Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) in Madrid, Spain
Global Special Studies
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Location
Madrid is the capital of Spain. This European city is home to almost 3.2 million people. It is the third largest city in the European Union. The is made up of medieval, Renaissance and modern architecture. Spanish is the main language spoken. Madrid is a cultural hub, where you can find MANY museums, art centers, churches, historical sites, and restaurants.

"If you’re ever able to visit, make sure to get some Paella!!! 😊"

My Special Study
Pre-departure, you really must do your research about whatever topic you’ll be studying while abroad. Mines was IPV. Through doing my research, I learned that death rates by IPV are 6 times higher in the states than in Spain.

The purpose of my trip??

To gain knowledge about 1) how accurate this statistic is and 2) learn how Spain has managed to keep their IPV death rate relatively low, compared to the states.

Through meet-ups, interviews, and observations with several organizations, I sought out to gain the most comprehensive view of IPV in Spain.

Skills Used and Developed
Aside from improving my Spanish, I was about to develop and improve many skills that cross over into the social work profession, including:
- Maintaining Professional identity
- Decision making based on values and ethics
- Engagement of diversity and differences in practice
- Engaging in research-informed practice
- Engagement, assessment, and evaluation.

Agency & Community Partners
Since my project was a Global Special Study, I had to make my own connections and community partnerships. I was able to work with the following groups in Spain:

**International Academy of Madrid (IAM)**
The International Academy of Madrid is a school I was able to observe second graders’ social exchanges during recess for a series of days. The purpose of my observation was to observe gender roles and norms.

**The Madrid City Council**
To learn more about how policy and government approaches IPV in Madrid, I was able to meet with an intern for the Madrid City Council.

**Asociación para la convivencia (ASPCIA)**
ASPCIA was so I spent the bulk of my time in Madrid. ASPCIA is a non-profit organization that aims to eliminate violence of all forms, protect victims, and promote equality in relationships. The purpose of this was to gain perspective from those “on the ground level” and who actually deal with IPV cases on a day-to-day basis.

**Policía Municipal Madrid**
While in Madrid, I was encouraged by the members of ASPCIA to interview police officers, and members of a specialized police taskforce, called Grupo Luna. The purpose of this was to gain information on how police handle IPV cases and gain a ‘first responder’ perspective on IPV in Madrid.

**Women Against Violence Europe (WAVE)**
I came across this agency while I was in Madrid. They were visiting with ASPCIA and I was able to interview a representative from the agency. WAVE is a non-profit, working throughout Europe to combat violence against women and children.

Outcomes
I learned SO much about travelling, global interactions, and IPV that I never in a million years would have learned, had I not gone to Spain. Friends, family, and even Google could not have given me the wealth of unexpected knowledge I gained.

Here are some key outcomes of my trip, in regards to IPV:

**Definition of IPV**
The Spanish government defines IPV as (1) violence only expressed from a man to a woman, and (2) between and man and a woman who have been or currently is in a relationship. However, many advocacy groups and allies define IPV more similarly to the US; violent or aggressive behavior in any form towards a household member , involving abuse, power and control.

**Spanish culture and IPV**
Spain has come a very long way through history, like many other countries. Gender roles and norms are similar to the US, however older generations are more likely to abide by ‘traditional’ gender roles and norms. Similar to the US, our grandparents and great grandparents are more likely to be homophilic, look like a ‘traditional’ family, be abused, and overall be more at risk for IPV.

**Spanish Policies and Innovations**
I was able to learn about innovations that work for Spain, that I think would be interesting to try in the states.

1. A IPV emergency number, similar to the US’s ‘911’. Spain has a ‘911’, equivalent, how additional has ‘112’, which is solely for IPV emergencies.
2. A new pilot program within the Madrid government that focuses specifically on IPV. If it goes well, it will be rolled out in all of Spain and eventually all of Europe. The major missions are to help with policy making and creating less vague policies, while bridging the gap between the definition of IPV in government and IPV community groups.
3. Recently, policies has changed so that children involved in IPV situations are considered, by law, direct victims of IPV. This means they also get free counselling, however it is the choice of the parents.

**Lessons Learned**

1. Setting goals is great, but plan to be flexible as well.
2. When outside of my home country, I am at the mercy of that country.
3. I may be using the same words as someone, but we might have different meaning.
4. Community first: Ask, Listen, Learn
5. I represent more than myself when I travel abroad
6. I am not an expert.

Advice
DO YOUR RESEARCH!!! This can be stressful. Talk to those around you, read blogs, download apps, and use the SSW Office of Global Activities (OGA).

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Classroom Connections

SW 648: Issues in Global Social Work
This course better prepared me for a global social work experience, helping me understand how social problems are globally identified, understood and addressed. I strongly suggest it if you plan to do a global special study, as it can be very overwhelming.

SW 919: Advanced Field Instruction
Field helped me balance professional identity, while being involved in sensitive and confidential issues.

SW 708: Special Issues in Interpersonal Violence
This course helped me to understand IPV, beyond the physical. It heightened my awareness to IPV across racial, ethnic, gender, sexuality, SES, religious domains.