

Anthony Nicholl [REDACTED] March 30<sup>th</sup> 2015.

### **Royal Commissioners into Family Violence.**

The honourable Justice Neave, Ms Patricia Faulkner, Mr Tony Nicholson.

Thank you for asking for my humble contribution to the perplexing problems being broached by the implementation of the commission. I enclose the cover sheet and a considerable amount of research work in hard copies resourced in order to enable me to get an appropriate perspective on the matters of **male issues in relation to domestic violence**. I am sending hard copies to enable your people to use them as required and there is a lot more material not included.

My connection with family/domestic violence stems from having heard Professor Manning Clark lamenting the demise of the patriarchal role in Australia in the 1990's, and identifying with it and more particularly that as part of completing my diploma of community services (2014), (mental health, AOD), 2 years, I was able to undertake my placement at "Dad's in Distress" a support organisation for men/fathers who are disrupted by, dealing with, recovering from marital problems. I have had heard contributions from near 1000 men many are very sad. I am also a trained facilitator there but I am not an official representative of that organisation.

My understanding of the purpose of such a commission is to "restore gender inequality remove the heat that motivates DV and includes steps to provide more focused protection for women who are genuinely under threat, highlights problems and provides solutions". I have also noted that Mr Nicholson on 27<sup>th</sup> May 2014 in summary at a BSL meeting said "In the next year or two decisions will be made about its future (social welfare) that in all likelihood is irrevocable. I hope we can engage in the difficult conversations that are needed". \*\*Well the male perspective on DV is one of those "difficult conversations.\*\*"

I am perplexed by the lack of support and considerations for male issues in relation to domestic violence as are those with whom I collude many of whom are far wiser than myself. If we bear in mind that there are **eight types of domestic violence** (Australian Gov. 2012 enc.) men endure the more insidious forms of DV and many suffer greatly on account of it ( verbal, humiliation = social, financial, sexual, psychological etc these are well known). It is well known that **men are reticent about reporting DV.**

At the grassroots level in our society domestic/family violence is viewed only as men bashing women and according to the way it is portrayed it would be a valid assumption. The problem is that all men are being considered accountable in the realm of things such is the passion of domestic violence people in demonstrating their cause. **Domestic Violence is deplorable in all its forms and can largely be attributable to fellows who are dysfunctional or those who are disaffected by life's circumstances. By implying that all men are culpable**

**creates conflict and conflict creates anger, division and frustration and just expands the problem!**

I contend that only in the presence of harmonious collaboration can you move forward. It has to be apparent to the community as a whole that in 2015 and in the presence of emotional maturity this commission achieved a new perspective on the lessening of domestic violence which of course includes making it plain the penalties for aberrative behaviours as a deterrent in moments of extreme anger or any other for that matter. Seeking to vilify males is not helpful, and misandry is a blight on the whole exercise.

The root cause can be attributed to boys being **socialised to aggression** at an early age. This is difficult to reverse of course but to modify may be possible. Maybe from this stems much of the gender entitlement referred to so often but female gender entitlement is very prevalent as women have almost all of the rights in marriage breakdown.

In Britain at present (see Guardian extract) is a campaign indicating **40% OF DV IS ENDURED BY MEN**. There are regular claims of the same statistic in Australia but men don't report it primarily for fear of not being believed or just that it is a "weak" thing to do.

**The statistics on domestic violence frequently alluded to can easily be regarded as erroneous and not irrefutable.** The police can only report on what they are involved in and that is where the statistics are determined. It is also often said 40% of Domestic Violence goes unreported that means that the figures are 40% out of kilter for starters.

In "domestic violence statistics" May 2012 USA. Taken from Menweb, 'survey men more often victims of intimate partner violence; <http://www.batteredmen.com/NISVS.htm>. (Maine USA)--random excerpts.

"although there has been an increase in the number of fatal domestic violence incidents against women, men are more likely to be victims of attacks with a deadly weapon"

"because of lack of funding there are also few shelters that cater only for men" – similar here? DHS definitely say so.

"Not reporting domestic violence because of the stigma attached is the main reason that men currently receive few services".

"Key facts and stats, one in three campaign – family violence – Australia says no"

- At least one in three victims of family violence is male
- One male is a victim of domestic homicide every 10 days
- Almost one in four young people are aware of their mum/stepmum, hitting their dad stepdad.

- Males are almost three times less likely being a victim of domestic violence to police
- Post separation similar proportions of men and women report experiencing

**Family violence and abuse can never be excused or justified, however, in order to reduce the levels of violence in the family, we must seek to understand the causes and contexts that give rise to it.**

In a private communication from an impeccable source the originator said that if people don't believe that males are being perpetrated against significantly consider the following (hard copy with resource material)

1. You don't believe that men's rights are being abused
2. You believe that an alleged murderer or a terrorist should have more legal rights than an alleged domestic violence offender.
3. You don't believe in gender equality
4. You don't believe that AVO's can be fabricated
5. You don't believe that women can lie or be violent.
6. You don't believe that a father has a close bond with his children or that they need a father in their lives.
7. You don't believe that AVO's are used to gain custody of children.
8. You don't believe that police have trouble identifying which women are genuinely under threat.

The incidence of male suicide is a national disaster that is hardly addressed, six a day is claimed by Male Health Victoria which is more than 50% of road toll and if six whales were washed up on the beach there would be an inquisition'.

This is over 50% greater than the road toll! It very difficult to address on account of publicity producing suicide ideation, but it **just should not be this way**. This is in consideration of the primary age group being 25 to 45 and then men over 65. Marriage breakdown is a significant factor and 'single car accidents death by misadventure' are not factored in. Hopelessness, despair is palpable amongst the older male population and indeed many stay in bed all day, a manifestation of depression and their own perception of their worthlessness. It is worth saying that so many women suffer similarly but I cannot envisage the Commission being the empirical panacea.

Surely education in relation to the requisites of a happy marriage/relationship should be built into all high school curriculums? It is very daunting to think that around 50% of all marriages will fail and that expectations of joy and happiness of the rest will end in a maelstrom of continuous conflict.

Unfortunately many of my friends , colleagues and acquaintances feel that I am just wasting my time dwelling on and submitting this as opinions are so conclusive, even at this point and that there will be no change. If everyone thought like that there would be no change. The evidence is over whelming that male support is grossly

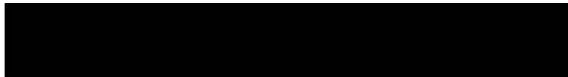
neglected, that misandry is rampant, male rights are scaringly (from my perspective anyway) controlling on account of draconian legislation.

I can see solutions but I can just watch and hope. The world is much less happy than it has ever been. I am just me trying to make a difference.

Yours Sincerely



Anthony Nicholl (Tony)



Bibliography of hard copies included here;

"One in three victims of family violence is male" One in three campaign.

"Men; the overlooked victims of domestic violence/ Domestic Violence statistics" may 2012.

Australian Statistics on Domestic Violence. Jane Mulrone. Australian Domestic and Family Clearing House 2003.

50 facts about domestic violence. Soraya Chemaly 2012.

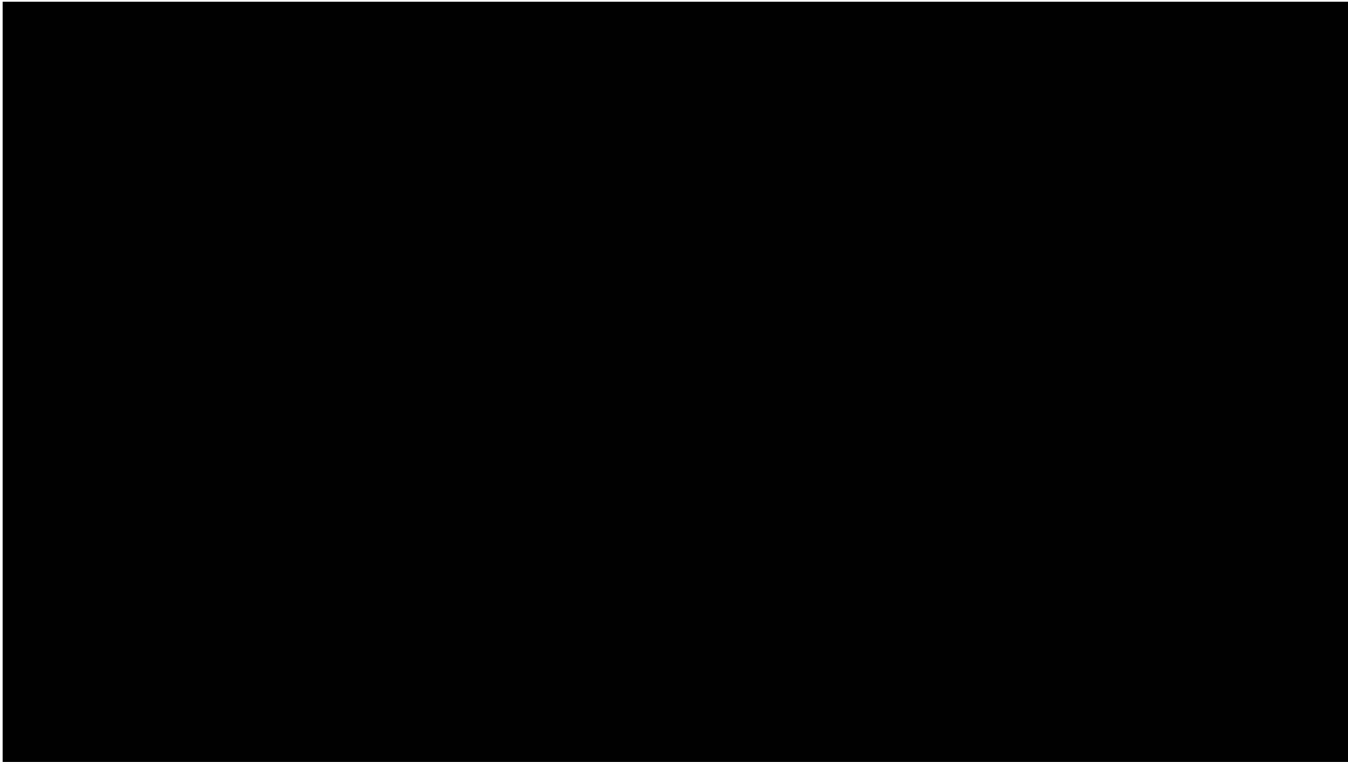
"Understanding the Nature and dynamics of domestic violence" the Missouri coalition against domestic and sexual violence. 47 pages.

"Australian Institute of Criminology – Emerging Issues in domestic /family violence research. Lorraine Bartels. – has more to do with indigenous, CALD, and FIFO issues in WA.

"Domestic Violence – why men abuse women" Better Health Channel"

"Hidden Hurt. Male victims of domestic violence"UK.

AMRA. Domestic Violence statistics. Australia, Are men and women equally violent? Headley, Scott, De Vaus. Melbourne and Latrobe Universities.






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## MALE VICTIMS OF FAMILY VIOLENCE

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### BARRIERS TO DISCLOSING

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Male victims of family violence and abuse - like women - often face many barriers to disclosing their abuse:

- They are likely to be told that there must be something *they* did to provoke the perpetrator's abuse
- They can suffer shame, embarrassment and the social stigma of not being able to protect themselves
- They can fear that if they disclose the abuse there will be nowhere for them and their children to escape to
- In cases of intimate partner violence, they can fear that if they disclose the abuse or end the relationship, their partner might become more abusive and/or take the children
- They can feel uncertain about where to seek help, or how to seek help
- Services are less likely to ask whether a man is a victim of family violence, and when they do ask, they are less likely to believe him (indeed many health departments have mandatory domestic violence screening for young women, but no such screening for young men)
- Male victims can be falsely arrested and removed from their homes because of the assumption that because they are male, they must be a perpetrator and not a victim. When this happens, children can be left unprotected from the perpetrator of the violence, leading many men to suffer the abuse in silence in an attempt to protect their children.

Because of these barriers, men are much less likely to report being a victim of family violence than are women (and women also frequently don't report violence against them).

### FORMS OF ABUSE

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Abuse of men takes many of the same forms as it does against women - physical violence, intimidation and threats; sexual, emotional, psychological, verbal and financial abuse; property damage and social isolation. Many men experience multiple forms of abuse. Men, more so than women, can also experience legal and administrative abuse - the use of institutions to inflict further abuse on a victim, for example, taking out false restraining orders or not allowing the victim access to his children.

*I was petrified to come home from work and would see her car in the drive and have to drive away and sit for an hour or so by myself to prepare for the likely barrage to come. I lived in terror walking on eggshells around her for nigh on 20 years. I attempted suicide a number of times. Dan*

### IMPACTS ON MALE VICTIMS

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The impacts of family violence on male victims include:

- Fear and loss of feelings of safety
- Feelings of guilt and/or shame
- Difficulties in trusting others
- Anxiety and flashbacks
- Unresolved anger
- Loneliness and isolation
- Low self-esteem and/or self-hatred
- Depression, suicidal ideation, self-harm and attempted suicide
- Use of alcohol or other drugs to cope with the abuse
- Physical injuries

- Sexual dysfunction and/or impotence
- Loss of work
- Loss of home
- Physical illness
- Loss of contact with children and/or step-children
- Concern about children post separation.

To add insult to injury, male victims of family violence often find it distressing to see social marketing campaigns such as *Violence Against Women Australia Says No* (federal) and *Don't Cross the Line* (SA), which suggest that men are the only perpetrators of family violence and women and children the only victims.

Gay men can be reluctant to report the abuse they are suffering because they are afraid of revealing their sexual orientation. They can also suffer threats of 'outing' of their sexual preference or HIV status by the perpetrator. The perpetrator might also tell them that no one will help because the police and the justice system are homophobic.

### CHILDREN OF MALE VICTIMS

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Children of male victims of intimate partner violence can suffer the same impacts as children of female victims, including

- The abuse of witnessing family violence by their parents or step-parents
- Direct violence and abuse themselves
- Negative impacts on their behavioural, cognitive and emotional functioning and social development
- Harm to their education and later employment prospects
- Shaping their attitudes to violence in positive or negative directions
- The possibility of being more likely to grow up to perpetrate violence in their own relationships (the majority however do not).

*Poor dad. I had seen him walking naked in the back yard at night all upset and embarrassed; and I had seen him crawling under the bed to escape her vicious attacks, and I have seen him nursing his fresh wounds in the toilet, and he would say no word against her. Son talking about parents*

### WHAT ABOUT FEMALE VICTIMS?

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The **One in Three** Campaign aims to raise public awareness of the existence and needs of male victims of family violence and abuse; to work with government and non-government services alike to provide assistance to male victims; and to reduce the incidence and impacts of family violence on Australian men, women and children.

There is a wealth of information about violence against women readily available on the internet. Please click [here](#) to browse through a sample of these resources.

### MEDIA COVERAGE



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Dr Elizabeth Celi, author of *Regular Joe Vs Mr Invincible* appears on the Ten Network's *gam With David & Kim* program, talking about men's health, domestic abuse and social bias against men.

***Her sexual violation of my reluctant body had no name.  
Her demands were not simply an occasional  
inconsiderate insistence. This was a remorseless and  
frightening menace. Alan***

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## KEY FACTS AND STATS

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- At least one in three victims of family violence is male
- One male is a victim of domestic homicide every 10 days
- Almost one in four young people are aware of their mum/stepmum hitting their dad/stepdad
- Male and female victims of reported domestic assault receive very similar numbers and types of injuries
- Males are almost three times less likely to report being a victim of domestic violence to the police
- Post-separation, similar proportions of men and women report experiencing physical violence including threats by their former spouse
- More facts and stats [here](#).

## MALE VICTIMS LACK SUPPORT

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While many services have quite rightly been established over the past four decades to support female victims of family violence, the needs of male victims remain largely unmet. Historically government policies have been based on the assumption that the vast majority of perpetrators are male and the vast majority of victims are female, and the policies of current governments are still based on this erroneous position. Indeed, regrettably, the *National Council to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children* did not include male victims in their otherwise laudable March 2009 recommendations which have been enthusiastically supported by the federal government and the Council of Australian Governments. Now is the time for action by politicians and community leaders to recognise that a comprehensive approach is required to combat the scourge of family violence.

## REDUCING FAMILY VIOLENCE

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Family violence and abuse can never be excused or justified, however, in order to reduce the levels of violence in the family, we must seek to understand the causes and contexts that give rise to it. We need to address the complexities of violence. All victims need compassionate and highly responsive support, and all perpetrators need services to help them stop their use of violence and abuse. Dysfunctional relationships in which both parties use violence need to be supported to change, as it is these environments that are clearly the most harmful to children.

## RECENT WEBSITE CONTENT

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- [ABC TV Q&A Family Violence Special, Mon Feb 23 - Join the Studio Audience](#)
- [My Life in Two Minutes - Featuring Craig, a male victim of family violence](#)
- [OPINION: Men are victims of domestic violence too | Newcastle Herald](#)
- [In Australia One in Three Victims of Family Violence are Men | VICE | Australia / NZ](#)
- [Male victims of domestic violence: Police facebook post stirs debate on controversial issue](#)
- [NSW Police acknowledge male victims of intimate partner violence](#)
- [Drew's personal story](#)
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**One in Three Campaign Podcast 013: Meeting the**

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<sup>1</sup> Much international research demonstrates that women are as physically aggressive, or more aggressive, than men in their relationships with their spouses or male partners. For a bibliography examining 275

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## Men: The Overlooked Victims of Domestic Violence

May 16, 2012 by Ruth S 70 Comments

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women, the media and government focus the most attention on the female victims of domestic violence. Men are largely silent on the issue because of the perception that men are physically stronger and should be able to subdue a female attacker easily. Those men who do report physical violence are more likely to be ridiculed—both by law enforcement and by the public—than women are. More money is spent on women's programs, and more crusades are launched on behalf of women who are victims of domestic violence despite the fact that men are almost equally or in some cases more likely to be victims of both physical and psychological abuse.

Although there has been an increase in the number of fatal domestic violence incidents against women, men are more likely to be victims of attacks with a deadly weapon. According to one study, 63% of males as opposed to 15% of females had a deadly weapon used against them in a fight with an intimate partner.

What is worse than the statistics, however, is the fact that there has been little research in the area of domestic abuse against men because neither the Justice Department nor any other agencies will fund such research. Because they refuse to do the research, people are able to perpetuate such myths as women are only violent when defending themselves, or that men could more easily leave a violent relationship.

Because of lack of funding, there are also few shelters that cater to men. Most shelters available will only take women and children, and some even have an age limit on the boys that they will take in (13 years old).

There is some help for male victims of domestic violence. MenWeb ([www.batteredmen.com](http://www.batteredmen.com)) offers resources for men, as well as a place for them to tell their story. There is also a Domestic Abuse Helpline for Men and Women (1-888-7HELPLINE) operated by a nonprofit in Harmony Maine. Clark University and Bridgewater State University are currently conducting a study on male victims of domestic abuse.

Men who suffer domestic violence can only receive help if they break the silence. Not reporting domestic violence because of the stigma attached is the main reason that men currently receive few services, and one of the reasons that studies on the issue are so few.

Sources:

Figure taken from MenWeb: *CDC/DOJ Survey Men more often victims of intimate partner violence.*  
<http://www.batteredmen.com/NISVS.htm>

Philip Cook, "The Truth About Domestic Violence" From the book *Everything You Know is Wrong* (Russ Kick, 2002) Published by The Disinformation Company.

Domestic Abuse Hotline for Men and Women. <http://dahmw.org/>

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Filed Under: Domestic Violence Articles, Featured Articles

Domestic violence is considered one of the most pressing issues in American society. Everyone quotes the statistics given by the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence: 1 in 4 women will be victims of domestic violence at some point in their lives, 1.3 million women are assaulted by their partner every year, 85% of domestic violence reported is against women. However, in a conflicting survey taken by the CDC in 2010, it was found that 40% of the victims of severe, physical domestic violence are men.

Despite many findings that show almost equal amounts of abuse perpetrated against men and



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- Domestic Violence in the Workplace
- My story, like many others...
- What's Worse: Physical Scars or Mental Scars? One Pair of Panties... "A True Story of Abuse, Survival and Victory"
- Men: The Overlooked Victims of Domestic Violence

## Comments

**Patsy says:**

September 23, 2014 at 4:45 am



I know and believe that men and women both can be the abusers. I also realize our laws and courts are out of touch with today's domestic problems. But the reason for my comment is a piece by a man with the name of John. He portrayed a mental illness (borderline personality disorder) in a very negative and incorrect way. There will be persons reading these comments (also, friends, family, boy/girl friends, couples (married or not) that have this diagnosis and some may believe his rants and this could cause fear, mistrust, stress of perceived chance of violence from the persons with this disorder, or even falsely placed blame on the person with this very complicated illness if DV would occur. Also think of the embarrassment, confusion of the misrepresented symptoms, even guilt and shame that could affect the person that has this illness. Fear too that they might be misjudged by others. John, don't let your anger and maybe the shame you felt write incorrect info that might cause harm to another. I feel sad what happened to you and hope you are healing. P.

**Louise says:**

September 24, 2014 at 1:57 pm



My little brother was murdered in March 2012 by his girlfriend. He was only 29 years old, she killed him and tried to dispose of his body on a farm in a rural area located in Elbert County, Colorado. The police department wouldn't put a missing persons report out when we knew something was wrong... we knew who he was with last and nobody would listen to us. We knew what she had done this because he told us she was going to kill him and we all told him "leave her" he said "you don't understand she is crazy" he told his friends "If I end up missing she did it"... Well she killed him and is now walking free while my brother's four children are without a father. We live in Denver, Colorado and we are putting together a rallying on Oct. 15, 2014 to bring awareness of the double standards of domestic violence. To try and get some understanding from our state as to why his killer has not been brought to justice. I'm happy that we have come so far with women's rights it's amazing. I'm tired of telling my mom the detectives will handle it... NOW IS THE TIME to stand up for our brothers, sons, dads, cousins... Lets stand up for OUR MEN!! I don't know what we are doing but I can no longer stand by and do nothing!!!!

If anyone in the area would like to support the cause please feel free to email me at [louiseornelas4@gmail.com](mailto:louiseornelas4@gmail.com) we need all of the support and help that we can get. We are starting from scratch so any advice or support will be greatly appreciated

**Rick says:**

September 29, 2014 at 12:46 pm



A few of the comments here still pass on the stigma about abuse against men. Being a victim of DV myself, I believe the stats released by this article. I have been married now almost 17 years and I have been abused on average 5 times/yr. Believe me, nothing to brag about but not looking for pity. It's difficult to leave when children (two of them in my case) are involved. It started off as verbal abuse in private, then verbal abuse in public, then became physical. She's one of those type of women who maintains a peaceful, friendly personality in public for the most part, but her TRUE personality comes out behind closed doors. I threaten to call the police the last few times but I'm not out to embarrass her or traumatize my daughter so it's just a threat to get her to stop. The most recent incident was last week. I am a strong guy, able to take care of myself. For me the damage is most mental and emotional. It really hurts to know that someone I committed my life to and sacrificed for, thinks so little of me that she feels it's okay to verbally or physically attack me. I am just biding my time until I can just leave and get a divorce.

**John Rooney says:**

September 29, 2014 at 7:10 pm



I wish that it would become common knowledge what men are suffering. So many people seem to believe that men are never victims of women.

