

Trauma Intervention Strategies for Survivors of Femicide: Preliminary Findings from an Interdisciplinary Study

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Abstract

This poster presents preliminary findings from an ongoing interdisciplinary research project (2023–2026, funded by Spanish Government) focused on trauma recovery processes among survivors of femicide, including bereaved children, relatives of women killed due to gender-based violence, and mothers whose children have been murdered in this context. Drawing on feminist, intersectional and child-centred perspectives, the study conceptualises femicide as part of a continuum of gender-based violence that generates profound and long-term trauma, requiring sustained and multi-layered intervention strategies.

According to official data, femicide in Spain has resulted in over a thousand women killed since 2003, leaving hundreds of children orphaned and highlighting the urgent need for trauma-informed responses. Beyond these figures, the research examines how institutional responses, social inequalities and care systems shape victims' recovery processes and access to rights.

The study adopts a qualitative methodology combining case analysis and fieldwork. It is based on 24 cases, including more than 40 in-depth interviews with adult survivors, mothers, relatives, community members and professionals, as well as three expert focus groups. Ethical standards, including informed consent and confidentiality, have been strictly followed.

Preliminary findings reveal that, while protection systems have improved, significant gaps remain in addressing trauma recovery. Victims report unmet needs such as sustained psychological support, child-sensitive educational responses, economic stability and protection from re-victimisation in institutional settings. Recovery processes are often hindered by fragmented interventions, bureaucratic barriers and insufficient coordination between social, health, legal and educational services.

From a professional perspective, effective trauma recovery requires strengthening coordinated, interdisciplinary and long-term intervention models. Key strategies identified include early detection of risk and trauma indicators, the implementation of trauma-informed and victim-centred approaches, and the integration of gender and childhood perspectives across all services. Community-based interventions and preventive actions are also highlighted as essential to support resilience and reduce isolation.

Importantly, the study emphasises the need to move beyond a purely assistential model towards approaches that foster empowerment and identity reconstruction, enabling survivors to redefine themselves beyond their status as victims.

In conclusion, developing effective intervention strategies for trauma recovery in cases of femicide requires comprehensive, sustained and collaborative responses involving institutions, professionals and communities. Such approaches are essential to promote resilience, ensure rights and advance social justice in the context of gender-based violence.

Keywords

Femicide, Trauma recovery, Intervention strategies, Resilience, Gender-based violence, Children, Social work.