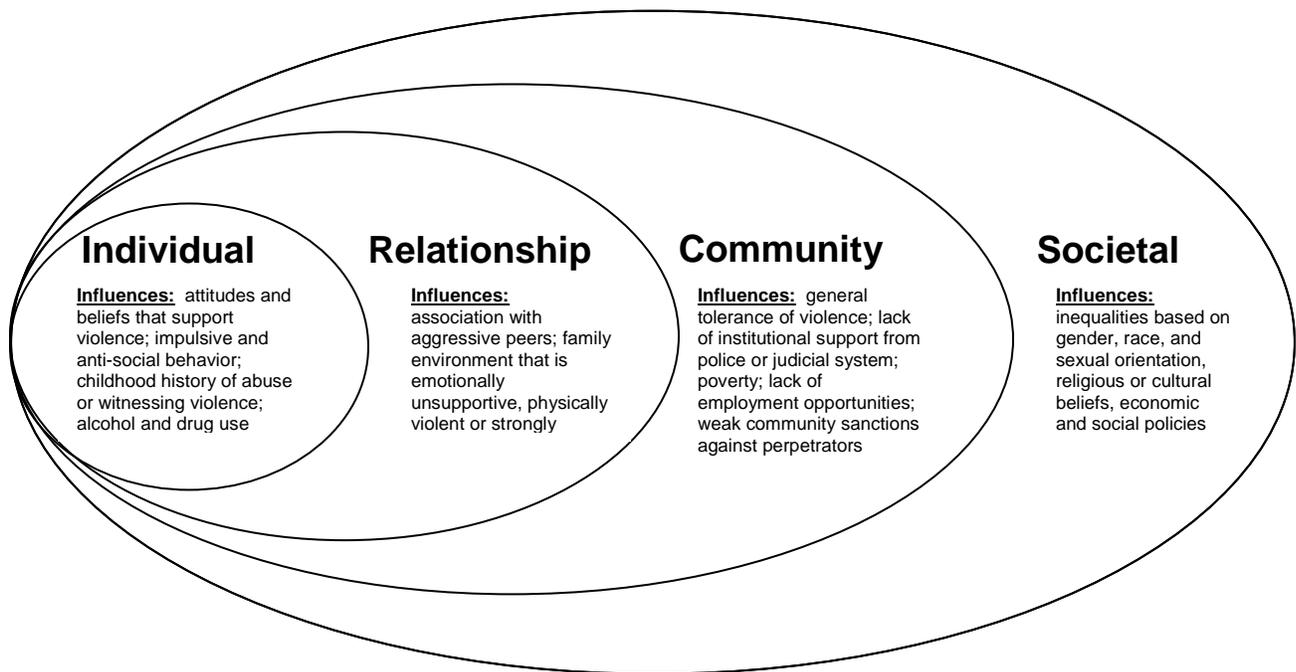


# A Public Health Approach to Preventing Child Abuse and Neglect

## The Ecological Model

*The Ecological Model and Risk/Protective Factors (adapted from World Report on Violence and Health (Jewkes, Sen, Garcia-Moreno, 2002))*

## Ecological Model



**Level of Social Ecological Model Addressed** - The Social Ecological Model is a comprehensive public health approach that not only addresses an individual's risk factors, but also the norms, beliefs, and social and economic systems that create the conditions for child maltreatment to occur.

- *Individual level influences* are biological and personal history factors that increase the likelihood of an individual becoming a victim or perpetrator of violence. For example, factors such as alcohol and/or drug use; attitudes and beliefs supportive of child maltreatment; impulsive and other anti-social tendencies. Interventions for individual-level influences are often designed to affect an individual's social and cognitive skills and behavior, and include approaches such as counseling, therapy, and educational training sessions (Powell et al., 1999).

- *Interpersonal relationship level influences* are factors that increase risk as a result of relations with peers, intimate partners, and family members. A person's closest social circle – peers, partners and family members – have the potential to shape an individual's behavior and range of experience (Dahlberg et al., 2002). Interventions for interpersonal relationship level influences could include family therapy, bystander intervention skill development, and parenting training (Powell et al., 1999).
- *Community level influences* are factors that increase risk based on community and social environments in which an individual has experiences and relationships such as schools, workplaces, and neighborhoods. For example, lack of enforcement of child maltreatment laws in a community can send a message that child maltreatment is tolerated, and there may be little or no consequences for those who perpetrate violence against children.

Interventions for community level influences are typically designed to impact the climate, systems and policies in a given setting.

- *Societal level influences* are larger, macro-level factors that influence child maltreatment such as religious or cultural belief systems, societal norms, and economic or social policies that create or sustain gaps and tensions between groups of people.

Interventions for societal level influences typically involve collaborations of multiple partners to change laws and policies related to child maltreatment. Another intervention would be to determine societal norms that accept violence and identify strategies for changing those norms (Powell et al, 1999).