**Matt M says:**

October 3, 2014 at 2:42 pm



I grew up in a home where DV was a way of life. I somehow survived 14 years of being raped, beaten, verbally and emotionally abused. I was an army dependent, both my mother and stepfather were in the army. In a 3 year period between 11 and 14 I had managed to get 30 counts of run away always to be returned already broken and bleeding, to my parent's home so that I could endure more for embarrassing them. It wasn't uncommon for my face to be bruised or cut by my mother's hand. It wasn't that uncommon for me to have broken bones from either her or my stepfather. The system off base declared it wasn't their problem it was a military matter. The system on base, felt that I was simply a bad kid who liked to hurt himself. I left home for the last time at 14. Out of a reaction I blacked my mother's eye during a beating she was giving me. People might like to think we aren't animals, but instinct will always trump reason in a bad situation. I managed to stay gone and never return. Because even then I had

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already learned that no one cared at all the damages she had done to me, all they would see is the black eye I gave her.

Later in my life I married a woman that I was in love with. I was young and stupid and never took her anger into account always forgiving it or doing my best not to be the target of it. Until one night when she opted to stab me with my own knife for simply asking her why she was home so late. I know a lot of people feel that might be a little overboard and maybe even a little made up. But lets face it, people are often unreasonable. As before though, I knew the system would never help me, so I then too left. This time I was able to do so without touching the woman that has harmed me. No one has the right to be abused, and no one has the right to abuse another person.

My lesson in all of this? The system is broken and only encourages women to be violent towards men as there is no repercussions for her actions. Now I don't believe all women are like this, But a great many are and it's making it harder for us men to trust women or trust that it even matters if we try and report being hurt. I have to wonder. How many men that kill their partners in DV do so because they realize that their life is already over and they feel that at least they can remove another abuser from the world. Truth is, I considered that very thing growing up. Was stopping my mother's abuse of my sisters and I worth losing my life over? I think if I had been stronger and less afraid, I just might have.

#### Donald says:

October 3, 2014 at 10:12 pm



Compelling stories here. Allow me to tell mine...

I was arrested for Domestic Violence Assault in 2011. My life hasn't been the same since that horrible day. The next day I was late for work because I couldn't get to my truck that was parked in my dooryard where my now ex-girlfriend was living, with me. Hence, I was "evicted" from my home until she moved out 6 weeks later. My boss fired me on the spot. I had called in to tell the office what had happened. I was kept in a jail cell for 7 hours before a close friend had come and bailed me out at midnight.

I've lost everything I owned except the clothes on my back. As already stated .. My job, my house, my dog, a John Deere tractor, an art collection, ski's, canoe, fishing equipment, etc., etc. Most of all I've lost my independence. 3 years later and I still have no job. My previous 2 jobs consumed 25 years of my life. I'm loyal to the company I work for.

Here's what happened. You be the judge... My girlfriend had been living with me for a year and a half. I had a good paying job and she had a job that wasn't as lucrative, for lack of better term. I came up with a budget in which I would pay 2/3rds of all of our combined bills. She would pay 1/3rd. Fair enough. I learned that in couples counselling years ago. Fact is she could never "afford" to pay her share. After several months I had enough of that problem and told her to go. She would cry and promise to pay and that whole girly girly show, I gave into it. My mistake. Things didn't change and she puts her vehicle off the road and it has damage which makes the rig unsafe to drive. Now she needs a dependable vehicle. My credit is stellar and hers is not. I rework the budget and find a way to get her a used vehicle, the loan has to go in my name. My mistake again. In 10 months she made only 2 payments toward the vehicle and still not contributing to the "household" budget. Long story short, she gives me a check for a months payment towards the vehicle and I take it to the bank and the teller tells me "I can't deposit this check for you" and she hands it back to me. Insufficient funds. I was upset but not over the top. I'd seen this before.

The incident... I got home and she's in the wash room doing laundry and I was calm. I walked into the room and held the check up and said "good try. It bounced." As I turned to walk out she said, "you should have cashed it sooner when the money was there" and slammed the door shut right to my back. I got to the bank 3 days after she had given me the check. When I heard and felt the door slam I lost my temper. The door was locked and I "broke" through it. I threw an empty jug of laundry detergent at the wall. That wasn't enough for me so I grabbed another laundry detergent jug that was about half full and threw it at the wall. There, I was over it. She said, "I'm calling the police." I said, "don't do that." I sat down on the couch and she walked by me and picked up the phone and dialed 911. That's when the lies started pouring out. "He hit me with an ironing board." "He has guns." "He's staring at me." "I'm scared." I hollered out "those are lies." I simply got up and walked outside and then I could hear the Sherriff coming down the country road I lived on. He interviewed me and I told him exactly what had happened. He went inside and interviewed her and came out and said "The stories didn't match up... You're under arrest." She had not a mark on her. The Sherriff admitted this to me. On the ride to jail I asked him why he arrested me and he said because she got sprinkled with laundry detergent. Her shirt had roughly 7 spots of laundry detergent the size of a dime on it. That equaled in law terms .. "Offensive Contact."

I had never been in trouble with the law before. I was handed a penalty of a One Year Deferred Disposition." That is, if I stayed out of trouble with the law for one year the charge would be dropped. However, I had to plead guilty to the charge. I was told it wouldn't show up on my record. Not so sure about that?? I was told I didn't have to check off the "conviction box" on an application. No so sure about that?? Remember, I haven't been hired in 3 years of searching for work.

This is the first time I've told my story to the general public. I entered myself into counselling the day after the incident. A term came out that was startling to me. It hit the nail right on the head ... "Financial Abuse." I was a victim of financial abuse. I'm not happy with my actions that day. What I have been through has caused me to be a more patient man. Anger Management helped. Counselling helped. Drawing closer to God and having a Bible study has helped. I feel reformed because there have been many situations that I could have been angry about but, I have maintained an even keel. I am better a person, no doubt.

I have a point to make. If society is serious about getting a handle on domestic violence, it's going to have to take a good hard look at the core of what has caused the violence. I certainly have taken responsibility for my actions that day and I've payed the price and then some. But, the one who was "stealing" from me is the victim?? Huh?? It takes 2 to tango. It takes 2 to debate. It takes 2 to share. It takes 2 to love. It takes 2 to commit domestic violence. Society has to study the perpetrator AND the victim. The victim and their mental state is as important to study as the perpetrator. We'll never get to the bottom of this thing the way the law is slanted now. Man cannot fix man's problems.

All this said, of the perpetrators here, are you working?? Has it been difficult for you to find work?? Are there advocates out there for the perpetrators to help them weave into society again?? If so, I need the links. I'm on skid row for throwing a jug at the wall. Mind you, I understand my wrongs that day. It's just the penalty seems way out of proportion.

As my sister-in-law said . . . She wasn't scared. "She was pissed." I cut the funds off and the only way for her to get "even" was to call the cops.

Am I in denial??

**Tim Poore says:**

October 5, 2014 at 9:13 pm



My wife beat me for 4 years she has a pain pill addiction along with her Mother and when she couldn't get them she was a demon she knocked me out twice in front of my son and step daughter threatened suicide told me she hopes I flip my truck on the way to work on Christmas night of 2013 at 9 pm or so she went to her mothers house they called the cops and told them I had kicked her in the butt I was sitting in a recliner playing with my sons Nabi he was right beside me when she came in the door told me she was totally flipping my world upside down walked into the kitchen took the ham out of the oven threw it in the sink and walked over to me started to tell me how she didn't need me anymore she had a 17'000 savings bond bout that time my mom calls I pick up the phone and she just starts punching hitting me and scratching me I'm sitting down my 3 year old son is upset beside me so I put my foot on her chest push her off me get up walk into our bedroom push the door closed put the bed against the door turn on planes for my son I sat on the bed and about that time I hear her running down the hall she hits the door pushes the bed halfway across the room my son then is really scared so I get up grab my coat and give my son kisses hugs tell him goodbye and I proceed to leave as I'm walking out her mom walks in starts saying your going to jail I never said a word to her mom I leave about an hour later I get a call to come to the police station they just wanted to talk to me

**Tim Poore says:**

October 5, 2014 at 9:19 pm



I went to the police station they took my statement and told me I was going to jail over a quarter size bruise on her butt cheek my face was scratched beat and they ignored everything I told them I was the victim thatnrite this was Dec 25 Jan 1st she was moved in with another man I haven't and cannot speak to her ever since I haven't seen my son in nine months and I have lost over 50 lbs since I'm still fighting to see my son everyday the justice system is protecting my son from the wrong person she's the demon .

**Giannerys says:**

October 14, 2014 at 2:50 pm



I'm a female college student who think that domestic abuse is domestic abuse regardless we is doing that abuse and in the manner we should all be entitle to that same help and benefit. I understand the there is some very cruel and damage man out there but on the other hand there is less female abuser but those not make it ok. also I also believe that part of this behavior my come from a deep issues and that what we need to work on. For example little girls that see their mom getting abuse by their father many of them grow up to be abuser because they think before he those it to me I will do it to him. That those not make it right but I do understand it. I'm a public health major student I will be doing my research paper on domestic violence and how I feel it just not fare. And again I have to say I do understand the female are that majorly of that victim of domestic violence but what can we do to help over all. I'm open to any ideas or information about this subject

Female are mother and teacher let teach our children that abuse goes both way and is not right in any situation. I will also love to participate in activist /advocate groups feel free to email me

**Lindsay says:**

October 19, 2014 at 4:17 pm



It's hard for me to hear men talk about the false reporting, because that's what I'm being accused of. I play the past over and over in my head and there's no way he wasn't psychologically abusive, controlling and manipulative. The GAL believed him and not a word I said. He didn't look after the welfare of the children and now they're living in a household with his chosen partner who assaulted my 2 yo last week. I called the police, CPS, requested a welfare check, filed a anti-harassment order against her and so far, I have no idea the state of my children because he had a lawyer that ensured the doubt of the

court about my innocence. I'm sorry some of you men have gone through this, it sucks. I know I would have my kids if I had a lawyer. My ex is a narcissist and has no ability to connect intimately with anyone, nor does he understand how his actions affect other people. He could run around in a tirade and I was expected to be even keel, with no response, just happy and affectionate. If I got upset, I was called crazy, bitch, worthless and a child. If I got upset about the name calling, I was told I was blowing it out of proportion and making a mountain out of a molehill. He'd kick me under the table when he didn't like something I said at dinner with friends. He'd text me "shut the fuck up" from across the room when he didn't like the subject of conversation that his mother in law was insisting upon. Yet, he has my kids. I wish he would have hit me instead of threatening to many times. Then, someone would believe me.

**Takato says:**

November 1, 2014 at 10:08 am



Moral of all these stories, kill the bitch abusing you and run, you will lose everything anyways, might as well stop her from doing it to someone else.

**Robyn says:**

November 7, 2014 at 1:01 am



In response to "Donald says:

October 3, 2014 at 10:12 pm" .. Your comment .. "it takes 2 to commit Domestic Violence"... ?? That's an ignorant comment!! One very important step in healing from abuse is knowledge. Educating yourself, researching, reading, more reading, learning as much as possible! It doesn't take 2 to commit Domestic Violence!

**Arran says:**

November 12, 2014 at 5:56 pm



Just found this site yesterday and it's helped to see other people have gone through what I did ... As with a lot of these cases, I am a 6'1" 200lb man and my ex wife was 5'1" and 115 soaking wet... I wish I'd have known then what I know now... had previous incidents of her throwing things at me, screaming at me even though I pretty much took care of our boys from clothes, to dinner to lunches for school etc ... didn't make a difference. The "Incident" that landed me in court started out with us going to an Az Cardinals game beginning of Nov 2005 ... long story short she started drinking heavily and basically flipped when I asked her to stop screaming out cuss words as there were kids in our section ... she left me at the stadium but I got a ride home and walked in to our apartment. Fortunately the boys were at my parents house as we were going to the game ... I walked in and told her that the boys would be staying at my parents house that night. She started screaming at me that I had embarrassed her at the game and she should be able to "let loose" when she has a chance ... I told her that there was no talking to her in her present condition and that I was leaving and would be back in the morning when she was sober and we needed to talk... as I was reaching for the front door handle I saw her swinging an ironing board at me and I blocked it with my left forearm as I was trying to grab door handle with my right hand... she swung twice but my forearm took the brunt of it... as I was leaving she came out and threw a chair that was outside our front door down the walkway at me... neighbor saw it and went inside as I just held up my hands walking away... went to my parents house to sleep and my Mum insisted on taking photos of my left forearm as there was visible scrapes and bruising. I show up the next morning and she is apologetic but I told her that if she is going to be drinking I don't want her around the boys ... she agreed and cries and says she thought I was going to leave her ... end of , I thought, but that's when it all turned ... Day before Thanksgiving I get a message on my phone from a detective saying she wanted to talk to me about incident on Nov 5... we were getting ready to go to my sisters house for dinner when I looked at her and told her about the message I just got... she said she thought I was going to leave her so after I left that night she called her friend and they went to hospital claiming I had hit her because she knew I would fight for custody of my son

**Arran says:**

November 12, 2014 at 6:12 pm



cont ... I play phone tag with the detective but finally she leaves a message saying nothing will be filed. By April '06 I knew I had to leave and that I would be filing for divorce and fighting for custody... I talked with the detective numerous times to find out if this was going to come back and bite me in custody battle and even finally met with her face to face and she told me "that she appreciated my concern but there was no file to make a note of our meeting as there now was no casefile because there wasn't any evidence." I file for divorce and custody of my son (his older half brother was from a previous relationship) and in May '06 I meet for pretrial deliberation about custody arrangements when I am told that City of Phoenix is now filing domestic violence charge against me... I find out who the lead detective is and much to my relief, it's the detective I had been talking to all this time! I find out my ex took pictures of her face and jaw that night claiming I punched her and she is submitting them in trial. ... I had my pics of my forearm as well and when we saw her pictures there wasn't anything to be seen ( I thought she might've faked it or something!?!). ... so going into the court case I was not only confident of winning I was told I should consider having her charged with filing a false report ... walked into court thinking I can't believe

they are going through with this and up until start my attorney is convinced they aren't even going to try this and just throw it out. .... then it started and reality hit

**Arran says:**

November 12, 2014 at 6:45 pm



I was expecting her to get up on the stand and "put on a show" and she didn't disappoint but after her own mother testified FOR me saying she had talked to her daughter that night and she was "barely coherent" and that she knew I didn't do anything and her daughter had a drinking problem ... my ex admitted being so drunk she didn't remember throwing the chair at me as I left (neighbor was at court) until reminded of it. Then I see the detective I had talked to all those times and she was "giving a statement but was not available for cross examination" ... Oh, and also, this little doozy... despite saying that she had gone to the hospital that night the prosecution had "lost" the medical report (after my conviction that day I appealed and got a copy of the medical report from her visit that night where the medical professional actually wrote on there "evidence does not correspond with her story" which is obviously why I wasn't picked up or ever arrested.... same Pro Tem judge said she would've convicted me even with that evidence so I lost that appeal) ... then the capper... after she (the judge) asked "why would she lie" about my ex and my attorney explaining about divorce and custody proceedings the judge actually said that the "only visible injuries are on the defendant ... but I'm going to go ahead and find him guilty" ... I was floored..... shocked, confused and yes ... angry ... didn't say anything in court as I was speechless!!!! But my first thoughts were about my custody battle for my son and how this was going to kill me

**Tito says:**

December 14, 2014 at 6:32 pm



Hi, i'm a victim of male domestic violence by my wife, it's more verbal but it's obvious that she wants to control everything. This hurts so much to know that she really don't love me, never want to marry me and the last in her agenda. I own a home with her, and I'm just scared to start over. and I know why don't you just leave, easier said than done. I have now where to go, my family can't help and it's so embarrassing. She a bully and self center, I can't anything my defence because she explodes into this crazy woman. And I not the only guy there a thousands that are treated like crap every day

**Patty says:**

January 5, 2015 at 9:50 pm



I am the ex of a man who is now in an abusive relationship. He and I were together for 22 years and we parted ways. Now he is in a 5 month old relationship with a woman who has punched him in his groin, punched him in his face, he and her 15 yr old daughter punching him in his face. He call me and fills me in and has even drove the 700 miles back to our home, to just turn around and go back to it. I am fearful for his life and safety but he will not listen to me or his son. Now I await the next call telling me this crazy lady has killed him.

**J.C. Samuelson says:**

January 28, 2015 at 9:30 pm



It's easy to appreciate the well-meaning attempt to draw more attention to male victims. It's true that male victimization isn't as well reported so it seems worth raising the public consciousness. However, the writer does all victims a disservice in that she seems to have reported the statistics incorrectly or in a misleading manner. For example, the 2010 CDC survey does not report that 40% of victims of severe, physical domestic violence are men. Rather, it reports that 13.8% of victims of severe, physical domestic violence are men (2010 National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey, pg. 2). This result is borne out in the 2011 report as well. Also, I don't know where the deadly weapon statistic comes from, but according to the Bureau of Justice Statistics' 2005 Family Violence Statistics report, 83% of spouse murderers were male, which seems a rather strong counterpoint.

The point is that, while male victims deserve a greater voice and there is little doubt of cultural bias regarding domestic abuse (for both men and women), faulty or misleading reports undermine attempts to bring the issue forward. Why? Misleading reports serve as a fodder for detractors, promote unnecessary conflict or an us vs. them mentality, and perpetuate the myth that statistics determine importance. Regardless of gender, it seems to me that victims of domestic violence are best served when the facts are reported accurately and transparently.

**Alicia says:**

February 2, 2015 at 1:54 am



I am a college freshman writing my third paper on male victims of abuse by females and I must say that these stories, these realities, have really hit home for me. I mean, I know that male victims are often misunderstood and charged falsely, but reading these true stories truly showed me how real this actually is. I just want y'all to know that there is help out there, and if you guys need someone to get help for you just let me know, email me or something. You're definitely not alone, and there is light in the

darkness. Some of y'all are already out of it based on your stories, and I'm proud of you for taking action, that's great. If you still want someone to talk to, I'm here. I would love to help and get involved to fix this issue and the inequality of laws for DV against men vs women. May God be with each and every one of you.

**Joclyen Rogers says:**

February 10, 2015 at 1:45 pm



I found the article to be a little biased in the language used. When I read the article the language lead me to believe that women are also just as likely to be perpetrators of intimate partner violence against men. What I wonder tho is what the numbers tell us. We know that men are also victims of rape, however the numbers tell us that the perpetrators are still vastly committed by men.

What I am curious is that if the numbers of men who are victims of intimate partner violence are perpetrated by other men? It does not seem to add up properly to me that men do not report intimate partner violence that is perpetrated by women because it is an embarrassment.

It does, however, seem much more likely to me that men who are victims of intimate violence are less likely to report it because the perpetrator is their male partner. We know already that same sex partnerships have much higher rates of unreported sexual and physical abuses due to the oppressive systems set in place against same sex couples.

We know already how difficult for a person who is greatly invested in an abusive intimate relationship is to report and seek help, now if we add being outed to that equation then I think we can clearly see why these cases are underreported.

I dont mean to argue that women do not act violently or are abusive. There is also a vast amount of intimate partner violence among female same sex couples.

But I just want to point out that perpetrators of intimate partner violence are much more likely to be men. Our society promotes men to be violent.

Domestic and intimate partner violence hurts everyone, men, women, trans, queer, children, community.... this list goes on and on...

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## **Australian Statistics on Domestic Violence \***

*Jane Mulroney  
Senior Research Officer  
Australian Domestic and Family Violence Clearinghouse*

### **Introduction**

The first national data on incidence and prevalence of domestic violence using a representative sample of 6300 Australian women was provided by the *Women's Safety Australia* study (Australian Bureau of Statistics [ABS] 1996). Prior to this, data was only available from self-selected samples (e.g. phone surveys or service usage).

The ABS study measured the incidence of physical and sexual violence against women (18 years and over) during the 12 months prior to the survey and over their lifetime (since the age of 15). For the purposes of this survey, violence was defined as any incident involving the occurrence, attempt or threat of either physical or sexual assault (ABS 1996, p. 2). Such incidents were defined as actions considered to be offences under criminal statutes in each state or territory. Accordingly the data does not reflect the entire picture of women's experiences of domestic and family violence as it does not record other forms of abuse (emotional, social, financial etc.) that occur in tandem with acts of violence. Key results from the study indicate:

- 23% of women who had ever been married or in a de-facto relationship, experienced violence by a partner at some time during the relationship (ABS 1996, p. 50).

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- 42% of women who had been in a previous relationship reported violence by a previous partner (ABS 1996, p. 51).
- Half of women experiencing violence by their current partner experienced more than one incident of violence (ABS 1996, p. 54). Injuries sustained in the last incident were mainly bruises, cuts, and scratches, but also included stab or gun shot wounds, and other injuries (ABS 1996, p. 55).
- 12% of women who reported violence by their current partner at some stage during the relationship, said they were currently living in fear (ABS 1996, p. 51).
- Women who experienced physical or sexual violence by a partner were significantly more likely to experience emotional abuse (manipulation, isolation or intimidation) than those who had not experienced violence (ABS 1996, p. 51).
- 35% of women who experienced violence from their partner during periods of separation (ABS 1996, p. 57).
- Younger women were more at risk than older women, with 7.3% of women aged 18-24 years having experienced one or more incidents of violence from a current partner in the previous 12 month period as compared to 1.2% of women aged 55 and over (ABS 1996, p. 50).

## **Why do we need statistics?**

Current and accurate data concerning domestic violence is required to ensure that:

- Governments are informed about the seriousness of domestic violence and the need for appropriate funding levels to services.
- Policy makers ensure that provisions are made for victims of domestic violence and guidelines are set out for service providers to respond in a sympathetic and informed manner.

- Services understand how those affected by domestic violence will access services and which services they are more likely to go to for supportive interventions.
- Programs are developed to respond to areas of highest need.

## **Sources of data on domestic violence**

- Population surveys
- National and state crime surveys
- Data Collection Projects
- Police records: callouts to incidents of domestic violence
- Courts data: applications for protection orders  
final orders granted by the court  
breaches of protection orders  
criminal charges (assault, homicide)  
conviction rates
- Emergency accommodation: Numbers of women and children accessing refuges and numbers turned away
- Child protection services data: Number of matters where domestic violence is an identified issue
- Health data: Hospital admissions  
Presentations to Emergency Departments  
Community health services  
Routine screening

## How accurate are statistics in representing the true incidence of domestic violence?

Statistics can, at best, be an indication of minimum levels of domestic violence for a number of reasons.

### ***Barriers to disclosure***

Women experiencing domestic violence are more likely to deal with the issues themselves or talk to family and friends rather than seek outside support due to barriers such as fear, isolation, lack of support and shame. This is supported by findings in the report, *Against the Odds: How women survive domestic violence* (Keys Young 1998), which found that:

- Less than 20% of women interviewed had had contact with domestic violence crisis services while they were in the abusive relationship.
- About 25% of women had contact with the police while they were in the abusive relationship.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (1996) *Women's Safety Australia* survey found similar results:

- Only 4.5% of women who were physically assaulted contacted a crisis organisation.
- 19% of women who were physically assaulted in the previous 12-month period contacted the police.
- 42% gave the main reason for not contacting police after the last incident that they wished to deal with it themselves.
- 58% of women physically assaulted in the previous 12-month period discussed their experience with a friend or neighbour.

