

December 2022

Toward Tomorrow

INFORMATION BOOKLET



PARTNER ABUSE

Introduction

Gender-based violence (GBV) can affect anyone, men, women, boys, or girls. The majority of victims however are women and girls.

Gender-based violence occurs as a result of role expectations and unequal power relations between partners.

If you, or someone you know is a victim of violence please seek help.

What is partner abuse?

It is the mistreatment of a spouse or partner (male or female) by their husband, wife or significant other.

Why is abuse so common?

- Most abusers believe that they need to be aggressive to get or maintain control in a relationship. They view their partners as passive and defenseless participants. And oftentimes try to solve problems with violence because they do not know how to talk about issues that bother them.
- Abusers usually connect violent acts or aggressive behaviour with love and use this method of control in relationships.
- If partners accepted abuse in the past, they may view it as normal in relationships and continue to accept it.

Some types of abuse are:

Physical Abuse

- Slapping
- Punching
- Kicking
- Pushing
- Threatening with a weapon

Emotional Abuse

- The use of threats of harm against you or family members
- Excessive harassment
- The use of insults and/or verbal abuse
- Any other behaviour that causes emotional pain.

Some types of abuse cont'd:

Sexual Abuse

- Being sexually mistreated
- Being raped
- Feeling like 'less of a partner' or that you no longer have control over your own body

Financial Abuse

- The deprivation of money
- Your partner controls your finances
- Threatens to harm you or your children if you do not give them money

Characteristics of an abuser

As stated before, anyone can be an abuser. They can come from different socio-economic groups. They can be a friend, a neighbour, the pastor, a teacher, a relative, just about anyone.

- Abusers tend to objectify their victim and often sees them as their property or sexual objects.
- He or she may appear successful, but internally, they feel inadequate and blame others for their behaviour.
- An abuser minimizes the seriousness of the violence they perpetrate against others.
- An abuser externalizes the cause of their behaviour by blaming the victim, a bad day, alcohol, drugs or other factors.

Warning signs of an abuser

- Extreme jealousy
- Possessiveness
- Unpredictability
- A bad temper
- Generalized cruelty
- Controlling behaviour
- Blaming the victim for anything bad that happens.
- Accusations of the victim flirting with others or having an affair.
- Control of what the victim wears and how they should act.
- Demeaning the victim privately or in public
- Obstructing the victim's ability to work or attend school.

You may feel trapped in an abusive relationship

Most of the time, people try to leave abusive relationships, which can result in the worst attacks. Depending financially on a spouse can also make this transition difficult since paying rent or paying for necessities can be a great challenge.

Persons exposed to repeated abuse can develop self-esteem issues. They sometimes think they deserve the abuse and blame themselves for their inability to complete tasks perfectly. This creates the need to overcompensate to be better and usually results in people feeling more confused because the abuse does not stop. This sometimes leads to hopelessness and makes the victim believe they will never be able to change their circumstances.

It is important to note that, no one enters a relationship expecting to be abused by their partner. But it can happen. You may want to believe your partner's promises of change however, the chances of this happening are highly unlikely without professional help. If you find yourself trapped in an abusive relationship, your priorities need to change. You have to stay safe and alive.

Remember, abuse is never your fault.

Persons in abusive relationships may find it hard to leave for many different reasons. The following are a few of those reasons:

- Fear of additional violence
- Financial dependence
- Low self-esteem
- False hope
- Religious or cultural beliefs
- Isolation

Myths vs. Facts about abuse

MYTH: Family violence is rare and doesn't affect many people.

FACT: Family violence has long been an underreported problem. It is a very widespread social issue around the world.

MYTH: Family violence only happens in poor, uneducated, or minority families.

FACT: Family violence occurs among all types of families, regardless of income, profession, region, ethnicity, educational level, or race.

MYTH: Family violence happens because men get angry and lose control.

FACT: Family violence is not about a loss of control. It is about gaining control since using violence is a choice an abuser makes.

MYTH: Family violence occurs because women provoke men.

FACT: It is common for abusers to blame women for provoking them, but there is no excuse for violence. Family violence happens because a person chooses to act violently. Most women experiencing abuse try to do everything they can to please their partner and avoid further violent episodes, but they remain vulnerable to further abuse regardless of their attempts.

MYTH: If a woman was in real danger, she would just leave. If she hasn't left, it can't be that bad.

FACT: A woman is at the highest risk of extreme violence, including murder, when she does leave an abuser. Many women stay because they are justifiably fearful for themselves or their children if they do leave. If a woman chooses to stay in an abusive relationship, it doesn't mean the situation isn't bad, it means she's worried that leaving might make it worst.

MYTH: Only physical violence counts as family violence.

FACT: Family violence can be defined as any controlling or violent behaviour that causes emotional, psychological, sexual, financial or physical damage to a family member, partner or ex-partner, or causes them to feel fear.

It may seem difficult to ask for help, but you are not alone. Below are a list of local agencies which offer confidential counselling services.

Emergency Numbers

Police - 999

Ambulance - 811

Lifeline (Suicide) - 645-2800/645-6616

Families In Action - 628-2333/622-6952

Childline - 800-4321

Children's Authority of T'dad & T'go - 996/800-2014

National Domestic Hotline - 800-SAVE/800-7283

Rape Crisis Society - 622-7273/657-5355

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