

WAYS VIOLENCE IS CARRIED OUT

Below are some of the ways in which we VAs have experienced, and may unknowingly support, violence. These simple definitions and short inventories don't begin to address the enormity of these topics. A thorough exploration of them is not the aim of this pamphlet. They are offered as prompts to further reflect on how violence may permeate our lives.

INTIMIDATION

Making others afraid by using looks, actions, gestures • smashing things • destroying property • abusing pets • displaying weapons • threats • intimidating language • bullying • taunting • policies and procedures that make participation difficult

EMOTIONAL ABUSE

Involves attempting to manipulate someone's feelings with the intention of inducing emotional trauma • demeaning • putting others down • shaming • name calling • lying • manipulating • playing mind games/gaslighting • denial • humiliating others • guilt tripping • defensiveness • stonewalling • neglect • smothering • punishing • threats • inadvertently passing on harm from previous generations

PSYCHOLOGICAL ABUSE

Involves the use of verbal and social tactics in order to control someone's way of thinking, mental state or behavioral characteristics • bringing another's mental health into question • manipulating others to question their own sanity • purposeful ignorance • neglect of another • malicious manipulation • isolation • minimizing, denying and blaming • privilege & entitlement • spiritual or religious violence • gaslighting • shaming • rescuing • sexism • racism • casteism • intimidation (to act or speak in a way that induces fear)

PHYSICAL ABUSE

Any intentional act causing injury or trauma to another person or animal by way of bodily contact. Can have emotional and psychological effects • hitting • slapping • biting • pinching • kicking • punching • poking • restraining • carceral policies and systems

ISOLATION

Controlling who another interacts with • where they go • limiting access to information or support • limiting another's outside involvement • using jealousy, fear, guilt, shame, dogma, etc. to justify actions • denying need for connection with others • segregation

MINIMIZING, DENYING, AND BLAMING

Making light of another's experience • trivialize abuse and not taking concerns about it seriously • shifting responsibility for abusive behavior • saying another caused it (scapegoating) • gaslighting • scoffing • accusing others of the things we did rather than admitting them • lying • justifying hurtful or discriminatory actions

USING CHILDREN

Using guilt about the children to manipulate another • using the children to relay messages • using visitation to harass or control another • threatening to take the children away • withholding access to children • slandering another in front of or to children • manipulating children to pick a side or carry out an agenda • burdening children with information that is not age appropriate •

modeling hatred to children • sexual abuse and trafficking

PRIVILEGE & ENTITLEMENT

An inherent belief that some are better than others • treating another like a servant, lesser being, slave, etc. • assuming some have higher status or value • making all the big decisions • acting like the “master of the castle” • creating rules that only benefit some • being the one to define roles • ignorance of systemic advantages • minimizing or denying power dynamics • taking advantage of those more vulnerable • creating, perpetuating or imposing double standards • benefiting from and/or perpetuating an inequitable power structure by action or inaction • Related: speciesism, animal abuse, environmental abuse

ECONOMIC OR FINANCIAL ABUSE

Controlling someone's access to money, work or education • creating dependency for financial security • theft • lying about money • dishonesty for financial gain • creating and enforcing rules (spoken or not), policies, or laws that discriminate • withholding someone's money • restricting information about or access to family or shared income/resources • using money, power or financial status to manipulate, control or cause harm

COERCION AND THREATS

Using the potential of pain, injury or damage to assert dominance or control • using fear to influence or manipulate someone's behavior, as with whistleblowers • using force or ultimatums to compel a person to act against their will • express intent to withhold or remove access to emotional, psychological or physical needs being met • threat of incarceration

SPIRITUAL OR RELIGIOUS VIOLENCE

Using an image of God as enforcer • using religious edicts to enforce or excuse judgemental or abusive behavior • invoking ideology to assert dominance and control • holding one's religious beliefs as superior, a means of demeaning others • using religion or dogma as entitlement to behave violently or to enrich oneself at the expense of others • justifying Drama Triangle roles as religious or spiritual • using shame to indoctrinate others to adopt beliefs • using fear or threat of spiritual consequences to control people • supporting discriminatory beliefs and behavior through religion • any physical, mental or psychological abuse condoned by religion or a “spiritual” group

GASLIGHTING

Playing mind games to achieve your ends • shifting blame to another person in order to avoid accountability • casting doubt on someone's intuition or perception in order to gain power • acting out violence and then using phrases like “You're overreacting, You're being crazy, That's not how it happened, I was just joking, I'm only doing this because I love you...” • lying in order to manipulate • trivializing another's concerns • accusing others of the violence you are committing • coercive control • a form of minimizing, denying and blaming at both personal and societal levels (“We had the Civil Rights movement - racism is over”)

SHAMING

Shaming may be expressed through words, facial expressions, tone, or other behaviors and conveyed face-to-face, through others, or through public exposure. shaming might address any aspect of an individual, such as weight, height, language, religion, ethnicity, or any emotional, intellectual, or physical trait • labeling with negative qualities • subjecting someone or a group to disgrace, humiliation, or disrepute especially by public exposure or criticism • expressing

disdain, like rolling eyes • an acquired belief that one's identity is flawed, thereby holding negative judgments against one's self • a belief that someone is defective as a human being • holding others responsible for our experience • negative comparisons: "You'll never be as good as..." • trying to make someone else feel bad or change by scolding them • dehumanizing another person or group • when a triggered person can't own their feelings, people around them are subjected to carrying the unowned shame • unconscious behavior can result in dumping shame onto others