### ***How domestic violence is recorded***

Whether abuse is actually recorded as domestic violence will depend on how domestic violence is defined. For example, if domestic violence is largely

recorded in terms of physical abuse, many women who experience sexual abuse or abuse of a psychological nature will remain undetected.

Criticism has also been levelled at research methodologies that narrowly categorise domestic violence. For example, studies using one of the most commonly used research tools, the Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS) (Straus & Gelles 1986), have been criticised for a number of reasons. Bagshaw and Chung (2000) argue that the CTS:

- gives no consideration to the meaning or intent of acts of violence;
- makes no distinction between attack and defence;
- does not include many violent acts associated with domestic violence, such as burning, suffocating, squeezing, spanking, scratching, sexual assault and many forms of psychological, social and economic abuse.

Researchers and policy analysts have recognised the need for a more comprehensive and systematic approach to the collection of data concerning family violence. Currently, a number of ongoing data collection projects have been initiated to ensure a more accurate knowledge base about this violence within the Australian community (e.g. Northern Territory Data Collection Project, Victorian Family Violence Database, and NSW Child Death Review Team).

## **What other statistics have been recorded?**

### ***Domestic homicide***

The first detailed study examining intimate partner homicides within the Australian context was undertaken by Alison Wallace in 1986. She found that nearly one quarter of all homicides in NSW occurred between spouses. The Australian Institute of Criminology study analysing homicides in Australia between 1989 and 1999 found that:

- 20.8% of all homicides involve intimate partners. This represents approximately 76 homicide incidents within Australia each year.

- Over three-quarters (76.9%) of these intimate partner homicides involved a male offender and a female victim.
  - Of these homicides, 65.8% occurred between current spouses or de-facto partners, whilst 22.6% occurred between separated/divorced spouses or de facto partners.
  - 10% occurred between current or former boy/girlfriends, and
  - 2% occurred within same sex relationships (Mouzos 2000, p. 115).

In almost half of spousal homicides, there is a clear history of preceding violence (Morgan 2002, p. 26).

Differences occur with respect to domestic homicides occurring within particular communities. For example:

- Indigenous women are far more likely to be killed by their partner than non-Indigenous women. Just under half of all Indigenous homicides occur as a result of a domestic altercation (Mouzos 2001, p. 5). See section on Indigenous women for further information.
- Filipino women living in Australia are almost six times over-represented as victims of homicide, compared to other women (Cunneen & Stubbs 2002, p. 160).

### ***Children and Young People exposed to domestic violence***

Children are exposed to domestic violence by witnessing violence and abuse, intervening to protect their mother, being present in a household filled with violence and terrorising behaviours as well as being directly abused themselves.

Children are often present when there is violence and abuse being perpetrated against their mother. The *Women's Safety Australia* (1996) survey found that:

- 38.3% of women experiencing violence from a current partner said that children had witnessed the violence.

- 45.8% of women who experienced violence by a previous partner said that children in their care had witnessed the violence.

Police data collected by the Victorian Family Violence Database reported that just over 45% of family violence incidents (1999-2000 & 2000-2001) had one or more children present (VCCAV 2002, p.12). Approximately 55% of those seeking assistance from Victorian SAAP Services (1999-2000) because of domestic violence had one or more children accompanying them (VCCAV 2002, p. 12).

It has been suggested that the rate of children's exposure to domestic violence is higher than the figures above, as research with children and young people indicates that they have a higher level of awareness of the violence than their mothers report. Children do not have to directly witness or be involved in violent episodes in order to be affected.

More recent research published by National Crime Prevention, *Young Australians and Domestic Violence* (2001), found that up to one-quarter of young people (aged 12-20 years old) in Australia have witnessed an incident of physical domestic violence against their mother or stepmother. Witnessing male to female parental violence ranged from 14 per cent for those living with both biological parents to 41 per cent for those living with their mother and her partner.

Children also experience domestic violence when intervening to protect their mother. One third of children in a Western Australian study conducted by Blanchard, Molloy and Brown (1992), were hit by their father while trying to defend their mother or stop the violence.

### ***Coexistence of domestic violence and child abuse***

In addition to exposure to domestic violence, it is estimated that in 30% to 60% of families where domestic violence is a factor, child abuse is also occurring (Edleson 1999). Child protection agencies acknowledge that domestic violence is not always identified as a presenting problem but, once intervention and or investigation is undertaken, it is commonly identified as an

issue. In NSW, the Child Death Review Team (2001) found that, in 18 out of the 19 cases reviewed where the death occurred as a result of physical abuse and neglect, there was a background of domestic violence (2000-2001).

The Northern Territory Data Collection Project (commenced in 1994) compiles data on incidents of domestic violence with the cooperation of 31 organisations within the Territory (who fill out data collection forms) and the police computerised information system. The 1999-2000 Data Collection project recorded that:

- 1,787 children and young people were exposed to domestic violence from July 1999 to June 2000.

This data also showed:

Type of violence child/young person exposed to	Number of incidents	%
Physical	1220	68
Emotional/psychological	1485	83
Sexual	171	10
Economic	567	32
Social	663	37
Spiritual or cultural	488	27
Total no. of types of violence is greater than no. of incidents as young people experienced more than one type of violence.		

(Adriaansen & Jacob 2001, Attachment 5, p. 12)

In addition to data collection projects, a small number of Australian studies have also examined this issue. Notably, Stanley and Goddard (1993), researchers based at Monash University, Victoria, conducted a study examining twenty families (cases randomly selected within one Community Services Office in Victoria) where child abuse had been reported. They found that within the 20 cases, physical violence between adult partners occurred in 60% of the families. Children experienced the following forms of abuse within this context (recorded as confirmed or suspected):



<i>Physical</i>	<i>Sexual</i>	<i>Psychological</i>	<i>Neglect</i>
15	12	19	18

Goddard and Hiller (1993) surveyed 206 cases of child abuse, and found that domestic violence occurred in 40% of the sexual abuse cases and in 50% of the physical abuse cases.

In a Brisbane study, Cadzow, Armstrong and Frazer (1999) interviewed 151 women 7 months postpartum and found domestic violence to be a significant risk factor for child abuse.

### ***Young peoples' attitudes to domestic violence***

In addition to quantifying the incidence of children and young people's exposure to domestic violence, the National Crime Prevention (2000) study, *Young People and Domestic Violence*, interviewed 5000 young people aged 12-20 years of age about their attitudes to domestic violence. The study revealed:

- 92% believed domestic violence to be either very or quite serious
- One in twenty considered forcing a partner to have sex, throwing things like plates at each other and regular slapping or punching to be part of "normal conflict" rather than "domestic violence".
- 37% of males and 12% of females agreed with the statement "men should take control in relationships and be the head of the household".

### ***Pregnancy***

- Of women surveyed by the *Women's Safety Australia* study who experienced violence by a previous partner, 42% experienced violence during the pregnancy, with half of these women stating that violence occurred for the first time while they were pregnant (ABS 1996).
- 29.7% of women presenting to an antenatal clinic at a Brisbane hospital disclosed that they had experienced abuse over their lifetime and that 80% of abusers were current or ex partners (Webster 1994).

Other studies report similar findings but caution that many women experiencing problems as a direct consequence of violence do not disclose this important history. In many cases the available data does not make it possible to distinguish whether partner abuse directed towards the pregnant woman is a continuation of abuse or specific to the period of pregnancy. With the introduction of screening tools within health settings, including antenatal clinics, it may be possible in the future to more accurately assess this.

Both adolescent women and Indigenous women appear at increased risk of experiencing violence during pregnancy. A number of studies clearly show enormous health consequences for women experiencing violence during pregnancy. For example abused pregnant women experience:

- Higher rates of serious mental disorder, harmful drug and alcohol abuse (Roberts et al. 1998).
- Higher rate of genital tract infection, pap smear abnormalities and anaemia (Quinlivan & Evans 2001)
- Severe levels of violence, such as being pushed, shoved, slapped, (23.5%) and kicked, bitten and hit with a fist (13.2%) (Webster 1994).

### ***Indigenous women***

Indigenous women experience violence at far higher rates than non-Indigenous women.

- Indigenous women are the victims of homicide at a rate that is 10 times greater than the rate for non-Indigenous women (Strang 1992).
- Based on offences reported to police in Western Australia, Indigenous women are 45 times more likely to experience family violence than non-Indigenous women (Ferrante et al. 1996).
- 69% of assault cases against Aboriginal women were carried out by the spouse or partner (Aboriginal Justice Council 1999).

Comparing violence towards spouses between Aboriginal communities and non-Aboriginal communities in Western Australia, Ferrante et al. (1996) found

that 39.5% of Indigenous women experienced serious assaults as compared to 7.5% of non-Aboriginal women.

According to Indigenous author and researcher, Judy Atkinson, there have been more deaths of Aboriginal women through assault than there have been deaths of Aboriginal people in custody. Atkinson supports her statement by referring to data highlighting the death of five women within the Cape York Peninsula area where no charges were laid (Lucashenko 1997, p. 154).

Reasons for the higher rates of Indigenous family violence have been reviewed. The Northern Territory Data Collection Project report highlighted that Indigenous Territorians generally conduct their lifestyle and activities in the "public arena" and accordingly, when altercations do occur within a family, violence may be harder to conceal and more likely to be drawn to the attention of external support services. The *Violence in Indigenous Communities* report (Memmott et al. 2001) also refers to multi-causal factors that explain higher rates of violence within Aboriginal communities. Historical circumstances, the loss of land and traditional culture, the disempowerment of traditional elders, breakdown of community kinship systems and Aboriginal law, entrenched poverty and racism are clearly factors underlying the use of violence.

### ***Women from non-English speaking backgrounds***

Little research has been undertaken which analyses the incidence of domestic violence experienced by women from culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

- 7.5% of women born in non-English speaking countries had experienced violence by their partner during the course of their relationship (ABS 1996, p. 56). Data concerning women from non-English speaking backgrounds should be viewed as conservative estimates as the literature identifies many barriers that prevent immigrant and refugee women from accessing services.

- 13.1% of women in SAAP funded services during 1999-00 were women from a non-English speaking background (AIHW 2000).
- As stated previously, Filipino women living in Australia are almost six times over-represented as victims of homicide compared to other women (Cunneen & Stubbs 2002, p. 160).

### ***Women with disabilities***

Women with disabilities represent 16% of the adult female population of Australia. Despite this, there is a lack of data directly relating to women with disabilities and domestic violence.

- Overseas studies have found that women with disabilities, regardless of age, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation or class are assaulted, raped and abused at a rate of between two and twelve times greater than women without disabilities (Mulder 1995).
- 5% of domestic violence incidents involved victims with a disability (NT Data Collection Report 1999-2000).

### ***Gay and Lesbian domestic violence***

Data on domestic violence in gay and lesbian relationships in Australia is almost non-existent. McQuarrie (1995, p. 39) states, 'although no research has ever been done, guestimates suggest that up to 25% of same-sex relationships could be affected.' Others have also commented that prevalence rates are not dissimilar to those in heterosexual relationships. Papers from the First National Conference on Violence and Abuse within Lesbian Relationships (Irwin 1997) highlighted that it has been difficult to talk about violence within relationships within the lesbian community, let alone the broader community, and that there is little documented evidence available.

The NSW Police Service *Out of the Blue* report (Thompson 1995) provided details of the experiences of violence of gay men and lesbian through a survey administered at Mardi Gras Fair Day in 1994:

- 5% of lesbians and 5% of gay men who responded to the survey, stated they had experienced domestic violence within the previous 12 months.
- Barriers to reporting incidents to the police were highlighted with many reporting that there was little they thought the police could do.
- Results also indicated that lesbians expressed higher fear levels about sexual assault and domestic violence than gay men and that they were twice as fearful of experiencing domestic violence than the general female population.

### **Older women**

In recent years more research is focusing on the incidence and impact of domestic violence on older women. Typically, older women are low users of support services and thus, less likely to report violence.

- According to the ABS *Women's Safety Australia* (1996) data, 2.1% of women aged between 45-54 experienced physical or sexual violence by their partner in the previous 12 months (ABS 1996, p. 50).
- Of women born 1935-45 who are participating in the Melbourne Women's Longitudinal Health Study (Duncan 2002, p.19), 5.5% had experienced physical violence from their partner in the last year.
- 29.6% of women aged 50-69 years participating in a Melbourne General Practice study experienced physical and/or emotional abuse by their partner in the last year (Mazza et al. 2001, p. 200).

### **Rural women**

With better recording mechanisms, data concerning domestic violence in rural and remote communities is slowly emerging. A National SAAP data collection report during 1997-98 calculated the following rates of domestic violence for females over 15 years per 1000 population:

Capital city	4.29
--------------	------

Other metropolitan centre	4.39
Large rural centre	9.95
Other rural area	6.18
Remote area	20.86

(WESNET 2000, p. 4)

SAAP data also indicated that 11% of domestic violence clients in remote areas obtained restraining orders. This figure represents half of the national average of domestic violence clients who obtained orders, who were currently in SAAP services (WESNET 2000).

- 54% of all reported incidents in WA occurred outside the Perth Metropolitan area. However, only 24% of applications for restraining orders came from these areas (Ferrante et al. 1996).
- In comparison, higher rates for Apprehended Violence Orders granted in 2000 in NSW were in non-metropolitan areas (NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research 2000).

In a report for the Commonwealth Department of Transport and Regional Services, 'Domestic Violence in Regional Australia', the authors state, "Whilst there is no difference in overall homicide rates, a significantly higher proportion of overall victims in rural and remote areas are female spouses killed in domestic violence related incidences" (WESNET 2000, p. 8).

## **Where can I find statistics about domestic violence in each state or territory?**

### **AUSTRALIA**

#### **Australian Bureau of Statistics**

*Women's Safety Australia*

[www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs%40.nsf/5e3ac7411e37881aca2568b0007afd16/b62deb3ac52a2574ca2568a900139340!OpenDocument](http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs%40.nsf/5e3ac7411e37881aca2568b0007afd16/b62deb3ac52a2574ca2568a900139340!OpenDocument)

*Special Article - Violence Against Women (Year Book Australia, 1998)*

<http://www.abs.gov.au/Ausstats/abs%40.nsf/94713ad445ff1425ca25682000192af2/0b565c403b0a0356ca2569de0025631c!OpenDocument>

### **Young People and Domestic Violence**

*National Research on Young People's attitudes and experiences of domestic violence: Fact Sheet*

[http://sgeaq001web.ag.gov.au/www/rwpattach.nsf/viewasattachmentPersonal/7A674D876AFB335ECA256B4300042518/\\$file/no10\\_factsheet.pdf](http://sgeaq001web.ag.gov.au/www/rwpattach.nsf/viewasattachmentPersonal/7A674D876AFB335ECA256B4300042518/$file/no10_factsheet.pdf)

### **AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY**

urbis keys young 2001, *Evaluation of the ACT Family Violence Intervention Program Phase II: Final Report*, ACT Department of Justice and Community Safety, Canberra. See our Research & Resources database #1156.

### **NEW SOUTH WALES**

#### **NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research**

*Apprehended Violence Orders granted in 1998. NSW Criminal Courts - Local Courts*

[www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au/bocsar1.nsf/pages/lc\\_2000\\_avo](http://www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au/bocsar1.nsf/pages/lc_2000_avo)

#### **Women's Domestic Violence Court Assistance Program**

*Statistics from 1997/98 and 1998/99*

[www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au/lc/dvlink.nsf/pages/cap\\_stats](http://www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au/lc/dvlink.nsf/pages/cap_stats)

## **NORTHERN TERRITORY**

### **Northern Territory Government Domestic Violence Strategy**

*Data Collection Project Report 1999 -2000*

<http://www.owp.nt.gov.au/dcm/owp/pdf%20files/DOMESTIC.PDF>

## **QUEENSLAND**

### **Office of Economic and Statistical Research**

*Queensland Crime Victimization Survey 2000*

[www.oesr.qld.gov.au/data/publications/crime\\_pub/cvs2000/cvs2000.pdf](http://www.oesr.qld.gov.au/data/publications/crime_pub/cvs2000/cvs2000.pdf)

### **Department of Families, Queensland Government**

*Families Information Gateway*

[www.families.qld.gov.au/faminfogate/current/communitysupport/tab\\_domviol\\_ord.html](http://www.families.qld.gov.au/faminfogate/current/communitysupport/tab_domviol_ord.html)

[www.families.qld.gov.au/communitycare/dv.html](http://www.families.qld.gov.au/communitycare/dv.html)

## **SOUTH AUSTRALIA**

### **Central Violence Intervention Program**

*Annual Statistics*

[www.salvationarmy.org.au/cvip/statistics.asp](http://www.salvationarmy.org.au/cvip/statistics.asp)

## **TASMANIA**

### **Women Tasmania**

*Infosheet No. 11 – Shelter Usage and Domestic Violence Crisis Service Contacts*

[www.women.tas.gov.au/resources/information/infosheets/domviolence.html](http://www.women.tas.gov.au/resources/information/infosheets/domviolence.html)



## **VICTORIA**

### **Victorian Community Council Against Violence**

*Victorian Family Violence Database: First Report.*

[http://www.vccav.vic.gov.au/CA256902000FE154/Lookup/Downloads/\\$file/First %20Report %20Revised.pdf](http://www.vccav.vic.gov.au/CA256902000FE154/Lookup/Downloads/$file/First%20Report%20Revised.pdf)

### **Domestic Violence and Incest Resource Centre**

*Statistics*

<http://home.vicnet.net.au/~dvirc/Statistics.htm>

## **WESTERN AUSTRALIA**

### **The Crime Research Centre, University of Western Australia**

[www.law.ecel.uwa.edu.au/crc/publications/books/dv.htm](http://www.law.ecel.uwa.edu.au/crc/publications/books/dv.htm)

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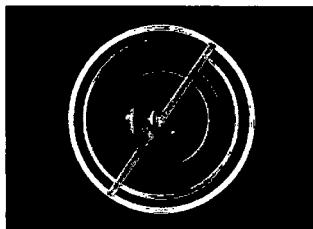
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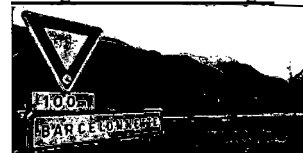
Sunday was the [International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women](#)

([http://www.who.int/violence\\_injury\\_prevention/en/](http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/en/)) and the launch of this year's [16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence](http://16dayswgl.rutgers.edu/) (<http://16dayswgl.rutgers.edu/>). In the time it takes me to write this paragraph, 26 people -- given our statistics probably all women -- will be assaulted by an intimate partner in the U.S. In the roughly 48 hours between my writing and posting, at least six women in the US and hundreds if

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not thousands around the world will be killed ([http://www.alternet.org/story/71309/three\\_women\\_are\\_murdered\\_by\\_their\\_husbands\\_bovfriends\\_every\\_day\\_in\\_america](http://www.alternet.org/story/71309/three_women_are_murdered_by_their_husbands_bovfriends_every_day_in_america)) by violent spouses. So, what does it mean that Republicans in Congress have degraded (<http://www.nytimes.com/2012/11/25/opinion/sunday/the-gop-and-violence-against-women.html>) and continue to hold up passage (<http://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/112/hr4970>) of the Violence Against Women Act ([http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/vawa\\_factsheet.pdf](http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/vawa_factsheet.pdf)) (VAWA) for the first time since 1994?

According to an exhaustively comprehensive study ([http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2012/04/24/what\\_sex\\_means\\_for\\_world\\_peace](http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2012/04/24/what_sex_means_for_world_peace)), the U.S. is squarely in the middle of the global pack (<http://womanstats.org/newmapspage.html>) as far as the physical safety of women is concerned, and a large part of the reason why is our high rates of intimate partner and domestic violence. And, yes, I am putting our country (<http://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2012/03/how-ioseph-stalin-invented-american-exceptionalism/254534/>) in the same area of comparison as the rest of the world.

16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence (<http://16dayscwg.rutgers.edu/>), started in 1991, is coordinated by the Center for Women's Global Leadership (<http://www.cwgl.rutgers.edu/>) at Rutgers. This year's theme, *From Peace in the Home to Peace in the World*, is focused on how the worldwide proliferation of small arms exponentially increases the threats that women and children face. This is a special problem in the U.S. where, although we are not a militarized zone in technical terms, we rank ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Number\\_of\\_guns\\_per\\_capita\\_by\\_country](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Number_of_guns_per_capita_by_country)) No. 1 in the world for guns/per capita, with 88 guns/100 people -- far exceeding the second on the list, Serbia, at 58.2/100. Access to firearms increases (<http://ajph.aphapublications.org/doi/abs/10.2105/AJPH.93.7.1089>) the chance of deadly domestic violence five-fold in the U.S. Internationally, especially (<http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/security/report/2010/03/10/7511/stoppping-the-destructive-spread-of-small-arms/>) in militarized areas where people are actively engaged in warfare or where the state is abusive and heavily armed, the threats are far greater (<http://www.cwgl.rutgers.edu/gender-based-violence/388-intersections-of-violence-against-women-and-militarism-meeting-report-2011>).

It's been 693 days since VAWA expired (<http://www.buzzfeed.com/chrisgeidner/advocates-to-make-domestic-violence-bill-push-on-w>). Despite real and profound harm taking place every day, VAWA remains hostage to those whose reasoning results in only some violence and abuse being "legitimate (<http://www.nytimes.com/2012/11/25/opinion/sunday/the-gop-and-violence-against-women.html>)" and only some people (<http://www.motheiones.com/politics/2012/03/republicans-violence-against-women-act>) deserving of legal protection. So, for example, homosexuals, transsexuals, immigrants and native Americans assaulted by non-Native Americans ([http://www.nytimes.com/2012/05/14/opinion/backward-on-domestic-violence.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/05/14/opinion/backward-on-domestic-violence.html?_r=0)) are not quite ([http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/05/16/house-passes-violence-against-women-act\\_n\\_1522524.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/05/16/house-passes-violence-against-women-act_n_1522524.html)) citizens enough. "Hostile," which is a word (<http://www.nytimes.com/2012/05/14/opinion/backward-on-domestic-violence.html>) that can and has been used to describe the tenor of Republican objections, isn't just a metaphor when you are talking about thousands of people (some of whom may be homosexuals, transsexuals, immigrants or Native American women assaulted by non-Tribal men), routinely humiliated, hit, kicked, raped, stalked, beaten, strangled and murdered every day, most often by spouses. As with rape ([http://www.huffingtonpost.com/soraya-chemaly/50-facts-rape\\_b\\_2019338.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/soraya-chemaly/50-facts-rape_b_2019338.html)), some information regarding domestic violence might be useful. I know that the topic is difficult, but I'm with Mansur Gidfar, who earlier this year asked in an article (<http://www.upworthy.com/dont-believe-in-the-war-on-women-would-a-body-count-change-your-mind>) in which he shared a jarring graphic comparing the first two facts below: "Would A Body Count Change Your Mind?" Because something has to change so that we reauthorize VAWA as quickly as possible.

