

Editor's Comments

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Several years ago, I worked on a pilot project with the Family Violence Prevention Fund and the University of Mississippi to develop a computer-assisted assessment tool to screen for lifetime exposure to violence at a rural community health center. The project was challenging and we struggled with considerable resistance from some of the staff as well as technological difficulties, but the experience convinced us of the tremendous potential for using computers to facilitate screening and intervention for exposure to violence and related health outcomes.

Of course, there are potential adverse outcomes with most scientific advances. A personal situation opened my eyes to how technology can be abused to monitor and endanger victims. I was trying to stay in touch with a friend who was in an abusive relationship. My first hint of what laid ahead was how he called her twenty or more times a day on her cell phone just to "check-in." Her technologically-savvy perpetrator was soon tracking any calls she made on her cell phone. He knew the nature of my work so he certainly did not want her calling me. I decided that a prepaid calling card was the solution. What I did not know was that her partner was able to find out what numbers she had called with the prepaid calling card. I was horrified but when I spoke with a domestic violence advocate, she was well aware of this risk. And so, my ongoing admiration and appreciation for the skills and expertise of advocates who must keep ahead of what abusers are doing went up another notch.

This issue of *Family Violence Prevention and Health Practice* focuses on technology and intimate partner violence. One of our feature articles describes the cutting-edge work of an organization that is dedicated to enhancing victim safety by increasing awareness and advocating for policies on technology and victim safety. In this issue, leading experts describe their research and perspectives on the role of technology in screening for intimate partner violence. We look forward to your comments and feedback.