RESCUING

Giving unsolicited advice • "educating" someone • arguing with someone in my head • attempting to fix other people's problems • giving out of manipulation rather than generosity • trying to bear someone's pain for them • pretending to be someone I'm not to gain love/approval • passively aggressively expecting someone to reciprocate my generosity • denying my needs to "help" another • gaining false power by "caring for" others • denying my needs to avoid the pain/conflict • enabling addictive and abusive behavior • pretending to be altruistic when I'm really motivated by fear • posing as the knight in shining armor • tend to do more than their share most of the time • colonialism - "rescuing" other cultures

VICTIM THINKING

Placing personal power outside of self, "That person, group, place, thing or situation is responsible for my experience" • thinking the world is against you • nothing is my fault or in my power to change • self pity • "It's not fair", "I can't handle it", "I need to be saved" • using always and never • whining and complaining • taking things personally • thoughts of fear and anger stemming from old unresolved pain • emotional misery • judgemental thinking beyond discernment • seeking to be "right" over being at peace • critically comparing ourselves with others • using guilt and shame to manipulate others into rescuing • holding on to negative thoughts and emotions • unable to empathize with others • learned helplessness • catastrophizing • thoughts of self harm or suicide • ruminating over past wrongs or hurts • the only way to get attention and love is if others feel sorry for us • lack of self direction • Critical judgemental statements about self or others: "Why should I even try, I'll never be as good as them." "They are stupid." "I'm bad."

SEXISM

Prejudice, discrimination or stereotyping based on one's sex or who you choose to love or have sex with • used as a tool to manipulate or oppress others (can include economic exploitation, social domination and exclusion) • thinking one sex is superior to another • allowing one sex to make decisions for another • "boys will be boys" • male privilege • comments, actions and behavior colored by assumptions based on gender • verbal and/or nonverbal behaviors that convey insulting, offensive, or condescending thinking based on sex or gender • negative views toward individuals who violate traditional gender roles • derogatory jokes based on sex or gender roles • sexual harassment • Related: gender identity bias, lookism, sizeism

RACISM

Prejudice, discrimination, abuse or antagonism by an individual, community, or institution against a person or people in a particular racial or ethnic group, typically one that is a minority or marginalized • a belief that race is a fundamental determinant of human traits and capacities •

the process by which systems and policies, actions and attitudes create inequitable opportunities and outcomes for people based on race • includes all the laws, policies, ideologies and barriers that prevent people from experiencing justice, dignity, and equity because of their racial identity • belittling people based on their physical appearance • “jokes” or negative comments about a particular ethnic group • offensive comments online • plays out in our thinking and physical actions • fear, denigration, slander, or other forms of abuse toward people of a different cultural background • Related: colorism

CASTEISM OR CLASSISM

Orienting thought and behavior based on who we think or believe is of one class or another • a division of society based on differences of wealth, inherited rank or privilege, profession, occupation, religion, or race • a system of rigid social stratification characterized by hereditary status, endogamy, and social barriers sanctioned by custom, law, or religion • rank based on socioeconomic or cultural conditions (can include citizens/non-citizens, incarcerated/non-incarcerated, employed/unemployed, housed/unhoused, income inequality, dominant-language-fluent/limited fluency) • bullying or shaming based on appearance of being in a caste or class • discrimination or justifying violence based on any of these differences

VIOLENT MEDIA

Visual, auditory or written expressions of violence and the many ways it is carried out • any media that depicts actual or imminent physical, psychological or existential threat to person(s), animals, property, natural world, or society

GENDER IDENTITY BIAS

Prejudice, discrimination or stereotyping based on one’s gender identity • social barriers based on gender sanctioned by custom, law, or religion • insulting, offensive, or condescending thinking based on gender identity • negative views toward individuals who don’t conform to the male/female binary • derogatory jokes based on gender identity • harassment, bullying, physical assault • Related: homophobia, transphobia

GROUP VIOLENCE

Violence carried out by two or more people • varies from a group of children picking on another child to racist or terrorist organizations designed to carry out violence • groups who carry out violence could include but are not limited to criminal organizations, gangs, white collar crime syndicates, terrorist organizations, cartels, etc... • can also occur informally, such as being ostracized, bullied or gaslighted • can be implicitly built into societal systems, such as job discrimination, voter suppression or religious groups discriminating against others • violence can be carried out in the school group, church group, local civic group, family systems, recovery groups and more

AGEISM/ABLEISM

Prejudice, discrimination, abuse or antagonism by an individual, community, or institution against a person or people who are differently abled, or older or younger than middle-age, infringing upon the rights of elders and children • midlife adult privilege • discrimination based on

able-bodied people • discrimination based on societal preference for youth, physical and mental agility, speed • disregarding these groups to the point of ignoring or not noticing them • excluding individuals because it's too inconvenient to accommodate them • failing to make information available in an accessible format, such as braille or sign language • telling someone that they "don't look disabled" as a compliment • choosing a non-disabled job candidate over a disabled one, thinking disability will make someone less productive • beliefs or practices that devalue and discriminate based on abilities: physical, mental and/or emotional • assumptions that others need to be 'fixed' or adapt to their environments, instead of the environments supporting them • "I can do it, why can't you?"

WAR

A state of hostility, conflict, or antagonism, or a struggle or competition between groups, states or nations for particular ends • may be characterized by extreme violence, destruction, and mortality • may involve regular or irregular military forces

SYSTEMIC VIOLENCE

System-wide addiction to power and control, to meet the needs of a few individuals or groups, at the cost of the many • loosely or formally organized, deliberately or unknowingly, the regular use of violent thinking, behavior and policies make up larger systems of abuse • examples include colonialism, imperialism, policy violence, binary thinking ("us versus them") affirmed or enforced by a system • Related: all topics mentioned above