



Victim Services of Waterloo Region

Fact Sheet on Domestic Violence

What is Domestic Violence?

Domestic violence is any act of an abusive nature directed at a member of the family, be it between spouses or other members within a family (e.g. parent and child, siblings etc.). For the purpose of this fact sheet we will discuss domestic violence within intimate relationships –marriage, common law and dating relationships.

Abuse can occur in any relationship, regardless of social, cultural or economic status. Statistically, this abuse is most likely to be directed towards a female by her male partner. However, abuse can also be directed towards a man by his female partner, or can be present in gay and lesbian relationships as well.

Types of Abuse

There are six main categories of abuse: physical, psychological, verbal, emotional and sexual:

Physical

- Pushing
- Hitting
- Holding against the wall
- Restraining
- Slapping
- Shoving
- Preventing from leaving etc...

Psychological

- Name calling
- Humiliating
- Overly compliant behaviour
- Harming pets
- Belittling
- Mind control
- Isolation from friends and family
- Breaking things

Verbal Abuse

- Swearing
- Opinionated
- Put downs etc.
- Belligerent
- Criticisms

Emotional Abuse

- Blaming
- Put downs

- Criticisms
- Contradicting behaviour
- Correcting etc.

Sexual

- Physical
- Masturbation
- Voyeurism
- Fondling
- Intercourse
- Exhibitionism

Financial

- Giving an allowance
- Prevents from getting a job
- Not allowing access to finances
- Must ask to get money
- Taking money from the person
- Controls finances

There are also other methods of abuse:

Using the Children

- Having them convey messages
- Threatening to take them away
- Using them to induce guilt
- Using visitation to harass the partner

Immigration Threats

- Fear of losing immigration status
- Exploiting lack of knowledge about Canadian laws
- Exploiting language difficulties
- Fear of deportation

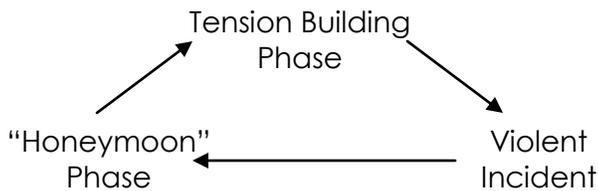
Why Victims Stay

- Financially dependent upon partner.
- Immobilized by fear. Feels partner has a problem and that they can cure them through love and understanding.
- Feels loyalty to marriage vows.
- Emotional ties are difficult to break.
- Don't want to separate the children from the other parent.
- Religious beliefs.
- Family and societal pressure.

Cont'd on reverse...

- ❑ Shame, guilt and stigma.
- ❑ Isolation and loneliness.
- ❑ No support system/no where to go.
- ❑ Low self-esteem.
- ❑ Cultural/language barrier.

The Cycle of Violence



Tension Building Phase

Partner is edgy, challenges the abused partner and puts them down. Abused partner internalizes anger at the unfair treatment; symptoms include anxiety, depression, headaches etc. As tension increases, minor violent incidents increase e.g. slapping, pinching and shoving.

Violent Incident

An explosion of violence. Abused partner may not fight back. Following this, the abused partner is in a state of physical and psychological shock. Abuser may discount the incident and minimize the abused partner's injuries.

"Honeymoon" Phase

Both parties are relieved that the violent incident is over. Abuser is genuinely sorry and fears the abused partner will leave them. Apologizes, may shower the abused partner with gifts and praise to raise their self esteem. In time, tension begins to mount again and the cycle repeats itself.

If you are the Victim of Domestic Violence...

- ❑ Call the police!
- ❑ Make sure you are safe. If you feel you are in

danger, leave the house with your children/pets and go somewhere safe. Take important papers (e.g. citizenship, driver's license, birth certificate, SIN card etc.).

- ❑ Get medical attention – don't try and treat yourself. You may be more injured than you are aware.
- ❑ Seek assistance from a professional. Contact shelters, support groups or victim services.
- ❑ Save all the evidence/proof you can. Consider visiting the Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Care and Treatment Centre for a forensic exam. If you decide to press charges at a later date you can submit it to police.

Emotional Support

You are NOT to blame. You are not the cause of this behaviour, and are an important and worthwhile human being. You deserve to be treated with respect and to have power over your own life. You can decide what is best for you and your children, and can make your own decisions. You are not alone; others can help you if you want them to. You can make changes, and are worth working and changing for. You deserve to have a safe and happy life!

Staying Safe in the Home

- ❑ Keep a packed bag in a safe place (do not keep at home if not safe to do so) with ID, money, passport, other important documents and medications.
- ❑ Find a safe place in the house where you can lock the door.
- ❑ Get a portable phone (no cords).
- ❑ **Stay away from the kitchen**, if possible.
- ❑ Try and stay near windows, doors and a phone if you sense the potential for a violent outburst.
- ❑ Teach kids to call 9-1-1 and run to a neighbours home.
- ❑ **ALWAYS KEEP AN EXTRA SET OF CAR KEYS.**



Victim Services of Waterloo Region

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