**50 Facts About Domestic Violence**



Number of [U.S. troops killed \(http://apps.washingtonpost.com/national/fallen/\)](http://apps.washingtonpost.com/national/fallen/) in Afghanistan and Iraq: 6,614:

Number of women, in the same period, [killed \(http://www.upworthy.com/dont-believe-in-the-war-on-women-would-a-body-count-change-your-mind\)](http://www.upworthy.com/dont-believe-in-the-war-on-women-would-a-body-count-change-your-mind) as the result of domestic violence in the US: 11,766

Number of people per minute [who experience \(http://www.cdc.gov/ViolencePrevention/pdf/IPV\\_Factsheet2012-a.pdf\)](http://www.cdc.gov/ViolencePrevention/pdf/IPV_Factsheet2012-a.pdf)

intimate partner violence in the U.S.: 24

Number of [workplace violence incidents \(http://opdv.state.ny.us/statistics/nationaldvdata/nationaldvdata.pdf\)](http://opdv.state.ny.us/statistics/nationaldvdata/nationaldvdata.pdf) in the U.S. annually that are the result of current or past intimate partner assaults: 18,700

Number of women in the U.S. [who report \(http://www.cdc.gov/ViolencePrevention/intimatepartnerviolence/consequences.html\)](http://www.cdc.gov/ViolencePrevention/intimatepartnerviolence/consequences.html)

intimate partner violence: 1 in 4

Number of men in the U.S. [who report \(http://www.cdc.gov/ViolencePrevention/intimatepartnerviolence/consequences.html\)](http://www.cdc.gov/ViolencePrevention/intimatepartnerviolence/consequences.html)

intimate partner violence: 1 in 7\*

Number of women who [will experience \(http://www.who.int/violence\\_injury\\_prevention/violence/global\\_campaign/16\\_days/en/index.html\)](http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/global_campaign/16_days/en/index.html)

partner violence worldwide: [1 in 3 \(http://www.stopvaw.org/prevalence\\_of\\_domestic\\_violence\)](http://www.stopvaw.org/prevalence_of_domestic_violence)

Order of causes of death for [European women \(http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/ACT77/001/2005/en\)](http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/ACT77/001/2005/en) ages 16-44:

domestic violence, cancer, traffic accidents

Increase in likelihood that a woman [will die \(http://16davscwgl.rutgers.edu/\) a violent death \(http://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJM199310073291506#t=article\)](http://16davscwgl.rutgers.edu/) if a

gun is present in the home: 270 percent

Number of women [killed by spouses \(http://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=i&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&ved=0CC4QFiAA&url=http%3A%2F%2F16davscwgl.rutgers.edu%2Fcomponent%2Fdocman%2Fdoc\\_download%2F441-domestic-violence-a-small-armspdf&ei=oDq1UIS4KIf0ogGpq4GYDO&usg=AFQjCNEmSaE5tokHiHLf6f-ZTVCgOfOIOW\)](http://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=i&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&ved=0CC4QFiAA&url=http%3A%2F%2F16davscwgl.rutgers.edu%2Fcomponent%2Fdocman%2Fdoc_download%2F441-domestic-violence-a-small-armspdf&ei=oDq1UIS4KIf0ogGpq4GYDO&usg=AFQjCNEmSaE5tokHiHLf6f-ZTVCgOfOIOW) who were shot by guns kept by men in the home in [France and South Africa \(http://16davscwgl.rutgers.edu/\)](http://16davscwgl.rutgers.edu/); 1 in 3

Percentage of the 900 million [small arms that are kept in the home \(http://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=i&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&ved=0CDEOFiAA&url=http%3A%2F%2F16davscwgl.rutgers.edu%2Fcomponent%2Fdocman%2Fdoc\\_download%2F441-domestic-violence-a-small-armspdf&ei=9Dq1UIWbA7OG0GDsIAI&usg=AFQjCNEmSaE5tokHiHLf6f-ZTVCgOfOIOW\)](http://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=i&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&ved=0CDEOFiAA&url=http%3A%2F%2F16davscwgl.rutgers.edu%2Fcomponent%2Fdocman%2Fdoc_download%2F441-domestic-violence-a-small-armspdf&ei=9Dq1UIWbA7OG0GDsIAI&usg=AFQjCNEmSaE5tokHiHLf6f-ZTVCgOfOIOW), worldwide: 75

Country in which 943 women were killed in [honor killings \(http://www.hrcp-web.org/pdf/AR2011/Rights%20of%20the%20disadvantage.pdf\)](http://www.hrcp-web.org/pdf/AR2011/Rights%20of%20the%20disadvantage.pdf) in 2011: Pakistan

City in which man "butchered (<http://www.ijihadwatch.org/2012/06/muslim-shouting-allahu-akbar-beheads-wife-in-front-of-their-six-children-throws-her-head-off-apartme.html>)" his wife in front of their six children in 2012: Berlin

States in which man [decapitated \(http://www.ktla.com/news/landing/ktla-texas-chainsaw-murder\\_o.372936.story\)](http://www.ktla.com/news/landing/ktla-texas-chainsaw-murder_o.372936.story) his wife with a chainsaw in 2010 and another man [did the same \(http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/29189095/ns/us\\_news-crime\\_and\\_courts/t/man-arrested-wifes-beheading/#.ULPoH5hNMng\)](http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/29189095/ns/us_news-crime_and_courts/t/man-arrested-wifes-beheading/#.ULPoH5hNMng),

respectively: Texas and New York

Percentages of people killed in the U.S. by an [intimate partner \(http://www.bjs.gov/content/intimate/victims.cfm\)](http://www.bjs.gov/content/intimate/victims.cfm): 30 percent of women, 5.3 percent of men.

Number of [gay and bisexual men who experience \(http://www.uncfsp.org/projects/userfiles/File/DCE-STOP\\_NOW/NCADV\\_LGBT\\_Fact\\_Sheet.pdf\)](http://www.uncfsp.org/projects/userfiles/File/DCE-STOP_NOW/NCADV_LGBT_Fact_Sheet.pdf) domestic violence in the U.S.: 2 in 5 (similar to heterosexual women)

Percentage of the 31 Senate votes [cast against \(http://www.senate.gov/legislative/LIS/roll\\_call\\_lists/roll\\_call\\_vote\\_cfm.cfm?congress=112&session=2&vote=00087\)](http://www.senate.gov/legislative/LIS/roll_call_lists/roll_call_vote_cfm.cfm?congress=112&session=2&vote=00087) the Violence Against Women Act that came from [older, white, male Republicans \(http://front.moveon.org/the-31-republican-senators-who-voted-no-on-the-violence-against-women-act/\)](http://front.moveon.org/the-31-republican-senators-who-voted-no-on-the-violence-against-women-act/): 95.8

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Percentage of the 31 Senate votes cast against the Violence Against Women Act ([http://www.senate.gov/legislative/LIS/roll\\_call\\_lists/roll\\_call\\_vote\\_cfm.cfm?congress=112&session=2&vote=00087](http://www.senate.gov/legislative/LIS/roll_call_lists/roll_call_vote_cfm.cfm?congress=112&session=2&vote=00087)) that came from a younger, male Republican, at least one (<http://takingnote.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/11/19/marco-rubio-is-not-a-scientist/>) of whom sits on the Science Committee but is unable to say how old the Earth is: 4.2

Number of legal, medical, professional, faith-based and advocacy groups that signed a letter protesting the stripped-down VAWA (<http://democrats.judiciary.house.gov/sites/democrats.judiciary.house.gov/files/documents/ORG%26INDIV120514.pdf>): 300

First year that the Republican-led House of Representatives graded VAWA (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2012/05/14/addressing-violence-against-native-women-violence-against-women-act-reauthorization>) of provisions designed to increase protections for Native Americans, immigrant women, members of the LGBTQ community and, yes, men: 2012

Estimated number of children, worldwide, exposed (<http://www.thecenteronline.org/learn-more/did-you-know>) to domestic violence everyday: 10,000,000

Worldwide, likelihood ([http://www.who.int/violence\\_injury\\_prevention/violence/global\\_campaign/16\\_days/en/index7.html](http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/global_campaign/16_days/en/index7.html)) that a man who grew up in a household with domestic violence grows up to be an abuser: 3 to 4 times more likely than if he hadn't.

Chance that a girl of high school age in the U.S. experiences (<http://www.womenhelpingwomen.org/what-is-abuse/teen-dating-violence/>) violence (<http://www.nccdglobal.org/publications>) in a dating relationship: 1 in 3

Percentage of teen rape and abuse victims who report ([http://www.cdc.gov/ViolencePrevention/intimatepartnerviolence/teen\\_dating\\_violence.html](http://www.cdc.gov/ViolencePrevention/intimatepartnerviolence/teen_dating_violence.html)) their assailant (<http://www.wvu.edu/~lawfac/mmcdiarmid/doj%20data%20on%20sex%20crime%20recidivism.pdf>) as an intimate: 76

Percentage of U.S. cities citing domestic abuse as the primary cause (<http://www.nationalhomeless.org/factsheets/whv.html>) of homelessness: 50

Percentage of homeless women (<http://nnedv.org/policy/issues/housing.html>) reporting domestic abuse: 63

Percentage of homeless women with children ([http://www.icphusa.org/PDF/reports/ICPH\\_brief\\_HousingAssistanceCriticalforSurvivorsofDV.pdf](http://www.icphusa.org/PDF/reports/ICPH_brief_HousingAssistanceCriticalforSurvivorsofDV.pdf)) reporting domestic abuse: 92

Percentage of women with disabilities (<http://www.vaw.umn.edu/documents/inbriefs/domesticviolence/domesticviolence.html>) who report violence: 40

Annual cost of domestic violence in the U.S. related to health care ([http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/pub-res/ipv\\_cost/ipvbook-final-feb18.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/pub-res/ipv_cost/ipvbook-final-feb18.pdf)): \$5.8 billion

Annual cost of domestic violence in the U.S. related to emergency care plus (<http://www.safehorizon.org/index/what-we-do-2/domestic-violence--abuse-53/domestic-violence-the-facts-195.html>) legal costs, police work, lost productivity: 37 billion dollars

Annual number of jobs lost in the U.S. (<http://www.cdc.gov/ViolencePrevention/intimatepartnerviolence/consequences.html>) as a result of intimate partner violence: 32,000

Percentage change between 1980 and 2008 of women and men killed (<http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr/ucr>) by intimate partners in the U.S.: (w) 43 percent to 45 percent; (m) 10 percent to 5 percent

Average cost of emergency care ([http://www.caepv.org/getinfo/facts\\_stats.php?factsec=2](http://www.caepv.org/getinfo/facts_stats.php?factsec=2)) for domestic abuse related incidents for women and men according to the CDC: \$948.00 for women, \$387 for men

Increase in portrayals of violence ([http://articles.courant.com/2009-11-29/news/hc-commentary/mccall-battered112.artnov29\\_1\\_tv-watch-violence-intimate-partners](http://articles.courant.com/2009-11-29/news/hc-commentary/mccall-battered112.artnov29_1_tv-watch-violence-intimate-partners)) against girls and women on network TV during a five year period ending in 2009: 120 percent

The number one cause of death ([http://www.americanbar.org/groups/domestic\\_violence/resources/statistics.html#african\\_americans](http://www.americanbar.org/groups/domestic_violence/resources/statistics.html#african_americans)) for African American women ages 15-34 according to the American Bar Association: homicide at the hands of a partner

Chance that a lesbian\*\* in the U.S. will experience ([\[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/soraya-chemaly/50-actual-facts-about-dom\\\_b\\\_21939...\]\(http://www.huffingtonpost.com/soraya-chemaly/50-actual-facts-about-dom\_b\_21939...\) 25/03/2015](http://www.uncfsp.org/projects/userfiles/File/DCE-</a></p>
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[STOP NOW/NCADV LGBT Fact Sheet.pdf](#) domestic (not necessarily intimate partner) violence: 50 percent

Chances that a gay man experiences domestic violence: 2 out of 5 ([http://www.uncfsp.org/projects/userfiles/File/DCE-STOP\\_NOW/NCADV\\_LGBT\\_Fact\\_Sheet.pdf](http://www.uncfsp.org/projects/userfiles/File/DCE-STOP_NOW/NCADV_LGBT_Fact_Sheet.pdf)\*)

Ratio of women shot and killed (<http://www.vpc.org/studies/wmmw2004.pdf>) by a husband or intimate partner compared to the total number of murders of men by strangers using any type of weapon, from 2002 homicide figures: 3X

Number of people who will be stalked in their lifetimes ([http://www.americanbar.org/groups/domestic\\_violence/resources/statistics.html](http://www.americanbar.org/groups/domestic_violence/resources/statistics.html)): 1 in 45 men and 1 in 12 women (broken out ([http://www.americanbar.org/groups/domestic\\_violence/resources/statistics.html](http://www.americanbar.org/groups/domestic_violence/resources/statistics.html)))

17 percent of American Indian and Alaska Native women; 8.2 percent of white women, 6.5 percent of African American women, and 4.5 percent of Asian/Pacific Islander women)

Percentage of stalkers (<http://opdv.state.ny.us/statistics/nationaldvdata/nationaldvdata.pdf>) identified as known (<http://www.victimsofcrime.org/library/crime-information-and-statistics/stalking>) to victims: 90.3

Percentage of abused women in the U.S. who report being strangled by a spouse ([http://www.sp2.upenn.edu/ortner/docs/factsheet\\_strangulation.pdf](http://www.sp2.upenn.edu/ortner/docs/factsheet_strangulation.pdf)) in the past year: 33 to 47.3 (this abuse often leaves no physical signs)

According to one study, percentage of domestic abuse victims who are tried to leave after less severe violent (<https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/jr000250d.pdf>) and nonviolent instances of abuse: 66 versus less than 25

Average number of times an abuser hits his spouse ([http://www.doorwaysva.org/domestic-violence/the\\_facts\\_about\\_domestic\\_violence/](http://www.doorwaysva.org/domestic-violence/the_facts_about_domestic_violence/)) before she makes a police report: 35

No. 1 and No. 2 causes of women's deaths during pregnancy in the U.S. (<http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/10/27/health-pregnancy-violent-idUSL3E7LR03R20111027>): Domestic homicide and suicide, often tied to abuse

Number of women killed by spouses who were shot by guns kept by men in the home in the United States: (<http://16dayscwp.rutgers.edu/>) 2 in 3

Percentage of rape and sexual assault victims under the age of 18 who are raped by a family member (<http://www.rainn.org/get-information/statistics/sexual-assault-victims>): 34

Number of women killed everyday (<http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/intimatepartnerviolence/index.html>) in the U.S. by a spouse: 3+

The primary reason cited by right-wing conservatives for objecting (<http://www.saveservices.org/wp-content/uploads/CWA-VAWAtr.2.1.2012.pdf>) to the Violence Against Women Act: To protect the family.

Percentage reduction in reports of violence ([http://www.who.int/violence\\_injury\\_prevention/violence/global\\_campaign/16\\_days/en/index10.html](http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/global_campaign/16_days/en/index10.html)) after men and women in South Africa went through an educational training program on health, domestic violence and gender norms: 55

Number of members of Congress who have gone through an educational training program on health, economics, violence, and gender norms: 0

These are only some of the reasons why we should #PassVAWA2012 (<http://4vawa.org/>).

Globally and domestically, violence against women is pandemic (<http://www.rhrealitycheck.org/article/2012/09/24/violence-against-women-is-still-global-pandemic>). And it primarily happens in the context of the home. Women are the overwhelming targets of intimate partner and domestic violence. Everyone suffers. The women suffer long term social, emotional, physical and economic trauma ([http://www.who.int/violence\\_injury\\_prevention/violence/global\\_campaign/16\\_days/en/index2.html](http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/global_campaign/16_days/en/index2.html)). Their children, likewise ([http://www.who.int/violence\\_injury\\_prevention/violence/global\\_campaign/16\\_days/en/index3.html](http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/global_campaign/16_days/en/index3.html)) -- girls being more likely (<http://www.safehorizon.org/index/what-we-do-2/domestic-violence--abuse-53/domestic-violence-the-facts-195.html>) to become victims, boys abusers. Men who abuse (<http://www.pbs.org/kued/nosafeface/interv/hanks.html>) are untreated, controlling, violent and stripped of their humanity. The societal costs are great: everything from increased poverty and homelessness to maternal mortality and expensive emergency health care provisions. The drain on economies (<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/vaw/expert%20brief%20costs.pdf>) is deep

and clear. And last, but certainly not least, [violence in the home is the surest predictor of violence at the state level](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/soraya-chemaly/violence-against-women_b_1959746.html) ([http://www.huffingtonpost.com/soraya-chemaly/violence-against-women\\_b\\_1959746.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/soraya-chemaly/violence-against-women_b_1959746.html)), a tolerance for such violence reflecting a propensity for militarization and war. These violences are [preventable](http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/activities/intimate/en/index.html) ([http://www.who.int/violence\\_injury\\_prevention/violence/activities/intimate/en/index.html](http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/activities/intimate/en/index.html)).

The fact that in [some countries](http://in.reuters.com/article/2011/06/15/idINIndia-57704120110615) (<http://in.reuters.com/article/2011/06/15/idINIndia-57704120110615>) obvious (<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/asia/fate-of-women-still-tied-to-arranged-marriages-in-posttaliban-afghanistan-8367593.html>) and extreme violence against women is practiced in systemic ways shouldn't be a reason to dismiss [our own](http://www.vday.org/take-action/violence-against-women/battery-abuse), (<http://www.vday.org/take-action/violence-against-women/battery-abuse>) which are [also](http://www.ktla.com/news/landing/ktla-texas-chainsaw-murder_0_372936_story) ([www.ktla.com/news/landing/ktla-texas-chainsaw-murder\\_0\\_372936\\_story](http://www.ktla.com/news/landing/ktla-texas-chainsaw-murder_0_372936_story)) sometimes on violent public display. Despite real declines, rates of domestic violence, battery, stalking and rape in this country remain unconscionably high. At the very least the people holding up VAWA's reauthorization should not simultaneously protest "[common sense reforms](http://www.npr.org/2012/07/28/157525024/the-nras-lock-on-the-gun-control-debate)" (<http://www.npr.org/2012/07/28/157525024/the-nras-lock-on-the-gun-control-debate>) on [gun](http://www.local8now.com/news/headlines/Police-Man-shoots-wife-has-standoff-with-authorities-166080386.html) (<http://www.local8now.com/news/headlines/Police-Man-shoots-wife-has-standoff-with-authorities-166080386.html>) control. There are [270,000,000 guns in households](http://www.gunpolicy.org/firearms/region/united-states) (<http://www.gunpolicy.org/firearms/region/united-states>) in this country. The [reductions in home-based violence](http://www.nnedv.org/policy/issues/funding.html) (<http://www.nnedv.org/policy/issues/funding.html>) that we have seen in the past two decades are due to increased awareness ([http://www.icadvinc.org/what-is-domestic-violence/history-of-battered-womens-movement/](http://www.icadvinc.org/what-is-domestic-violence/history-of-battered-womens-movement/http://www.icadvinc.org/what-is-domestic-violence/history-of-battered-womens-movement/)) and the passage of VAWA in 1994. Our failure to pass a robust VAWA puts these life-altering gains at risk. I suspect most people would rather not think about it. Even though, given the statistics, *everyone* knows people who are being abused, whether they realize it or not.

I often hear something along these lines: if only these women would just LEAVE their abusers. It's simple. A matter of poor choices and female weakness. In addition, everyone knows, women "[gold diggers and frauds](http://www.slate.com/blogs/xx_factor/2012/05/17/the_role_the_mail_order_bride_industry_plays_in_the_battle_over_the_violence_against_women)" ([http://www.slate.com/blogs/xx\\_factor/2012/05/17/the\\_role\\_the\\_mail\\_order\\_bride\\_industry\\_plays\\_in\\_the\\_battle\\_over\\_the\\_violence\\_against\\_women](http://www.slate.com/blogs/xx_factor/2012/05/17/the_role_the_mail_order_bride_industry_plays_in_the_battle_over_the_violence_against_women)) lie about these things. Besides, why should we worry, as [some point out](http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/news/opinion/forum/2011-02-03-sommers04_st_N.htm) ([http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/news/opinion/forum/2011-02-03-sommers04\\_st\\_N.htm](http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/news/opinion/forum/2011-02-03-sommers04_st_N.htm)) in disgust, "Western women, with few exceptions, are safe and free," these facts are "myths" and those loopy feminists and bleeding heart liberals [exaggerate](http://www.amptoons.com/blog/2009/01/27/response-to-christina-hoff-sommers-part-3-truths-and-lies/) (<http://www.amptoons.com/blog/2009/01/27/response-to-christina-hoff-sommers-part-3-truths-and-lies/>) so that they can ruin men's lives and drive them to [American Male Emasculation Hell](http://www.foxnews.com/opinion/2012/11/24/war-on-men/) (<http://www.foxnews.com/opinion/2012/11/24/war-on-men/>) (otherwise know as FOX).

Well, women do leave and some do seek to protect themselves. Then they often face problems which are compounded by economic, legal and justice systems which are firmly and unabashedly androcentric -- by this I mean, they are systems designed by men, laws written by men, about men, to deal with how men experience the world -- including violence. So, for example, we have gendered correlations between abuse and homelessness that result from abuse because our economic system enshrines complementary roles for men and women that leave women economically vulnerable, their life stages largely out of sync with how the work place is structured. Or, the fact that women who defend themselves against domestic violence are often imprisoned, with lengthy sentences, because self-defense laws and penalties have historically been based on stranger assaults -- between people assumed to be relatively proportionally physically similar -- which are overwhelmingly [experienced by men](http://www.bis.gov/content/intimate/victims.cfm) (<http://www.bis.gov/content/intimate/victims.cfm>). So, all over the world, laws are not written to take into account a situation where a woman kills a man with whom she is intimate, maybe as he sleeps, because she knows from experience that when he wakes up he will, as he has for years, punch, choke and probably rape her; sometimes in the presence of their children. Once he is awake, she is generally at a disadvantage in this scenario. Consider [Marissa Alexander](http://www.cbsnews.com/8301-504083_162-57434757-504083/fla-woman-marissa-alexander-gets-20-years-for-warning-shot-did-she-stand-her-ground/) ([http://www.cbsnews.com/8301-504083\\_162-57434757-504083/fla-woman-marissa-alexander-gets-20-years-for-warning-shot-did-she-stand-her-ground/](http://www.cbsnews.com/8301-504083_162-57434757-504083/fla-woman-marissa-alexander-gets-20-years-for-warning-shot-did-she-stand-her-ground/)) who, nine days after giving birth, fired two warning shots at the ceiling to deter her ex-husband, who was chasing her through the house, having already assaulted her, with clear intent to do harm. She's sentenced to 20 years in jail. Florida might want to spell out its "testes possession" clause in its [Stand Your Ground](http://www.cnn.com/2012/05/11/justice/florida-stand-ground-sentencing/index.html) (<http://www.cnn.com/2012/05/11/justice/florida-stand-ground-sentencing/index.html>) law. Like her, most women who face these situations are either criminalized or pathologized. Men, on the other hand, face other issues related to gendered expectations about violence that they, too, pay for in our justice system. As Michelle Kaminsky writes in her book, *Reflections of a Domestic Violence Prosecutor: Suqgestions for Reform* (<http://www.amazon.com/Reflections-Domestic-Violence-Prosecutor-Suqgestions/dp/1480082570>), these situations are complex and laws and systems, outdated, are in dire need of revision.

