
  4. Fear of reaction/retaliation from the child
  5. Fear that police/justice system wouldn't treat them fairly



# 1. WHAT IS CHILD-TO-PARENT VIOLENCE AND ABUSE

## WHO'S INVOLVED?

### 1. Prevalence

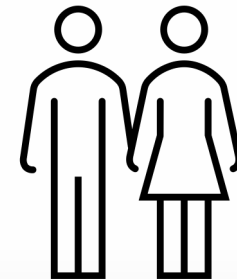
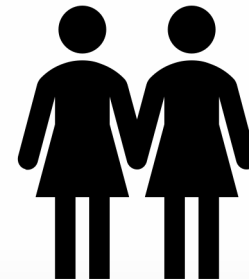
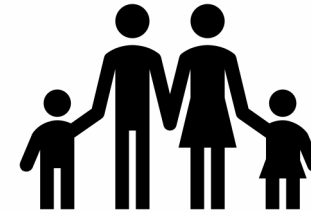
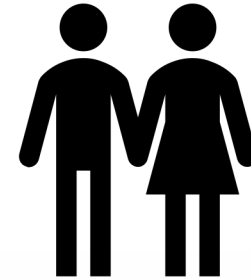
### 2. Who's involved?

#### 1. Gendered phenomenon?

1. Mothers more likely to experience CPVA than fathers
2. Children = mixed
  1. Criminal justice & clinical data: sons – physical aggression
  2. Daughters use more emotional & verbal aggression

#### 2. Age

1. Beginning early to mid-adolescence
2. Peaking between 14-16
3. Declining after 18 years old



## 2. IMPACT OF CHILD-TO-PARENT VIOLENCE

### ON CHILDREN, PARENTS AND SIBLINGS



**Physical**



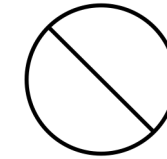
**Emotional  
& Mental  
health**



**Education**



**Legal  
implications**



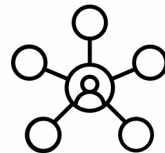
**Restrictions of space,  
movement & personal  
agency**



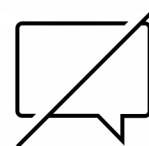
**Property  
damage**



**Financial**



**Relationship  
breakdowns**



**Shame &  
stigma**



**peacekeeping**



## 3. SEEKING HELP

### BARRIERS

1. Lack of awareness
2. Feelings of shame, isolation and fear of stigma
3. Limited resources
4. Fear of criminalisation and legal consequences
5. Lack of training and understanding

## 3. SEEKING HELP

### NEEDS

- A need for great sensitivity & not minimizing parents/children's experiences
- There is no such thing as The victim/perpetrator
- Open & encouraging environment = safe space with no judgement
- Understanding from wider support system facilitates seeking help
- Need for targeted and appropriate responses & more culturally-informed solutions
- Do we need a legal definition?

## 4. RESPONDING TO CHILD-TO-PARENT VIOLENCE AND ABUSE

### CHALLENGES FROM A DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PERSPECTIVE

- Need for specialised & tailored interventions from a holistic approach
  - Focus on both children and parents
- Domestic violence framework
  - Similarities IPV & CPVA
    - ▶ Impact of the abuse
    - ▶ Continuum
    - ▶ Gendered
  - Key differences IPV & CPVA
    - ▶ Distinct nature parent-child relationship – Legal & moral responsibility
    - ▶ Maintaining relationship parent-child
    - ▶ Blurred lines between 'victim' and 'perpetrator'
    - ▶ Different pathways to the violence

## 5. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

### WHAT IS CHILD-TO-PARENT VIOLENCE AND ABUSE

- CPVA is a harmful and social problem with serious implications for those involved
- It involves a range of physical and non-physical forms of abuse and violence → a pattern of behaviour that is harmful and exerts control over parents.
- Research is rather scarce → need more longitudinal and contextual research
- Impact on family members on different aspects of their lives
- Barriers to seeking help should be addressed
- Need for specialized and tailored responses – not a 'one-size-fits-all' solution
- CPVA is a complex phenomenon → multi-perspective & multi-layered approach

# THANK YOU

Please email any questions over to me at:  
[Yana.Audrey.Demeyere@vub.be](mailto:Yana.Audrey.Demeyere@vub.be)



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