Those opposed in Congress and their supporters seem obsessed by ideas that insist that these people who are part of the statistics above, especially the women (doubly so if immigrant women), lie, cheat, and are committing fraud. So far, no one has documented these claims with any substance. Part of the objections are that women are not only lying, but abusing men in equal numbers. Until the American Medical Association, The U.S. Department of Justice and The Centers for Disease Control, among others, provide longitudinal data based on large, national survey sizes, I'm sticking with [these facts \(http://www.domesticpeace.com/ed\\_nationalstats.html\)](http://www.domesticpeace.com/ed_nationalstats.html): "male partners assault 2 million American women each year" and "that 95 percent of the victims of domestic violence are women." If men are being battered in mass numbers, they need to come forward and report these crimes.

My question to feminist-bashers and abuse deniers is this: What is your Goldilocks number for violence, especially violence against women? All that protesting too much raises the question: If you reject the numbers above, what numbers would you be OK with? Instead of 1 in 4 women, would you be more comfortable with 1 in 6 or 1 in 10? What do you say to women [regularly strangled \(http://www.sp2.upenn.edu/ortner/docs/factsheet\\_strangulation.pdf\)](http://www.sp2.upenn.edu/ortner/docs/factsheet_strangulation.pdf), in what the *Washington Post* last year called the "[gateway to murder \(http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/a-gateway-to-murder/2012/05/12/gOApnd3KU\\_story.html\)](http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/a-gateway-to-murder/2012/05/12/gOApnd3KU_story.html)" in Maryland or many others, for example, those [lit on fire \(http://www.huffingtonpost.com/soraya-chemaly/we-are-all-sonali\\_b\\_1831927.html\)](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/soraya-chemaly/we-are-all-sonali_b_1831927.html) by men they know? "You're statistically insignificant." Which is ironic, after all, since the people who tend in this direction are seeking to increase [spending on the military \(http://articles.latimes.com/2012/oct/11/news/la-pn-fact-check-romney-defense-spending-20121011\)](http://articles.latimes.com/2012/oct/11/news/la-pn-fact-check-romney-defense-spending-20121011) to protect us against terrorism. Statistically speaking, an American woman has much a chance of being [killed by her own furniture \(http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2012/06/americans-are-as-likely-to-be-killed-by-their-own-furniture-as-by-terrorism/258156/\)](http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2012/06/americans-are-as-likely-to-be-killed-by-their-own-furniture-as-by-terrorism/258156/) as be hit in a terrorist attack. On the other hand, her chances of being hit by her husband or boyfriend is [significantly higher \(http://www.cdc.gov/ViolencePrevention/intimatepartnerviolence/consequences.html\)](http://www.cdc.gov/ViolencePrevention/intimatepartnerviolence/consequences.html), lingering as it does at 1 in 4.

Norms, not women, are the problem.

What Jackson Katz [calls \(http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3exzMPt4nGI\)](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3exzMPt4nGI) Tough Guise masculinity norms, anger and violence, manifested in these ways are entitlements. As Michael Kimmel explains in [Guyland \(http://www.amazon.com/Guyland-Perilous-World-Where-Become/dp/0060831340\)](http://www.amazon.com/Guyland-Perilous-World-Where-Become/dp/0060831340), it's a privilege we would all be better off without. It's also the case that the same norms result in our not understanding violence against men and boys both at the hands either other men or women. In narratives about gender, our cultural preference is generally to keep portraying men as strong and women as weak and in need of protection. (Violent women who batter male spouses are transgressive in many threatening ways -- not just physical.) Lots of boys and men grow up thinking: "I'm the man, this is my castle, you are mine, I'm in charge." All on an xy-rules basis in a now more balanced xx/xy world. We should stop talking about the simplistic and reductive "end of men" and start having substantive conversations about ["transforming masculinity \(http://www.nytimes.com/2012/11/26/world/asia/changing-the-notion-of-masculinity.html?emc=tnt&tntemail=y\)"](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/11/26/world/asia/changing-the-notion-of-masculinity.html?emc=tnt&tntemail=y) so that extreme violence, inherent to patriarchal systems, isn't understood to be an essential part of it. This isn't a domestic problem, it's a planetary one.

In February, a global strike to protest violence against women, [One Billion Rising \(http://onebillionrising.org/\)](http://onebillionrising.org/), will take place on February 14th. A schedule of events is [available here \(http://www.onebillionrising.org/pages/toolkit\)](http://www.onebillionrising.org/pages/toolkit), where you can also add your own.

Today in the U.S. we have [9 days left to do something \(http://4vawa.org/\)](http://4vawa.org/) about the passage of the Violence Against Women Act this year. Consider [contacting your representatives \(http://www.house.gov/representatives/find/\)](http://www.house.gov/representatives/find/) in Congress today [about reauthorizing \(http://4vawa.org/\)](http://4vawa.org/) the VAWA before the year is done. There are [two versions \(http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/11/14/violence-against-women-act-renewal\\_n\\_2132366.html\)](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/11/14/violence-against-women-act-renewal_n_2132366.html), the broader Senate version and a narrower House one [\(http://www.nytimes.com/2012/05/14/opinion/backward-on-domestic-violence.html?\\_r=1&\)](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/05/14/opinion/backward-on-domestic-violence.html?_r=1&). The Senate bill, which won bipartisan support, is the one that ensures that more people's rights are protected.

#### Resources

[16 Days of Activism \(http://16dayscswal.rutgers.edu/\)](http://16dayscswal.rutgers.edu/)  
[CDC Intimate Partner Violence Study and Preventative Strategies \(http://www.cdc.gov/ViolencePrevention/pub/NISVSpubs.html\)](http://www.cdc.gov/ViolencePrevention/pub/NISVSpubs.html)  
[National Domestic Violence Hotline \(http://www.thehotline.org/\)](http://www.thehotline.org/)  
[National Coalition Against Domestic Violence \(http://www.ncadv.org/\)](http://www.ncadv.org/)  
[Futures Without Violence \(http://www.futureswithoutviolence.org/\)](http://www.futureswithoutviolence.org/)  
[The Advocates for Human Rights](#)

[http://www.stopvaw.org/prevalence\\_of\\_domestic\\_violence](http://www.stopvaw.org/prevalence_of_domestic_violence) )  
[Safe Dates \(http://mrepp.samhsa.gov/ViewIntervention.aspx?id=141\)](http://mrepp.samhsa.gov/ViewIntervention.aspx?id=141)  
[The Joyful Heart Foundation \(http://www.joufulheartfoundation.org/\)](http://www.joufulheartfoundation.org/)/[Verizon's Your Voice Counts \(http://www.verizonfoundation.org/yourvoicecounts/\)](http://www.verizonfoundation.org/yourvoicecounts/)  
[World Health Organization \(http://www.who.int/aender/violence/who\\_multicountru\\_studu/en/index.html\)](http://www.who.int/aender/violence/who_multicountru_studu/en/index.html)  
[UNWomen \(http://www.endvaunow.org/en/articles/299-fast-facts-statistics-on-violence-against-women-and-girls-.html\)](http://www.endvaunow.org/en/articles/299-fast-facts-statistics-on-violence-against-women-and-girls-.html)  
[Pixel Project \(http://www.thepixelproject.net/\)](http://www.thepixelproject.net/)  
[White Ribbon Campaign \(http://www.whiteribbon.ca/\)](http://www.whiteribbon.ca/)  
[V-Day One Billion Rising Global Campaign \(http://www.vday.org/home\)](http://www.vday.org/home)  
[Center for Women's Global Leadership \(http://www.cwpl.rutgers.edu/about\)](http://www.cwpl.rutgers.edu/about)  
[Men Can Stop Rape \(www.mencanstoprape.org\)](http://www.mencanstoprape.org)  
[Healthy Masculinity Summit \(http://getinvolved.mencanstoprape.org/page.aspx?pid=368\)](http://getinvolved.mencanstoprape.org/page.aspx?pid=368)  
[National Organization for Men Against Sexism \(http://www.nomas.org/\)](http://www.nomas.org/)  
[Amnesty International \(http://www.amnestyusa.org/\)](http://www.amnestyusa.org/)  
[UNITE Against Violence Against Women \(http://endviolence.un.org/\)](http://endviolence.un.org/)  
[NoMore \(http://www.nomore.org/\)](http://www.nomore.org/)  
[National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs for LGBTQ Communities \(http://www.avp.org/ncavp.htm\)](http://www.avp.org/ncavp.htm)  
[Gay Men's Domestic Violence Project \(http://amdvp.org/\)](http://amdvp.org/)  
[National Center on Domestic Violence and Abuse \(http://www.ncdsv.org/publications\\_lgbt.html\)](http://www.ncdsv.org/publications_lgbt.html)  
[NoH8 Campaign \(http://www.noh8campaign.com/article/about\)](http://www.noh8campaign.com/article/about)  
[Sau No Unite To End Violence Against Women \(http://saunotoviolence.org/JOIN-sau-no/2012-16-days-activism-against-gender-violence-campaign\)](http://saunotoviolence.org/JOIN-sau-no/2012-16-days-activism-against-gender-violence-campaign)  
[Amplify Your Voice \(http://amplifyyourvoice.org/u/nikki\\_liz/2012/03/16/the-violence-against-women-act-it-shouldnt-be-controversial\)](http://amplifyyourvoice.org/u/nikki_liz/2012/03/16/the-violence-against-women-act-it-shouldnt-be-controversial)  
[Verizon Foundation \(http://www.verizonfoundation.org/yourvoicecounts/\); Your Voice Counts](http://www.verizonfoundation.org/yourvoicecounts/)



**\*\*Studies of domestic violence in LGBTQ relationships are scant. However, among those who identify as transgender women**  
 [\(http://opdv.state.nv.us/statistics/nationaldvdata/nationaldvdata.pdf\) report domestic violence at a rate of 4x that of those who identify as men.](http://opdv.state.nv.us/statistics/nationaldvdata/nationaldvdata.pdf)

**\* Likewise, we have very little information regarding male victims of abuse. Some would say that's because feminists like me hate men and families and don't care what happens to them. To that I say, ridiculous drivel. We don't have information for lots of reasons, among them: because we've focused our efforts on the women who are victims of abuse in order to get them out of harms way; we've culturally adhered to thinking of this as an individual, women's issue and "family privacy" problem which it historically has been; and men suffer a huge societal penalty for come forward -- they are seen as weak and "feminized" if they admit victimization. The stigma associated with coming forward is simply too high for many.**

**Correction:** An earlier version of this post mistakenly stated that two in five transsexual men experience domestic violence in the U.S. The statistic refers to bisexual men. The post has been updated to reflect this.

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# Understanding the Nature and Dynamics of DOMESTIC VIOLENCE



REVISED: MAY 2012



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The women, children or men pictured in this publication are models and are used for illustrative purposes only.

# Understanding the Dynamics of Domestic Violence

People often think of domestic violence only in terms of the black eyes and bruises that can be seen. In reality, domestic violence is a pattern of assaultive and coercive behaviors that abusive men use to control their intimate partners. As adaptive and resilient as they are, women who have been battered nevertheless face a daunting number of barriers to escaping the violence. In addition to the very real threat of harm or death to themselves or their children, victims must contend with the accompanying financial and emotional hardship. They also often weigh cultural and religious values that emphasize keeping families intact, and respond to the violence in spite of justice and social service systems that don't always provide adequate safety and support.

People who have never experienced abuse often find it difficult to imagine why women don't leave and how the abuse can continue for years. Relationships almost never start out abusive. It is important to remember that love and intimacy precede the abuse, which can make it difficult to break away. Abusive relationships are not violent all the time. There are periods when a woman is reminded why she fell in love with her partner. Abusers effectively weave together intimacy and abuse to control their partners.

Women who have been battered sometimes express confusion about the recurring nature of the violence they experience in their relationship. It seems to them to be unpredictable and impulsive. Domestic violence, however, is neither random nor haphazard. It is a complex pattern of increasingly frequent and harmful physical, sexual, psychological and other abusive behaviors used to control the victim. The abuser's tactics are devised and carried out precisely to control her.



**Domestic violence is a pattern of assaultive and coercive behaviors that adults or adolescents use against their current or former intimate partners.**

Domestic violence occurs in intimate relationships where the perpetrator and the victim are currently or previously have been dating, living together, married or divorced. They might have children in common or not.

### About the use of pronouns in this publication

**The greatest single common denominator about victims of domestic violence is the fact that the overwhelming majority are women.**

According to the most comprehensive national study by the U.S. Department of Justice on family violence, the majority of domestic violence victims are women. Females are 84 percent of spouse abuse victims and 86 percent of victims at the hands of a boyfriend or girlfriend. The study also found that men are responsible for the vast majority of these attacks—about 75 percent.<sup>1</sup>

And, women experience more chronic and injurious physical assaults by intimate partners than do men.<sup>2</sup>

That's why feminine pronouns are used in this publication when referring to adult victims and masculine pronouns are used when referring to perpetrators of domestic violence.

**This should not detract from the understanding that, in some instances, the perpetrator might be female while the victim is male or of the same gender.**

<sup>1</sup> Durose, M., et al. (2005). Family violence statistics: Including statistics on strangers and acquaintances. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice.

<sup>2</sup> Tjaden, P., & Thoennes, N. (2000). Full report of the prevalence, incidence, and consequences of violence against women. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice.

### DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IS UNLIKE OTHER CRIME

While domestic violence has certain similarities to other forms of family violence—such as child abuse, child-to-parent violence, sibling violence or elder abuse—it has certain unique characteristics that make it distinct. Domestic violence distorts what is supposed to be a partnership based on mutual respect. Neither partner has a legitimate role in disciplining or controlling the other. When domestic violence permeates a relationship, the abuser and victim no longer share equal rights and responsibilities within the partnership.

### SAFETY SHOULD BE PARAMOUNT

Safety must be the fundamental guiding principle in any and all efforts to assist those escaping the violence and control of their intimate partners. All contact and interventions with a survivor must account for the risks she faces when she seeks help. The reality for women victimized by domestic violence is that the risk of danger is greater when they leave their abusive relationships.

A woman who has been battered further risks the safety of herself and her children through the process of disclosing the abuse she received, separating from a batterer, seeking child support or reporting her batterer's abuse of her children. There will be unintended consequences for a woman if interventions are not based on safety and her assessment of her situation.

### EMPOWERING SUPPORT IS ESSENTIAL

The woman experiencing domestic violence is the expert on the violence in her life. She has the best sense of whether her batterer will carry through on his threats if she tells her story, goes to work or pursues child support. Anyone seeking to help a victim of domestic violence must encourage and respect the choices she makes. This reinforces her autonomy and can empower her with the knowledge that she can survive outside of her abusive relationship.

In a non-emergency situation, one of the primary reasons a survivor tells you her story is to seek your services, gather information and resources, investigate her options and be encouraged by a non-judgmental, helpful person. **The responsibilities of anyone who works with women victimized by domestic violence can be summarized as follows:**

- Help her plan for future safety.
- Listen to her and acknowledge her experiences.
- Affirm the injustice of the violence against her.
- Respect her autonomy.
- Promote her access to community services.
- Respect and safeguard her confidentiality.

## THE ROLE OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PROGRAMS

There are more than 100 domestic violence shelters and support programs throughout Missouri. However, fewer than half of the state's 114 counties have emergency shelters. Consequently, domestic violence program staff are accustomed to using creative and inventive approaches to providing services in a variety of settings. Most women don't need emergency shelter, but they do need someone to talk to beyond office hours. Almost all can benefit from the common ground found in a support group.

The majority of domestic violence shelters and service providers have toll-free numbers that allow them to serve multiple counties so they can help create safety plans, offer support, and provide court advocacy and other resource information— even from a distance. Some programs have outreach staff who can work with victims to make plans for obtaining services in their communities. When working to meet the needs of women and their children, there is more to be gained by working together than anyone can do by working alone.

## YOUR ROLE IS EQUALLY VITAL

The challenge for all of us is to do what we can. We can meet the challenge with hope. For the truth is that people commit domestic violence, and people can stop it. Your efforts have the potential to save lives, to stop the violence, and to create new opportunities for families living in fear and danger. By its very nature, your work to address domestic violence is an ethical endeavor to further social justice.

## Four types of abuse

Abuse can take on many forms. Some types are more subtle than others and might never be seen or felt by anyone other than the woman experiencing the abuse. The abuser uses a combination of tactics that work to control the victim. The abuse also usually increases in frequency and severity over time.

### PHYSICAL ABUSE

Physical abuse is easier to recognize and understand than other types of abuse. **It can be indicated when the batterer:**

- ▮ Scratches, bites, grabs or spits at a current or former intimate partner.
- ▮ Shakes, shoves, pushes, restrains or throws her.
- ▮ Twists, slaps, punches, strangles or burns the victim.
- ▮ Throws objects at her.
- ▮ Subjects her to reckless driving.
- ▮ Locks her in or out of the house.

*You cannot emerge a whole human being when you escape someone who constantly beats you and berates you physically, emotionally and spiritually . . . until that searing of the soul has been attended to . . .*

*There is something that happens to the psyche.*

*The wholeness of the individual must be looked at. . . They must begin to understand what has happened to them, and why.*

— SURVIVOR OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

### The people harmed by domestic violence

▶ About one in four women will experience domestic violence in her lifetime.

—Tjaden, P., & Thonennes, N. (2000). *Extent, nature and consequences of intimate partner violence: Findings from the National Violence Against Women Survey*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice.

▶ Having a verbally abusive partner was the variable most likely to predict that a woman would be victimized by an intimate partner.

—*Ibid.*

▶ The National Violence Against Women Survey estimated that 1.5 million women are raped or physically assaulted by intimate partners each year.

—*Ibid.*

▶ In 2007, 45 percent of female homicide victims were murdered by intimate partners; 5 percent of male homicide victims were murdered by intimate partners.

—Catalano, SI, Smith, E., Snyder, H. & Rand, M. (2009) *Female Victims of Violence*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice.

▶ 26 percent of female crime victims are victimized by intimate partners; 5 percent of male crime victims are victimized by intimate partners.

— Truman, J. & Rand, M. (2010). *Criminal Victimization, 2009*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice.

- ▶ Refuses to help when she's sick, injured or pregnant, or withholds medication or treatment.
- ▶ Withholds food as punishment.
- ▶ Abuses her at mealtime, which disrupts eating patterns and can result in malnutrition.
- ▶ Abuses her at night, which disrupts sleeping patterns and can result in sleep deprivation.
- ▶ Attacks her with weapons or kills her.

### SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND ABUSE

Sexual violence and abuse can be extraordinarily difficult for victims to talk about because of the ways in which this type of violence often is perpetrated. **Sexual violence or abuse can be indicated when the batterer:**

- ▶ Is jealous or angry and assumes she will have sex with anyone.
- ▶ Withholds sex and affection as punishment.
- ▶ Calls her sexual names.
- ▶ Pressures her to have sex when she doesn't want to.
- ▶ Insists that his partner dress in a more sexual way than she wants.
- ▶ Coerces sex by manipulation or threats.
- ▶ Physically forces sex or is sexually violent.
- ▶ Coerces her into sexual acts that she is uncomfortable with, such as sex with a third party, physically painful sex, sexual activity she finds offensive or verbal degradation during sex.
- ▶ Inflicts injuries that are sex-specific.
- ▶ Denies the victim contraception or protection against sexually transmitted diseases.

### PSYCHOLOGICAL ABUSE

It is the abuser's use of physical and sexual force or threats that gives power to his psychologically abusive acts. Psychological abuse becomes an effective weapon in controlling a victim, because she knows through experience that her abuser will at times back up the threats or taunts with physical assaults. **Psychological abuse can be indicated when the batterer:**

- ▶ Breaks promises, doesn't follow through on agreements or doesn't take a fair share of responsibility.
- ▶ Verbally attacks and humiliates his partner in private or public.
- ▶ Attacks her vulnerabilities, such as her language abilities, educational level, skills as a parent, religious and cultural beliefs or physical appearance.
- ▶ Plays mind games, such as when he denies requests he has made previously or when he undercuts her sense of reality.
- ▶ Forces her to do degrading things.

- ▶ Ignores her feelings.
- ▶ Withholds approval or affection as punishment.
- ▶ Regularly threatens to leave or tells her to leave.
- ▶ Harasses her about affairs he imagines her to be having.
- ▶ Stalks her.
- ▶ Always claims to be right.
- ▶ Is unfaithful after committing to monogamy.

## ECONOMIC ABUSE

Economic abuse can be indicated when the batterer:

- ▶ Controls all the money.
- ▶ Doesn't let her work outside the home or sabotages her attempts to work or go to school.
- ▶ Refuses to work and makes her support the family.
- ▶ Ruins her credit rating.

## The relationship between violence and other tactics of control

Domestic violence is not an isolated, individual event but rather a pattern of repeated behaviors. Assaults are repeated against the same victim by the same perpetrator. These assaults occur in different forms, including physical, sexual, psychological and economic. While physical assaults might occur infrequently, other parts of the pattern can occur daily. The use of these other tactics is effective because one battering episode builds on past episodes and sets the stage for future episodes. All tactics of the pattern interact and have profound effects on the victims. **Examples of commonly used control tactics include:**

### ISOLATING THE VICTIM

- ▶ Initially, a batterer might cut off the victim from supportive relationships with the claims of “loving you so much” and “wanting to be with you all the time.”
- ▶ The intent is to control her time and isolate her from her support system of family and friends who might question his actions. For example, he might refuse to have telephone service or reliable transportation, monitor her email, or make the family change residences frequently.
- ▶ He might constantly criticize her family and friends or harass her so much that it is easier for her to cut off contact with them. He might make it impossible for her to have contact with others by using coercion, threats or force.

*What really got to me was the way that he abused me. You know, he would not leave me alone until we had sex. He was like that. I would be there, tears rolling out of my eyes from our fighting, and him hitting me, and he would want to have sex. But I had no choice, because if I didn't have sex with him, well, what would happen to me next? Right after the fights is when he wanted it, and I couldn't stand it.*

— SURVIVOR OF  
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

*There were signs all along: he was very jealous and very possessive, but he was also very, very, charming. He brought me roses and diamond rings, and all kinds of stuff. He treated me like a queen for years until we bought this house and moved in together.*

— SURVIVOR OF  
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

- ▶ A victim might believe what her abuser says because she is so isolated she has no access to information that might contradict him.

### **USING THE CHILDREN**

- ▶ The batterer might punish the children as a way to hurt the victim.
- ▶ He might sexually abuse the children or force them to watch the abuse of the victim.
- ▶ He might use the children to spy or report on her activities.
- ▶ He might threaten to kidnap or kill the children if she leaves him.
- ▶ He could gain legal custody, just take the children, or use custody and visitation arrangements to harass or harm her.

### **DAMAGING RELATIONSHIPS**

- ▶ The abuser might discredit the victim's relationships with others in the community, such as employers, clergy, friends and neighbors, by spreading rumors or distorted information. For example, he might tell others she is crazy or a liar or send messages from her email address to alienate her from friends and family.

### **ATTACKING PROPERTY AND PETS**

- ▶ The abuser might hit the wall next to where the victim is standing or throw objects at her. He might pound the table next to her or break her favorite possessions. He might say: "Look what you made me do" or "You'll be next."
- ▶ The abuser might harm pets to hurt and intimidate her.

### **STALKING PARTNER OR EX-PARTNER**

- ▶ The abuser might follow, threaten, harass and terrify his partner or ex-partner, especially after she has left or separated.
- ▶ The abuser might monitor the victim's whereabouts, daily activities, phone conversations or email to prove to her that she cannot conceal anything from him.

## Domestic violence victims employ a variety of survival strategies

Women who have been battered are survivors. Asking them why they don't leave an abusive relationship ignores the complex set of factors they must weigh to decide how best to protect themselves and their children. Implying that it is the responsibility of the victim to end the violence blames her for the abuse and does not hold the batterer accountable for his crimes.

### FOR SOME VICTIMS, STAYING MAY BE SAFER

Not all women want to leave the relationship. They want the violence to stop. There are times when it may be safer for a woman and her children to stay. Quite simply, a woman who has been battered might be told she will be killed, or her children will be killed, if she leaves or refuses to return. Past violence has taught her that his threats often translate into action. Leaving also might harm her children if he gets custody or visitation. If she is still in the relationship, she can monitor his interactions with the children. Indeed, the decision to leave an abusive relationship is not as straightforward as it might seem. The table on page 8 outlines some of the crucial factors a victim must consider, especially if she has children.

### WOMEN WHO HAVE BEEN BATTERED LEAVE ALL THE TIME

It is important to remember that women do escape the violence in their lives. Friends, family and a network of service providers within a supportive community can be instrumental for a survivor who chooses to make the difficult decision to uproot her life.

What at first might appear to an outsider to be self-defeating behaviors on the part of the victim, such as being afraid to seek the services of a program for victims of domestic violence or wanting to return to the abuser in spite of severe violence, in fact might be normal reactions to significantly frightening situations. A victim uses different strategies to cope with and resist abuse. These strategies might appear to be the result of passivity or submission, when in reality she has learned that these are sometimes-successful, temporary means of stopping the violence.

*I was threatened by one of Dale's friends. He threatened to burn my house down and kill me and kill my father-in-law and burn down his trailer. I reported this to the police. In two weeks, my home was burned down. When I returned to the police station, they could find nothing about my previous report. Absolutely nothing. And I know I was there. I suppose somehow they got to the police.*

— SURVIVOR OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE



## DILEMMAS IN LEAVING AN ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIP

Leaving a violent relationship is not a simple matter. There are many factors that must be weighed carefully, because only the abuser truly can stop the violence.

### PHYSICAL

#### POSSIBLE RISKS IF SHE STAYS

- ▶ **Physical injury.** He can continue to hit and injure her.
- ▶ **Death.** He might kill her or the children.
- ▶ **STDs/HIV.** She might have no choice regarding safe-sex practices. He might sexually assault her.

#### POSSIBLE RISKS IF SHE LEAVES

- ▶ **Physical injury.** He might continue to injure her. He also might be inclined to escalate the violence after she leaves.
- ▶ **Death.** Leaving doesn't ensure that he won't find her, and it might increase the chance she or the children will be killed.
- ▶ **STDs/HIV.** Unsafe behavior might continue. He might sexually assault her.

### CHILDREN

#### POSSIBLE RISKS IF SHE STAYS

- ▶ **Physical injury or psychological harm.** Children can witness violence, be targets themselves or be hurt trying to protect others.
- ▶ **Loss of children.** He could make false allegations of child neglect or abuse about her. Failure-to-protect arguments could be used to remove children or terminate parental rights.

#### POSSIBLE RISKS IF SHE LEAVES

- ▶ **Physical injury or psychological harm.** Children can witness violence, be targets themselves or be hurt trying to protect others. They might be at greater risk during visitation.
- ▶ **Loss of children.** He could legally gain custody or just take the children. He could make false allegations of child neglect or abuse.

### FINANCIAL

#### POSSIBLE RISKS IF SHE STAYS

- ▶ **Standard of living.** He might control the money and give her little to live on. He could lose or quit his job. He might make her lose or quit her job.
- ▶ **Loss of income/job.** He could keep her from working or limit how much she works. He might sabotage her efforts to find a job or her success in a job or training program.
- ▶ **Loss of housing.** She could be evicted because of property damage he has done.
- ▶ **Loss of or damage to possessions.** He might destroy things of importance or value to her.

#### POSSIBLE RISKS IF SHE LEAVES

- ▶ **Standard of living.** She might have to live on less money, relying solely on her own income. She might have to move out of her home and community.
- ▶ **Loss of income/job.** She might have to quit her job and raise her children as a single parent. He might sabotage her efforts to find a job or succeed in a training program.
- ▶ **Loss of housing.** She might have to move out, leave town or go into hiding. She might lose her home in a divorce.
- ▶ **Loss of or damage to possessions.** He might destroy things of importance or value to her. She might have to leave things behind if she flees.

### FAMILY AND FRIENDS

#### POSSIBLE RISKS IF SHE STAYS

- ▶ **Physical injury.** He might threaten or injure family or friends, particularly if they try to offer assistance.
- ▶ **Loss of support.** They might want her to leave and might stop supporting her if she stays. They might be afraid of him or not like him. He might keep her isolated from them.

#### POSSIBLE RISKS IF SHE LEAVES

- ▶ **Physical injury.** He might threaten or injure family or friends, particularly if they try to offer assistance.
- ▶ **Loss of support.** They might not want her to leave and might stop supporting her.

### PSYCHOLOGICAL

#### POSSIBLE RISKS IF SHE STAYS

- ▶ **Psychological harm.** Verbal, emotional and physical attacks will continue to affect her.
- ▶ **Substance abuse.** She might use drugs or alcohol to help her cope with the emotional and physical pain.
- ▶ **Suicide.** He might threaten or commit suicide.

#### POSSIBLE RISKS IF SHE LEAVES

- ▶ **Psychological harm.** He might have continued access to her, particularly if they have children in common.
- ▶ **Substance abuse.** She might use drugs or alcohol to help her cope with her new situation and past abuse.
- ▶ **Suicide.** He might threaten or commit suicide.

## The relationship between poverty and domestic violence

Domestic violence permeates all social groups defined by race, ethnicity and economic circumstances, yet it is clear that the combined experience of poverty and violence raises particularly difficult issues for women and their children. Women living in poverty experience violence by their partners at higher rates partially because they have fewer options. Access to independent economic resources, including public assistance, is vital to an abused woman's decision making and safety planning.

The high rates of domestic violence in the lives of impoverished women, along with higher rates of physical and mental health problems, mean that economically disadvantaged women, including homeless women, are likely to have more, and more complex, needs than those who have more resources. It is important to note that women who experience violence and poverty can be astoundingly resilient and strategic in using the resources they do have at hand. Each woman has her own experience and is affected by the violence in her life in different ways and to different degrees.

Economic independence and employment are central considerations in women's safety. For a woman with limited resources, obtaining safe and affordable housing is often difficult and can lead to homelessness, which increases her risk of future victimization. Each victim faces unique risks and thus has unique needs for safety and self-sufficiency. In many instances, determining what a particular woman needs is as simple as asking her.

### BARRIERS TO LEAVING PUBLIC ASSISTANCE

Not all women who have experienced domestic violence have problems that interfere with their taking steps toward self-sufficiency. Other women, however, do have lingering safety concerns or trauma that interferes with job training or employment. For a significant number, domestic violence is a major "welfare-to-work" barrier. Abusers often feel threatened by a partner's efforts to become more financially independent, and they actively interfere with or sabotage job training, education or employment activities.

## Considerations for working with diverse populations

Domestic violence affects all segments of society including those defined by gender, race, ethnicity, religion, age, sexual orientation, geographic location, socioeconomic status, and physical or mental ability. Because our society is very diverse, it is important to understand that domestic violence and cultural issues can intersect in complex ways for each individual. To effectively provide survivor-focused advocacy, advocates must recognize that each survivor understands domestic

### Poverty and intimate partner violence

► Women living in disadvantaged neighborhoods are more than twice as likely to be the victims of intimate violence compared with women in more advantaged neighborhoods.

—Benson, M. L., & Fox, G. L. (2004). *When violence hits home: How economics and neighborhood play a role*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice.

► Women in disadvantaged neighborhoods are more likely to be victimized repeatedly or to be injured by their domestic partners than were women who lived in more advantaged neighborhoods.

—Ibid.

► Half of all homeless women and children become homeless while trying to escape abuse situations.

—Browne, A., & Bassuk, S. (1997). Intimate violence in the lives of homeless and poor housed women: Prevalence and patterns in an ethnically diverse sample. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 67, 261-278.

► Homeless women experience high levels of abuse before, during and after episodes of homelessness and often are victimized by multiple perpetrators in their lifetimes.

—Goodman, L.A., Fels, K., Glenn C. & Benitez, J. (2006). *No Safe Place: Sexual Assault in the Lives of Homeless Women*. Retrieved from [http://www.vawnet.org/applied-research-papers/print-document.php?doc\\_id=558](http://www.vawnet.org/applied-research-papers/print-document.php?doc_id=558).

### The extent of intimate partner violence

◆ Women living with female partners experience less intimate partner violence than women living with male intimate partners. Men living with male intimate partners experience more violence than do men who live with female intimate partners.

—Tjaden, P. & Thoennes, N. (2000). *Extent, nature and consequences of intimate partner violence: Findings from the National Violence Against Women Survey*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice.

◆ Rates of intimate partner violence vary significantly among women of diverse racial backgrounds. Asian American and Pacific Islander women and men tend to report lower rates of intimate partner violence than do people from other minority backgrounds. African American and American Indian/Alaska Native women and men report higher rates.

—*Ibid.*

violence in a different way and might experience unique barriers to seeking services. For example, if a person who is Deaf chooses to seek services, they might find that a service provider does not have access to an interpreter or assistive devices. Service providers should become familiar with the diverse populations in their communities and develop outreach strategies to ensure that all victims of domestic violence are aware of services and are able to gain access to them. Having a staff that is culturally representative of the community should be a goal for all programs and services.

### PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

The term “people with disabilities” is often used to describe a diverse group of individuals, including people with cognitive, physical or sensory disabilities, or people with mental illness. Many individuals with disabilities are at an increased risk for domestic violence. Perpetrators often choose to target people with disabilities because they perceive them to be vulnerable, unable to defend themselves and/or unlikely to report an assault.

People with disabilities can be more vulnerable to domestic violence for a variety of reasons. Some people might depend on others to meet their basic needs. These care providers might be involved in the more intimate parts of a person’s life, which can increase the opportunity for abusive acts. Some people with disabilities are taught to be obedient or passive; this socialization to comply may inadvertently make them more vulnerable to abuse. People with physical disabilities might face greater difficulties than those without physical limitations if they try to defend themselves or seek to escape a violent situation. Those with cognitive disabilities might be overly trusting of others. They might not understand the difference between abusive and non-abusive behavior, and might think abuse is normal.

People with disabilities are often less likely to seek services because they fear they will not be believed, do not realize that what happened to them was abuse or assume service providers will not be accessible to them. Barriers to communication also can cause problems in gaining access to services.

When working with people with disabilities, it is important to remember that each individual is very different in terms of skills and needs. Advocates should never make assumptions about a person’s abilities based on appearance and, when in doubt, should not be afraid to ask the individual what support she needs. Advocates should be open, respectful and flexible—as they are when working with all victims.

Any program working with domestic violence victims should collaborate with local programs that provide services for people with disabilities in order to share resources and receive education and support.

### IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE WOMEN

Immigrant or refugee women might face extreme difficulty in obtaining services due to cultural isolation and language barriers. She might be

unfamiliar with the community and unaware of resources available to her. Because of experiences in her country of origin or discrimination in this country, she might have little trust in the justice system or might not be aware that programs even exist to meet the needs of survivors. If she is undocumented, she might fear deportation if she chooses to report to law enforcement. Immigration relief in the form of VAWA, T and U visas are available for immigrant survivors of domestic and sexual violence, human trafficking and other violent crimes, and their children. Cooperation with law enforcement is not always a requirement, depending on the type of visa and the individual's situation. It is critical that immigrant and refugee women have access to legal services to help them address their particular concerns and legally complex situations.

Creating a plan to ensure language accessibility for all victims, conducting outreach in immigrant and refugee communities, and becoming aware of community resources can help programs provide quality services to immigrant and refugee women.

### **LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL AND TRANSGENDER SURVIVORS (LGBT)**

Heterosexist and homophobic bias in society provides unique opportunities for LGBT abusers to manipulate and control their partners. The small size of the gay and lesbian communities and lack of visible resources, especially in smaller towns and rural areas, can make it difficult for the abused partner to seek help. LGBT survivors are more likely to be embarrassed and to minimize the abuse because of internalized homophobia. An abuser might have tried to turn others in the community against the survivor.

An abusive partner might isolate the victim from contact with the community by preventing the partner from attending social events and seeing friends within the LGBT community. Isolation is a powerful tool used by abusive partners to create distance between friends, family, neighbors, service providers and law enforcement. The survivor is much easier to control and maintain power over when isolated from support systems. This is especially true for people in their first gay or lesbian relationship who might not have had much contact with the LGBT community before the relationship began.

The stigma attached to identifying as LGBT can cause those within the LGBT community to hide, ignore or minimize relationship violence for fear of further condemnation. Because of the lack of validation that abuse does exist in the community, LGBT survivors might not even recognize what they are experiencing as intimate partner violence.

Service providers can support LGBT victims by reassuring them that they are believed and that the violence is not their fault. If a LGBT victim chooses to disclose, advocates can provide support by being sensitive to the additional barriers that might arise. Using inclusive language while providing services can help LGBT survivors feel more comfortable seeking services.

### **Intimate partner violence in the gay and lesbian communities**

Intimate partner violence in same-gender or gender-diverse relationships is as prevalent and lethal as in heterosexual relationships<sup>1</sup>.

Heterosexist and homophobic bias in society provides unique opportunities for LGBT abusers to manipulate and control their partners. The small size of the gay and lesbian communities and lack of visible resources, especially in smaller towns and rural areas, can make it difficult for the abused partner to seek help. The stigma attached to identifying as LGBT can cause a survivor to hide, ignore or minimize relationship violence for fear of further condemnation by the majority population.

Isolation is a powerful tool used by abusive partners to create distance between friends, family, neighbors, service providers and law enforcement. The survivor is much easier to control and maintain power over when isolated from support systems. This is especially true for people in their first gay or lesbian relationship who might not have had much contact with the LGBT community before the relationship began.

<sup>1</sup>LGBT Domestic Violence Coalition and Jane Doe Inc., 2005.

### **Intimate partner violence and women with disabilities**

◆ In a study on women with disabilities, 56 percent reported abuse. Of this group, 74 percent reported abuse that was chronic in nature and 55 percent reported multiple abuse situations in their adult lives. The abuser was their male intimate partner 80 percent of the time.

—Wayne State University (2004). *Michigan study on women with physical disabilities*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice.

In considering accessibility of services, educating key people, such as law enforcement, hospital staff and social service agencies about the reality of domestic violence in LGBT relationships could increase service provision for LGBT communities.

The need for a victim/survivor to freely tell his or her story without concern for the listener's comfort level with the language is crucial. Be well versed with the terminology used by the survivor. Use gender neutral language such as "partner" or "significant other" until you know for certain the gender of the abuser. LGBT survivors will be looking for such language and will interpret your use of gender language as sensitivity to their needs or as a lack of sensitivity and understanding from program staff.

### **OLDER WOMEN**

Due to their age and life experiences, domestic violence might present older women with issues different from those experienced by younger survivors. Older women can be more vulnerable to domestic violence for a variety of reasons, including isolation, physical condition, health and/or dependency on caregivers. Many have been raised in a culture and during a time when domestic violence was not openly discussed, making it difficult or even humiliating to disclose. This, in turn, makes them less likely to report. Older women also might choose not to report because they fear younger professionals would not believe them or they might not define the violence as a crime.

Domestic violence is not included under the mandated elder abuse reporting law in Missouri. An "eligible adult" under Missouri elder abuse reporting law is defined as someone 60 and older who is unable to protect his or her own interests or adequately perform or obtain services which are necessary to meet his or her essential human needs (660.250 RSMo).

### **ADVOCATES WHO ARE SURVIVORS**

Many are called to advocacy work after a personal experience with domestic violence, either in their own lives or in the life of a loved one. Including survivors' voices in the development and implementation of services continues to be a priority of the movement to end violence against women. Some survivors choose to become a part of the movement as a means of empowerment. Some survivors might choose to be on a domestic violence program's board of directors, some might choose to work as advocates, or others might volunteer to be a part of a program's speakers' bureau to tell their stories to others. Survivors providing direct services should be aware that advocacy with others might bring back memories of their own victimization and should identify their own coping strategies.

It is important to remember that each survivor has a different experience that is not necessarily reflective of all victims. Although there might be similarities among survivors' stories, each individual uniquely experiences domestic violence.

## Men who batter, their selective behaviors and societal influences

Domestic violence is not impulsive but purposeful and instrumental. Batterers can be perfectly agreeable with or conciliatory to police officers, employers, neighbors, co-workers and friends. But batterers don't use those skills with their intimate partners because they choose not to. Individual men beat individual women to make those women do what they want.

The violent man is not "out of control." He is at work on his own agenda, which is to condition his victim to be what he wants her to be all the time. This is impossible because he constantly changes his demands. The batterer chooses tactics that work to achieve compliance or control. His behavior is directed at controlling most aspects of his partner's life.

Men batter because battering works. Domestic violence is a socially supported behavior, learned through observation, experience and reinforcement. It is learned through our culture, families, schools and peer groups. Domestic violence is not caused by illness, genetics, substance abuse, stress, the behavior of the victim or problems in the relationship.

Domestic violence is a crime, and it should be accorded the same prosecution efforts as any other violent offense. Communities and the justice system have an obligation to reduce the prevalence of domestic violence and hold the perpetrators responsible. Prosecution of offenders can protect the victim from additional acts of violence, reduce children's exposure and possible injury, deter the abuser from committing further acts of violence, and reinforce a community's refusal to tolerate domestic abuse. Unless men who batter are truly held accountable, they have little incentive to stop their abusive behaviors.



**Domestic violence is purposeful behavior. The batterer's pattern of abusive acts is directed at achieving compliance from or control over the victim.**

\*\*\*\*\*  
Tactics that work to control the victim are selectively chosen by the batterer. This power affects many aspects of a victim's life.

### Attitudes and behaviors of men who batter

There is no way to spot a batterer in a crowd. Domestic violence is not a matter of class, race or socioeconomic status. It is a gender issue. Most batterers are male; however, most men are not batterers.

**Batterers often share the following characteristics:**

### How batterers choose to carry out their abuse

▶ In 2002, 63 percent of spousal murders involved a firearm.

—Durose, M., et al. (2005).  
*Family violence statistics: Including statistics on strangers and acquaintances.*  
Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice.

▶ The majority of spouse violence (78 percent) and boyfriend/girlfriend violence (64 percent) occurred in the victim's home.

—*ibid.*

### INTIMIDATION AND VIOLENCE

- ▶ Resolves conflict with intimidation, bullying and violence.
- ▶ Holds her down, restrains her from leaving a room, pushes or shoves.
- ▶ Uses threats and intimidation as instruments of control or abuse. This includes threats to harm physically, to defame, to embarrass, to restrict freedom, to disclose secrets, to cut off support, to abandon, to kidnap children and to commit suicide.

### VERBALLY ABUSIVE

- ▶ Says things that are meant to be cruel and hurtful.
- ▶ Degrades her, curses her and/or minimizes her accomplishments.
- ▶ May wake her up to yell at her or not let her go to sleep by yelling at her.

### MINIMIZES ABUSE

- ▶ Redefines a violent incident, for example, by saying, "It wasn't that bad," or, "I didn't hit her that hard; she bruises easily."
- ▶ Accuses her of exaggerating the abuse or of being crazy.

### SUBSTANCE ABUSE

- ▶ Cites alcohol or drug use as an excuse or explanation for hostile or violent conduct (e.g., "That was the booze talking, not me; I got so drunk I was crazy").
- ▶ Forces her to use drugs or alcohol.

### BREAKS OR STRIKES THINGS IN ANGER

- ▶ Beats on tables with a fist, throws objects around or near her.
- ▶ Uses symbolic violence (e.g., tearing a wedding photo, marring a face in a photo).

### HISTORY OF VIOLENCE

- ▶ Has battered in prior relationships.
- ▶ Has previous police encounters for behavioral offenses (e.g., threats, stalking, assault, battery).

### PROJECTS BLAME

- ▶ Refuses to take responsibility for his actions.
- ▶ Blames his partner for his problems to justify the violence.
- ▶ Often blames other ethnic groups, coworkers or women in general for his problems.

### CRUELTY TO ANIMALS OR CHILDREN

- ▶ Treats children cruelly or is insensitive to their suffering.
- ▶ Treats animals cruelly or is insensitive to their suffering.

- ▶ Expects children to be capable of doing things far beyond their ability or teases children until they cry.
- ▶ Forces children to watch the abuse of the victim or engages them in the abuse of the victim.

### **EXTREME JEALOUSY**

- ▶ Becomes jealous of anyone or anything that takes her time away from their relationship.
- ▶ “If I can’t have you, nobody will.”
- ▶ Requires her to account for all of her time.
- ▶ Accuses her of flirting or of having affairs.
- ▶ Calls her frequently at work or refuses to let her go to work.

### **CONTROLLING BEHAVIOR**

- ▶ Makes all the decisions about the house, joint finances, her clothing, or where they go and who they can or cannot visit.
- ▶ Is extremely impatient and might exhibit poor impulse control. Believes his needs and wants should be fulfilled immediately.
- ▶ Uses money to control her activities, purchases and behavior.

### **ISOLATION**

- ▶ Cuts her off from resources.
- ▶ Accuses people who support her of causing trouble.
- ▶ May not let her use the car, work or go to school.

### **DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE**

- ▶ Has sudden and extreme changes in mood.
- ▶ Is alternately loving and abusive.
- ▶ Can behave explosively.

### **RAPE OR USE OF FORCE IN SEX**

- ▶ Has no concern about whether she wants to have sex.
- ▶ Uses sulking, anger, harassment or coercion to manipulate her into compliance with sexual demands.
- ▶ Forces her to have sex while she is sleeping or demands sex when she is ill, injured after a beating or soon after childbirth.

### **SPIRITUAL AND RELIGIOUS ABUSE**

- ▶ Misuses religious passages or beliefs to reinforce abuse (e.g., emphasizing her forgiveness and not his repentance and responsibility).
- ▶ Manipulates her religious beliefs or spiritual values (e.g., refusing to allow her to attend church or spiritual

*We found our client work, but when her abuser got out of jail, he applied to the court for visitation rights for his daughter. It turned out that this visitation was just one way for him to get in closer with her. Even when he had the child, he would come over and throw rocks at the window if she didn't come out, wanting to make sure what she was doing while he had the child. It wasn't just about visiting with his daughter. He wanted to keep tabs on her. Unfortunately, she took him back. The violence is now interfering with her work. We have actually gotten calls from the employer. She is emotional, it is hard to get her to focus on her work, she calls in sick. She tells me that she cannot come to work with her black eyes and bruises.*

— JOB PLACEMENT  
COUNSELOR



*Abusive men can learn respect and equality—if we insist that they do so. But they won't make those changes unless they are subjected to tremendous pressure, because their cultural values as well as their privileges are pushing them so hard to stay the same.*

*There has never been a better time than the present to apply the pressure, to demand that abusers accept responsibility for the destruction they cause. We live in a period of mounting international pressure for the respect of human rights for everyone, of insistence on the recognition of the worth and dignity of each person, male or female, young or old, wealthy or poor, and of whatever color.*

—Bancroft, L. (2002). *Why does he do that?: Inside the minds of angry and controlling men* (p. 333). New York, NY: Putnam's Sons.

gatherings or claiming that she is condemned and unwanted by her God or her congregation).

#### USE OF PRIVILEGE

- ▶ Treats her like a servant; makes all of the “big” decisions.
- ▶ Threatens to “out” the victim if it is a same-sex relationship.
- ▶ Mistranslates information if the woman has limited English proficiency.
- ▶ Withholds medical attention or necessary intervention if the woman has a mental illness or physical or communicative disability.
- ▶ Uses social status or job/status in the community to question her credibility.
- ▶ Uses racial or ethnic slurs within an interracial couple.
- ▶ Threatens her immigration status.

### Factors for changing batterers' behaviors

Criminal justice and mental health systems are increasingly becoming more involved in domestic violence interventions. Frequently, the focus of batterer interventions is to hold batterers accountable, educate them about the effects their actions have on the victim, and underscore that they must learn and decide to act differently. These batterer intervention programs are only one part of a coordinated community response that delivers consistent support to survivors and consequences to batterers.

Because batterers usually don't voluntarily attend batterer intervention programs, intervention strategies must emphasize zero tolerance for new incidents of abuse. The message must be constantly reinforced that his abuse will be exposed and that he won't get away with it. Well-established and respected batterer intervention programs recognize and clearly stress that the goals of any program should parallel those of probation: victim safety must be the first priority, followed by offender accountability and behavior change. Effective batterer intervention programs consult with advocates who work directly with victims of domestic violence to help keep victims safe and to evaluate program practices.

While important, the content of batterer intervention programs seems secondary to the degree to which these programs are integrated into coordinated community responses to domestic violence. A successful batterer intervention program is part of a process that begins with an arrest or the issuance of a protection order. It also includes prosecution, sentencing and oversight of the batterer's subsequent behaviors by the justice system. The effectiveness of batterer intervention programs as a whole is inconclusive, and the limitations of all batterer interventions should be explained to victims to reduce the chance they will have a false sense of

security that their partners will be “helped” simply by attending an intervention program.

It’s important to note that anger management and impulse-control classes, and sometimes marital counseling and mediation, are frequently used as misguided intervention strategies with batterers. These approaches don’t generally take into account the power imbalances in abusive relationships and don’t adequately emphasize to the batterer that he will be held accountable for his actions.

## **Sociocultural factors that contribute to domestic violence**

There are multiple reasons why people perpetrate domestic violence. Some factors are related to the experiences of the individual offender, but many are related to the conditions within our society and communities that in some ways support, excuse and encourage domestic violence. Through observing popular culture, families, schools and peer groups, both men and women internalize views on femininity, masculinity and violence. These attitudes and beliefs lead to a culture in which some people perpetrate domestic violence and in which other men and women often fail to hold them accountable.

There are risk and protective factors for the perpetration of domestic violence. We use risk and protective factors to help better understand the problem and to inform response and planning for prevention. A risk factor is a condition or experience that increases the likelihood of perpetration. These factors identify who is at risk for perpetration of domestic violence. A protective factor decreases the likelihood of perpetration. These factors identify what protects against perpetration.

Identifying risk and protective factors for domestic violence is necessary as they highlight modifiable conditions or experiences that can lead to causes of violence. Limited evidence exists on the risk and protective factors for domestic violence perpetration and victimization. However, evidence suggests that because domestic violence is a complex problem there is no one risk or protective factor that predicts occurrence with certainty. For example, if someone is abused as a child, it cannot be predicted with certainty that he or she will grow up to abuse or be abused. Many factors are associated with domestic violence perpetration and victimization, but none are causal. Additionally, all risk and protective factors are not equal; a one-to-one relationship does not exist. Addressing or prioritizing a single risk factor to prevent domestic violence is not sufficient as multiple risk factors need to be taken into consideration.

**Risk factors for domestic violence perpetration include:**

### **SOCIETY**

- ▶ Traditional gender norms
- ▶ Societal norms supportive of violence

### **Prevention as Social Change**

Domestic and sexual violence prevention can take many forms, but at the heart of prevention is social change. Prevention is about changing the social norms that allow and condone violence against women. Preventing violence means changing our society—addressing attitudes, beliefs, behaviors, environments and policies. Prevention means eliminating factors that contribute to violence and promoting those that prevent the violence.

The early violence against women movement focused on social change through education about the dynamics of domestic and sexual violence, legislative changes to make women safer, finding and building resources to assist women, making alliances with law enforcement and increasing perpetrator accountability. Prevention has grown out of this social change movement.

### **Community and Coalition Building**

Community and coalition building is an important component of domestic and sexual violence prevention through social change. In order for change to occur, communities must be engaged, educated on the dynamics of domestic and sexual violence, and be willing to change. Community and coalition building fosters collaboration between agencies, systems and individuals who are stakeholders in the community. It encourages ownership of the prevention efforts that work in their community, whether it is urban or rural, large or small. Through this collaboration, participation and leadership, communities can be mobilized toward taking action against domestic and sexual violence.

- ▶ Institutional structures that promote unequal power between men and women
- ▶ Historical and societal patterns that glorify violence against women
- ▶ Men's gender-role socialization process
- ▶ Women's gender-role socialization process

### **COMMUNITY**

- ▶ Weak community sanctions against violence
- ▶ Poverty
- ▶ Unemployment
- ▶ Low social capital (lack of shared awareness and trust)
- ▶ Negative portrayal of women in the media

### **RELATIONSHIP**

- ▶ Fear of losing power and control
- ▶ Patterns of interpersonal communication
- ▶ Economic stress
- ▶ Male dominance in the family
- ▶ Poor family functioning
- ▶ Unresolved family of origin conflicts

### **INDIVIDUAL**

- ▶ Observing or experiencing violence in family of origin
- ▶ Power and control problems
- ▶ Low self-esteem
- ▶ Lack of empathy
- ▶ Stress
- ▶ Intimacy problems
- ▶ Gender role conflict
- ▶ Heterosexism and homophobia
- ▶ Depression
- ▶ Heavy drinking
- ▶ Young age

## **Preventing Domestic Violence**

Early work in the movement to end violence against women focused on social change through education about the dynamics of domestic and sexual violence, through legislative changes to hold violent men accountable, by finding and building resources to assist women, by making alliances with law enforcement and courts and through

increasing perpetrator accountability. Prevention is the natural evolution of a movement intent on creating social change.

Prevention can sometimes seem overwhelming because the oppression of women is deeply rooted in society. Prevention also can seem like a luxury when there aren't sufficient resources to help victims. Certainly, the movement to end violence against women can always provide quality services to and advocate for victims of domestic violence, but the question remains: how can advocates better address the larger issue of the oppression of women to reduce the number of victims who need services?

Domestic violence can have long-lasting and harmful consequences on individuals, families and communities. The goal of preventing domestic violence is to stop it before it starts.

Domestic violence prevention can take many forms, but at the heart of prevention is social change. No small feat. Preventing domestic violence means changing our society—addressing attitudes, beliefs, behaviors, environments and policies to eliminate those that contribute to domestic violence and to promote those that prevent domestic violence.

Much of today's domestic violence prevention language, models and research comes from the public health community. Public health is an appropriate perspective with which to approach violence prevention as it focuses on the health and well-being of the community rather than an individual. It is grounded in social justice and looks at how to prevent disease or injury rather than treat disease or injury.

The core principles of public health include emphasizing primary prevention, advancing prevention efforts, creating effective programs and building on the efforts of others.

The public health perspective approaches health as a public matter. Therefore, a community's health, disease, death rates and well-being reflect the decisions and actions a society makes, for good or for ill.

## PRIMARY, SECONDARY AND TERTIARY PREVENTION

**The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention use the following definitions for the three levels of violence prevention:**

**Primary Prevention:** Activities that take place before violence has occurred to prevent initial perpetration or victimization.

**Secondary Prevention:** The immediate responses after violence has occurred to address the short-term consequences of violence.

**Tertiary Prevention:** The long-term responses after violence has occurred to deal with the lasting consequences of violence. Tertiary prevention also includes the work of batterer intervention programs and sex offender treatment interventions.

Prevention efforts should reduce the occurrence of domestic violence through promoting healthy, respectful and non-violent relationships. Addressing domestic violence in multiple settings (individual, relationship, community and society) and in multiple ways is key to prevention.

Prevention efforts are varied and community-specific. Some communities implement school-based educational sessions to address attitudes,

**Prevention is the natural evolution of a movement intent on creating social change.**

### **Bystander Intervention Programs**

The **Green Dot Kentucky** program is becoming a model for violence prevention in Missouri. It was developed by Dorothy J. Edwards, Ph.D., the director of the Violence Intervention and Prevention Center at the University of Kentucky. Every act of violence against women—every incidence of rape, stalking, assault, or sexist joke, advertisement and music video—is represented by a symbolic red dot. The green dots stand in opposition to the red dots—everyone doing “his/her own little green dot” to make the state safer. A green dot represents “any behavior, choice, word, or attitude that promotes safety for women and communicates utter intolerance for violence.”

This bystander model of primary prevention identifies not only student leaders, but also influential people in a community, educating and encouraging them to be responsible for promoting healthy behavior, affecting social change and recognizing and responding to situations at high risk for violence. Individuals involved in the program act as peer educators to influence others in their community.

skills, beliefs and behaviors. Other communities focus on teaching skills to individuals to increase active and visible bystanders. Social marketing campaigns are another strategy for addressing domestic violence prevention by changing the media messages consumed in communities. While evidence is still limited about what works in prevention, communities have already been effectively tailoring strategies to fit their communities and neighborhoods.

### **BYSTANDER INTERVENTION**

Bystander intervention is one promising strategy in domestic violence prevention. Typically the term “bystander” refers to a person who passively stands by watching an event take place without getting involved. For primary prevention—stopping violence before it starts—a bystander is redefined as someone who actively intervenes when witnessing situations that promote or condone violence. This shift is important for a few reasons. First, empowering active, visible bystanders to stand up and speak out against violence shifts the cultural norm to make it more acceptable to speak up against violence, and makes violence less acceptable and, therefore, less likely to occur. Second, bystander intervention shifts away from the notion of men as perpetrators and women as victims and instead holds both men and women responsible for being active bystanders and preventing violence.

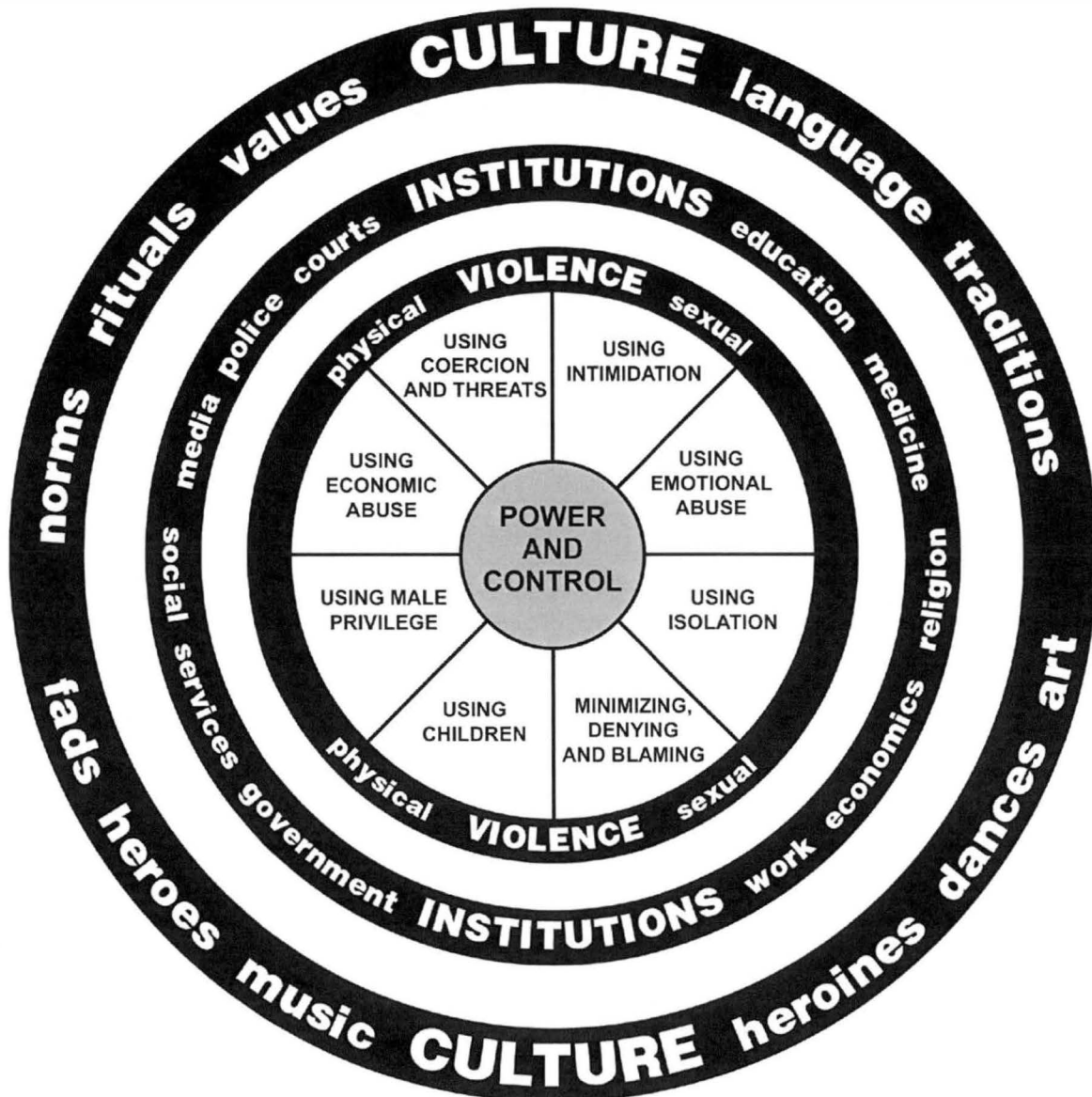
There are different programs and approaches to bystander intervention, but they typically follow a similar philosophy. That philosophy includes: teaching bystanders the skills necessary to: recognize a potential event that falls along the continuum—from inappropriate comments to sexual abuse and rape—that leads to violence, decide whether it is an event or situation that needs action, decide if the situation needs their own action, choose what to do, decide how to do it, and feel their action is manageable.

For bystander intervention to be successful, programs must be part of comprehensive prevention work that seeks to change social norms, policies, organizational practices, laws and community awareness. Through teaching the knowledge and skills necessary to intervene, bystanders can have a powerful and immediate impact on preventing domestic violence.

It is also important to understand the difference between awareness and prevention. Awareness activities, such as one-time events or education sessions, will not change beliefs, attitudes or behaviors to prevent domestic violence. However, without a basic understanding of the nature and dynamics of domestic violence, a community does not have the context or sense of urgency to mobilize to do true prevention work. Institutional and community awareness of the issue is needed, as is an understanding of the concept of prevention. Thus, awareness is necessary but not sufficient to achieve social change. Awareness must be moved into action to bring about social change. Comprehensive primary prevention programming can foster that change.

## POWER AND CONTROL WHEEL

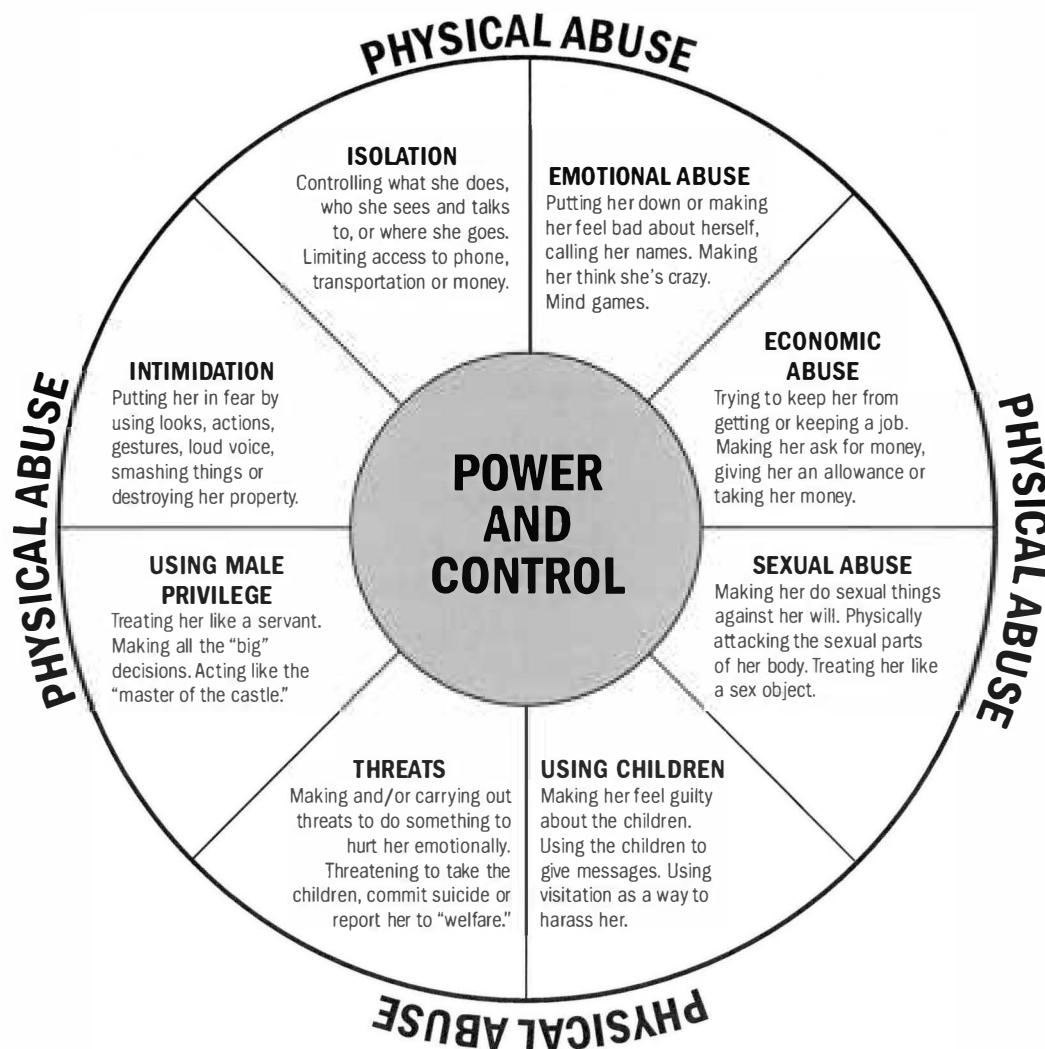
Domestic violence is a socially supported behavior, learned through observation, experience and reinforcement. It is learned through our culture, institutions, families, schools and peer groups.



The "Power and Control Wheel" was developed by the Domestic Abuse Intervention Project in Duluth, MN.

## HOW ABUSERS USE POWER AND CONTROL

Domestic violence is not impulsive, but purposeful behavior. The batterer chooses a range of abusive tactics that are reinforced by violence or the constant threat of violence.



The "Power and Control Wheel" was developed by the Domestic Abuse Intervention Project in Duluth, MN.

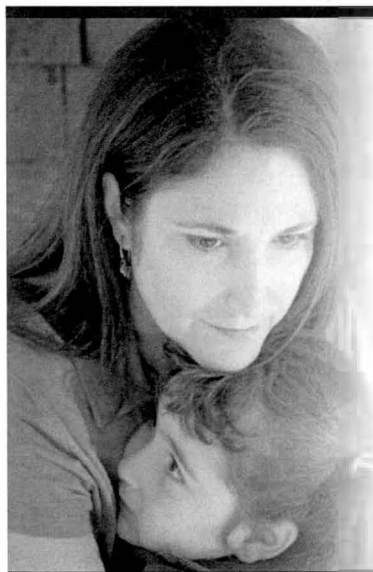
## Domestic violence and its complex effects on children and mothers

Like their mothers, children of women who have been battered frequently live in an atmosphere of fear and uncertainty. Quite simply, domestic violence can deprive children of the joys of childhood. It can disrupt their sense of safety and security and can threaten their well-being, development and social adjustment. In spite of these negative effects, it is important to note that each child's response to domestic violence is unique and is affected by the frequency and severity of the abuse, her or his relationships with adult caregivers, and a host of other complex factors.

The safety and security of survivors and their children are closely linked. In the vast majority of families where domestic violence is prevalent, the mother is the primary caregiver, and the father is the perpetrator. Women victimized by domestic violence who have children often make decisions about their relationships with intimate partners based on their beliefs of what will be in the best interests of their children. These decisions are not simple. A mother must determine how to protect herself and her children from physical danger. She also must contemplate how much she wants to uproot her children's lives by fleeing to a shelter, changing schools, losing financial security or having them see their father arrested.

Some policymakers, child protection workers and judges mistakenly assume that if a child is exposed to domestic violence, then the child is in immediate danger and must be removed from the home. Mothers victimized by domestic violence are sometimes also criminally prosecuted for "failure to protect" their children, even if those mothers believe that leaving the relationship will put themselves and their children at greater risk of harm. These types of punitive responses to victims do not hold the batterer accountable for his actions and can cause even greater unintended harm to the children and mother. Such actions ignore the reality that a woman is at greater risk for assaults after she leaves her abuser.

There also is evidence that in a significant number of homes where either child maltreatment or woman battering is occurring the other form of violence also exists.



**Children's safety and well-being is in fact often dependent upon their mother's safety.**

.....

Holding the batterer, not the mother, accountable for the violence and protecting the abused parent from further harm is critical in providing a safe environment for both the mother and her children. A child's mother might be her child's one constant in a long period of turmoil.



*My 3-month-old woke up in the middle of the night with an ear infection and temperature. My husband screamed, 'Shut the baby up, I'm trying to sleep.' I was trying to comfort her, but nothing worked. He got up, took her from my arms and whacked her. She had a black-and-blue rear end. Now what should I do? I thought. If I take her to the doctor, they'll take her away from me because I'm the mother and I allowed this. My husband told me, too, 'No matter what you say, I'm going to tell them that you did it.'*

— SURVIVOR OF  
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

## The effects associated with witnessing domestic violence

Millions of children are exposed to domestic violence each year in the United States. They can be harmed by:

- ▶ Intentional injuries inflicted by the perpetrator.
- ▶ Unintentional injuries from violence directed at the mother.
- ▶ An atmosphere in which they directly witness violence or the aftermath of an attack.
- ▶ Emotional abuse when they are used as pawns to coercively control the abused parent.

A batterer's use of violence against a child's mother can affect that child in varied and complex ways that can be exhibited in emotional, behavioral, social and physical development. Some children may exhibit aggression, depression, anxiety, lower levels of self-esteem and below-average academic performance, while others may show no response.

Some children might also lose respect for their mother—and women in general—if their mother's abuser constantly tells her she is worthless and unable to care for her children. These children also must contend with conflicting emotions about a father they both fear and love.

The effects of domestic violence on children also illustrate how their reactions can mimic so-called diagnosable disorders, including attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder. These reactions can be exaggerated in crisis situations, such as when a child is temporarily residing in a domestic violence shelter, and should be considered normal responses to abnormal situations.

### MODERATING FACTORS IN A CHILD'S RESPONSE

The impact of witnessing violence can be magnified or reduced by a number of factors, with some children showing great resilience in the face of adversity:

- ▶ Age and gender of child. Younger children in particular have fewer resources to draw upon to make sense of their experience. Gender is an important factor because of the way children are socialized. Girls tend to internalize their responses more than boys. Girls are likely to exhibit more depressive and anxious behaviors, while boys might exhibit more aggressive behaviors.
- ▶ Other violent experiences. Whether a child also has been battered or abused will have a significant influence. Consideration also must be given to the level of violence in the child's larger environment.
- ▶ Severity and frequency of violence. Varying degrees of violence and the recency of violence will have different effects.
- ▶ Social supports available and the extent to which the child can accept support. A child's relationships with adult caregivers, both within the family and community, strongly influence the child's adjustment.

## WHAT CHILDREN NEED

Children whose mothers are battered are not hidden, but the reality of their lives is all too often overlooked or misunderstood. They attend school, child care or church. Many already have contact with healthcare providers and mental-health professionals, government social workers, police, and the justice system. At the very least, every child needs and deserves these basic services:

- ▶ Education and support. Children need to learn what domestic violence is and hear that it is not their fault.
- ▶ Communication with others about what happened to them. Children need to talk about their experiences and learn that their situation is not unique. Talking with a group of peers can be helpful.
- ▶ Safety planning. Children need to develop a safety plan so they can feel and be safe. A safety plan can give them control of situations in which they often have little power, and it will increase their chances of escaping harm.

Anyone who has contact with children should be aware of the possibility that domestic violence can occur in any home. Clearly, greater screening is required, both routinely and when children demonstrate behavioral or emotional problems.

## Not all advocates are mandated reporters

By Missouri law, not all advocates are considered mandated reporters. "Mandated reporter" is a legal term. Legally mandated reporters of child abuse and neglect, as identified in 210.115 RSMo, are:

Any physician, medical examiner, coroner, dentist, chiropractor, optometrist, podiatrist, resident, intern, nurse, hospital or clinic personnel that are engaged in the examination, care, treatment or research of persons, and any other health practitioner, psychologist, mental health professional, social worker, day care center worker, juvenile officer, probation or parole officer, jail or detention center personnel, teacher, principal or other school official, minister as provided by section 352.400 RSMo, peace officer or law enforcement official, or other person with responsibility for the care of children.

Domestic violence programs have policies that address the specific procedures by which staff who are legally mandated to report child abuse and neglect must comply with the mandated reporting provision of Missouri law 210.112 RSMo. These policies take into account the provisions for such reporting in compliance with the strict confidentiality requirements for the shelter service information and records in Missouri law 455.220 RSMo. This Missouri law, as upheld by the Supreme Court

## Children and domestic violence

▶ It is estimated that 10 to 20 percent of children, or 3.3 million to 15.5 million children, are exposed to domestic violence each year in the United States.

— Carlson, B. (2000) Children Exposed to Intimate Partner Violence: Research Findings and Implications for Intervention. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, 321-342. McDonald, R., Jouriles, E., Ramisetty-Mikler, S., Caetano, R., & Green, C. (2006) Estimating the Number of American Children Living in Partner-Violent Families. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 137-142.

▶ Researchers estimate that child maltreatment occurs in 30 to 60 percent of families who experience domestic violence.

— Appel, A. & Holden, G. The Co-Occurrence of Spouse and Physical Child Abuse: A Review and Appraisal. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 578-599. Edleson, J. (1999) The Overlap Between Child Maltreatment and Woman Battering. *Violence Against Women*, 134-154.

▶ Between 23 and 70 percent of men who batter their partners also abuse their children.

—Edleson, *Ibid.*

▶ One study estimates that 50 percent of battered women have been abused while stopping their partner from abusing the children.

—Mbilinyi, L., Edleson, J., Hagemaster, A., & Beeman, S. (2007) What Happens to Children When Their Mothers Are Battered? Results from a Four City Anonymous Telephone Survey. *Journal of Family Violence*, 309-317.

### **Advocates emphasize confidentiality**

#### **Confidentiality is a fundamental necessity when assisting victims of domestic violence.**

Program advocates are bound by strict state and federal guidelines regarding the release of information. These restrictions sometimes might appear to be a barrier to collaboration.

You should understand that domestic violence advocates will not acknowledge a person's presence or participation in their program without a written release of information from the victim. Keep in mind that domestic violence advocates are bound by state law (Section 455.220, RSMo) and their programs' confidentiality requirements. A domestic violence advocate's insistence on written releases is a function of safety and self-direction for women and their children.

In addition, state law gives domestic violence shelter staff members and volunteers certain legal protections from being forced to testify about a program participant unless that individual waives her confidentiality protections (Section 455.220, RSMo). This law was upheld in *State ex rel. Hope House* (2004).

of *Missouri in State ex rel. Hope House* (2004), forbids domestic violence shelter staff and volunteers from disclosing records or testifying about those to whom they provide services unless that information is subpoenaed for a court case and the women whose records are sought consent to the release in writing.

For anyone who works with victims of domestic violence and their children, it is important to know the Missouri Department of Social Services Children's Division's definition of child abuse and the procedures the Children's Division will follow after a report of abuse. If a report is necessary, it is vital to keep the mother informed throughout the entire process. In most instances, a more positive outcome for the family can be achieved by providing support and services to a mother before, during and after she makes a child abuse report herself.

# Empowerment and advocacy for survivors

Throughout this publication, the word “empowerment” has been used countless times. There is good reason for this. A woman’s abuser takes power and control from her through the use of physical force, threats and coercion. Empowerment restores a woman’s power and control over her own life and affords her the opportunity to see herself as a strong survivor who can participate actively in securing safety for herself and her children.

A woman victimized by domestic violence deserves to tell her story to a non-judgmental, empathetic person. It is critically important to let her know that she is believed and that the violence is not her fault. This might be her first—and perhaps last—opportunity to be fully heard. By listening to a survivor talk about what has happened to her, you will have a greater understanding of her situation and can discuss options that are grounded in her experience, hopes and fears.

When people working with a woman who has been battered inform her of available resources and let her empower herself through education—instead of taking control and making decisions for her—it is more likely that she will be equipped to advocate for herself both immediately and throughout her life. That is not to say that advocates cannot provide additional assistance securing resources when asked by the women with whom they are working. It also is important to remember that victims of domestic violence are, first and foremost, people. All too often women who are beaten by their intimate partners are saddled with labels and diagnoses by well-intentioned, yet misguided, people who simply want to help. Unfortunately, the labels that are applied to women who have been battered in particular moments in their lives do not reflect the total context and complexity of their experiences. People who work with survivors should keep in mind that these individuals can and do harness the enormous power of their own experiences to move beyond the violence that subdues the spirit within.



**Empowerment affords a woman who has been battered the opportunity to see herself as a strong survivor who can participate actively in securing a life free from violence.**

What makes it possible for men to entrap women is not their greater physical strength but the social strength they derive when unequal power relationships are reinforced, rather than countered.

*They tell me I wouldn't make decisions on the job without somebody's OK. I could not make decisions on my own. That's the biggest drawback that I've had, learning how to make decisions and feeling comfortable with what I can do. That I, that I'm allowed to make a decision and I don't have to check with someone to make sure that this is the way it should be. The people in the office say I was afraid to do anything without making sure that somebody said it was OK for me to do so.*

— SURVIVOR OF  
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

## **The LIFE process of assisting women victimized by domestic violence**

Listening, informing and educating can lead to empowerment for a victim when the LIFE process of assistance is used. Through this process, victims gain knowledge, and knowledge is power. This process happens in degrees, but it does happen.

### **LISTEN**

- ▶ Provide a safe place for a woman to talk and tell her story.
- ▶ Afford sufficient time for her to become comfortable and able to discuss the details of her abuse.
- ▶ Begin with her story, history, concerns and questions. Affirm her experience and what she is saying. Clarify anything you do not or she does not understand.
- ▶ Identify her hopes and fears and the resources she is currently using or might need.
- ▶ Help her create a personalized safety plan.

### **INFORM**

- ▶ Tell her about available resources.
- ▶ Explore her circumstances and discuss the worst- and best-case scenarios as they relate to each of the remedies available to her.

### **FACILITATE**

- ▶ Help her to critically assess her chosen course of action (including her safety plan) and to understand the likely consequences of each action.
- ▶ Schedule specific times and dates for ongoing contacts or follow-up.
- ▶ Explore all contingency plans.

### **EMPOWER AND ASSIST HER**

- ▶ Support her so she can advocate for herself, thereby taking control of her life and making it safer for herself and her children.

## EMPOWERMENT IS THE CORE OF ADVOCACY

In the empowerment model, a woman seeking help is assumed to be a basically healthy person who needs understanding, concrete information, support and resources to make changes.

You should consciously reinforce the expectation that a woman who has been battered can—and will—take charge of her own life.



This is an adaptation of the "Empowerment Wheel" developed by the Domestic Violence Project, Inc., in Kenosha, WI, and is based on the "Power and Control and Equality Wheel" developed by the Domestic Abuse Intervention Project in Duluth, MN.

## A GUIDE TO WORKING WITH WOMEN IN CRISIS

The written Japanese *kanji* expression for “crisis” is composed of two characters. Taken separately, one means “opportunity,” the other means “danger.” Crisis can thus be a time of danger or vulnerability that offers an opportunity for change and growth.

### ◆ REMAIN CALM

Fear is contagious, and many women in crisis have enough fear bottled up to last a lifetime. By emotionally reacting to a woman’s fear you might limit your own ability to think clearly. The best ways to combat your fear are to be well-informed on procedures and resources, know yourself and learn to gauge your own emotional reactions, and get to know the woman you are working with so you can help her separate objective reality from her immediate sense of fear.

### ◆ LET WOMEN DECIDE THEIR OWN PACE FOR CHANGE

Allow women you are helping to decide on their own plan of action. Some women in crisis have never recognized their own resources. Others have lost touch with their resources. Respect and believe in a woman’s capacity to change and grow.

### ◆ EXPLAIN ALL KINDS OF INFORMATION THOROUGHLY

Don’t assume that women know about their rights or available services. Don’t talk down to women, but do be thorough in explaining information about your services and other community resources. If a woman looks or sounds confused, ask if she has any questions. Listen to her. Remember that she is the expert on her situation.

### ◆ DO NOT IMPOSE YOUR OWN VALUES

This does not mean you cannot express concern about a woman’s choices if you believe she is in danger, but it does mean you must be careful not to reject her even if you disagree with her behavior. Understanding the dynamics of domestic violence can help you avoid anger and despair when women struggle with decisions about ending a violent relationship or “giving it one more try.”

### ◆ ENCOURAGE EACH WOMAN TO ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY FOR HER FUTURE

There might be a tendency for you to want to do things for her that she can do for herself. Even though you can and should help her, she will become stronger and more self-sufficient as she assumes responsibility for her own life.

### ◆ DON’T CONVEY DISAPPOINTMENT IF A WOMAN RETURNS TO AN ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIP

She will have enough conflicts about her decision. She might feel like she is failing you. You can point out your concerns about her safety while still accepting her. Respect her decision and remind her that you are available if she needs you in the future. Always work with her to create a safety plan.

### ◆ BE ABLE TO TOLERATE YOUR OWN ANGER AND THE WOMAN’S ANGER

Have some personal outlets for your anger, anxiety and frustrations. You will be better equipped to help women in crisis if you can avoid “burn out” and overwhelming stress. Talk to other staff members or domestic violence program advocates if you need help dealing with your anger or a woman’s anger about the violence she has survived.

### ◆ MINIMIZE EDUCATIONAL, SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DIFFERENCES AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE

Avoid focusing on your own personal history. If you are distant, however, the woman you are trying to help might feel hurt. Strive for a comfortable balance. Answer her questions about you with minimal detail and turn the conversation back to her life. Convey warmth, respect and concern.

## PERSONALIZED SAFETY PLAN

**Safety plans might help you anticipate the dangers you may face. Just as abusers continually shift their tactics of power and control, your safety plan is an adaptable tool to help increase your safety in your ever-changing situation.**

### ▶ WHEN TO USE A SAFETY PLAN

Safety plans can be made for a variety of situations: for dealing with an emergency, such as when you are threatened with a physical assault or an assault has occurred; for continuing to live with or date a partner who has been abusive; or for protecting yourself after you have ended a relationship with an abusive partner.

### ▶ USE WHAT YOU ALREADY KNOW

If you are a woman who has been abused, you probably know more about safety planning and risk assessment than you might realize. Being in a relationship with an abusive partner—and surviving—requires considerable skill and resourcefulness. Any time you do or say something as a way to protect yourself or your children, you are assessing risk and enacting a safety plan. You do it all the time; it's just not always a conscious process.

### ▶ THINK IT THROUGH

It can be a helpful strategy to evaluate risks and make safety plans in a more intentional way. Whether you are currently with your partner or have ended the relationship, and whether you choose to use available services or to involve the police, there are certain things that are helpful to consider in planning for your future safety.

### ▶ BE AWARE OF DANGERS

If you are planning to leave your partner or already have left, be aware that batterers often escalate their violence during times of separation, increasing your risk for harm, including serious and life-threatening injury. Making a separation safety plan can help reduce the risks to you and your children.

### ▶ EVALUATE YOUR OPTIONS

Only you can judge who it's safe to tell about your situation and who to ask for help. Sometimes, people who don't have good information about domestic violence respond to women who have been abused in ways that aren't helpful, even when they mean well. On

the other hand, you might feel comfortable asking for help from someone you know. It's your decision. The important thing is for you to identify all the people who might be willing and able to help you. Make a list of their phone numbers and attach it to your safety plan for easy reference.

### ▶ PLAN AHEAD

You don't have to wait for an emergency to ask for help. In fact, it's a good idea to talk to people who can help before there's a crisis. Find out what they are willing and able to do for you. That way, you'll know in advance if you have a place to stay, a source of financial assistance or a person to keep copies of important papers.

### ▶ REDUCE YOUR RISK

No woman has control over her partner's violence, but women can and do find ways to reduce their risk of harm. The following safety plan is a tool to help you identify and evaluate your options and assist you in creating a personalized plan to reduce your risk when confronted with the threat of harm or with actual harm. Use what applies or change it to reflect your particular situation. **Your safety plan does not need to be written down (especially if you fear your abuser will find it), though you may choose to.** There's no right or wrong way to develop a safety plan. Make it your own, and review it regularly to make changes as needed.

### ▶ SAFETY DURING A VIOLENT INCIDENT

- I will use my judgment and intuition. If I think my partner is going to hurt me, I will try to move to a space that has lower risk, such as \_\_\_\_\_ . (Often bathrooms, garages, kitchens, areas near weapons or rooms without an outside exit are most dangerous.)
- If the situation is serious, I can give my partner what he wants to try to calm him down. I have the right to protect myself until I/my children are out of danger.



## PERSONALIZED SAFETY PLAN (CONTINUED)

### ▶ SAFETY IF STAYING

- I can tell \_\_\_\_\_ about the violence and request they call the police if they hear noises coming from my home.
- I can teach my children how to use the telephone or dial 911 to contact the police or fire department and/or how to contact a safe neighbor for help. I will make sure my children know our address.
- If I have a programmable phone, I can program emergency numbers.
- I will use \_\_\_\_\_ as the code word with my children or my friends so they will call for help if needed.
- If I have to leave my home, I will go to \_\_\_\_\_. If I cannot go there, I can go to \_\_\_\_\_.
- The domestic violence program hotline number is \_\_\_\_\_. I can call it or the national hotline at (800) 799-SAFE for help.

### ▶ SAFETY IF LEAVING

#### Preparing to leave

- I will call a domestic violence program to get help making my plans. The hotline number for the nearest program is \_\_\_\_\_.
- I will leave money and an extra set of keys with \_\_\_\_\_ so I can leave quickly.
- I will leave extra clothes with \_\_\_\_\_.
- I can open a post office box and have personal mail and bills (credit cards, cell phone, etc.) sent there.
- I will ask \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ to see who would be able to let me stay with them or lend me some money.
- I can increase my independence by opening a bank account and getting credit cards in my own name; by taking classes or getting job skills; and/or by getting copies of all the important papers and documents I might need and keeping them with \_\_\_\_\_.
- I can rehearse my escape plan and, if appropriate, practice it with my children.
- If it's not safe to talk openly, I will use \_\_\_\_\_ as the code word or signal to my children that we are leaving, or to my family or friends that we are coming.
- I can keep my purse and car keys ready and put them \_\_\_\_\_ so I can leave quickly.

### ▶ ITEMS TO CONSIDER TAKING IF LEAVING

The following items may be helpful to have if you decide to leave, but remember that almost all of these items are replaceable.

- Identification for myself
- My and my children's birth certificates
- My and my children's Social Security cards
- School and vaccination records
- Money, checkbook, bankbooks, ATM cards
- Credit cards
- Medication and medical supplies
- Keys—house, car, work
- Driver's license, car registration
- Insurance papers
- Public assistance ID/Medicaid cards
- Passports, Alien Registration Receipt Cards, work permits
- Divorce or separation papers
- Lease, rental agreement or house deed
- Car/mortgage payment book
- Children's toys, security blankets, stuffed animals
- Sentimental items, photos
- My personalized safety plan (if written down)

### ▶ SAFETY AT HOME

#### If my partner and I are no longer living together

- I can, or ask my landlord to, change the locks on my doors and windows.
- I can, or ask my landlord to, replace wooden doors with metal ones.
- I can, or ask my landlord to, install security systems, including additional locks, window bars, poles to wedge against doors, etc.
- I can buy rope ladders to be used for escape from second-floor windows.
- I can install smoke detectors and put fire extinguishers on each floor in my home.
- I can provide my onsite property manager and/or trusted neighbors with a picture of my partner and ask them to notify the police if they see him near my home.

### ▶ SAFETY AT WORK

- I can inform my boss, the security supervisor and the employee assistance program (EAP), if available, about my situation. The number of the EAP office is \_\_\_\_\_.

## PERSONALIZED SAFETY PLAN (CONTINUED)

- I can ask to screen my calls and visitors at work.
- When leaving work, I can \_\_\_\_\_.
- If there's trouble when traveling to and from work, I can \_\_\_\_\_.

### ▶ SAFETY IN PUBLIC OR IF BEING STALKED

- If I suspect I am in imminent danger, I will locate a safe place for myself (police stations, residences of family or friends, domestic violence shelters, local churches, public areas, etc.).
- I can document my partner's actions and keep it in a safe place. This may include taking photos of destroyed property/vandalism, saving answering machine messages, keeping letters/notes, etc.
- I can change my patterns—avoid stores, restaurants, banks, doctor's appointments, self-service laundries and other places where my partner might find me based on my regular schedule.
- I can tell \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ about the situation and provide them with a photo or description of my partner and any possible vehicles he may drive. I can ask them to call the police if they believe I or my children are in danger.
- When I am out of the house, I will try not to travel alone and will try to stay in public areas.

### ▶ WITH AN ORDER OF PROTECTION

- I will keep my protection order \_\_\_\_\_ (Always keep it on or near you.)
- I will give copies of my protection order to the local police or sheriff and to departments in towns where I visit friends and family.
- I will give copies to my employer, my religious advisor, my closest friend, my children's school and child-care center and \_\_\_\_\_.
- If my partner destroys my order or if I lose it, I can get another copy from the court that issued it.
- If my partner violates the order, I can call the police and report a violation, contact my attorney, call my domestic violence program advocate, and/or advise the court of the violation.
- I can call a domestic violence program if I have questions about how to enforce an order or if I have problems getting it enforced.

### ▶ PROTECTING MY CHILDREN

- I can teach developmentally appropriate safety strategies to my children.
- I can teach my children how to make a collect call to me if they are concerned about their safety.
- I can teach my children how to use the telephone or dial 911 to contact the police and fire departments and how to contact a safe neighbor for help. I will make sure they know our address.
- I can tell my children's caretakers who has permission to pick them up and make sure caretakers know how to recognize those people.
- I will give the people who take care of my children copies of custody and protection orders, as well as emergency numbers.

### ▶ SAFETY AND TECHNOLOGY

- Each day there are advances in technology. I can ask someone familiar with technology or domestic violence about the ways that my partner may monitor me.
- I will use a computer that my partner doesn't have access to when I look for help, a new place to live, etc. It may be safest to use a computer at a public library, Internet café, community center or \_\_\_\_\_.
- I can ask my friends and family to be careful about who they give my email address to, and to use the Bcc: option when copying me in on email.
- When making or receiving private calls, I will not use a cell phone that I share with my partner because my partner may have access to cell phone billing records and phone logs and may have put settings on my phone that allow him to track my whereabouts. My local domestic violence shelter may have a donated cell phone I can use.
- I will ask the court systems, post office and other government agencies how they protect or publish my records and request that they seal or restrict access to my files to help protect my safety.

### ▶ MY EMOTIONAL HEALTH

- If I am feeling down, lonely or confused, I can call \_\_\_\_\_ or the domestic violence hotline.

## PERSONALIZED SAFETY PLAN (CONTINUED)

- ❑ If I have left my partner and am considering returning, I will call \_\_\_\_\_ or spend time with \_\_\_\_\_ before I make a decision.
- ❑ I can attend support groups, workshops or classes at the local domestic violence program or \_\_\_\_\_ so I can build a support system, learn skills or get information.
- ❑ I will look at how and when I drink alcohol or use other drugs. If I am going to drink or use other drugs, I will do it in a place where people are committed to my safety.

### ▶ KEEP YOUR PLAN IN A SAFE PLACE

Only you can decide if it is safe to have a written safety plan. If you decide to keep a written safety plan, make sure to find a place to keep it where your partner won't find it; maybe you can ask a friend to keep a copy for you. Whether it's safe to write down your plan or not, it's still important to make one.

### ▶ WHAT CAN A DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PROGRAM DO FOR ME?

Local domestic violence programs are a vital resource, providing free and confidential assistance to women victimized by domestic violence and their children. They provide emergency safety services, such as shelter and 24-hour crisis hotlines. **But you don't have to stay in a shelter to get help from a program.** Most also provide a full range of non-residential services to women who have been battered. Domestic violence program advocates have accurate information about domestic violence and are experienced in providing assistance to women who have been battered and their children. They understand the criminal justice, family court and social service systems; and they are familiar with other community resources that might be useful to you.

In addition to giving you good information, advocates often can accompany you to court, to the police station or to social services offices. They can provide you with practical and emotional support. Getting help from someone who has experience working with survivors of domestic violence and who knows how to work with the different systems can make things a lot easier for you.

## NATIONAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HOTLINE

### 800-799-SAFE (7233)

Toll-free, 24-hour crisis intervention  
and referrals to domestic violence  
programs in your area.

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This personalized safety plan was adapted from ones developed by AWARE in St. Louis, the Office of the City Attorney, San Diego, the National Center for Victims of Crime Stalking Resource Center and the National Network to End Domestic Violence Safety Net Project.

## Fundamental issues related to justice system remedies

For most women, becoming a victim of a violent crime is their first introduction to the legal system. It can be complicated, confusing, frustrating, intimidating and, often, insulting. The stress of dealing with the bewildering proceedings and the frequently encountered gender bias of the justice system adds to a victim's trauma. And, while the court system is able to respond to some of the needs of women who have been battered, it is equally important that both survivors and those who work with them understand its limitations in ending violence against women.

Because a woman's danger generally increases as she tries to escape her abuser, it is vitally important that she have a well-thought-out safety plan. She is the expert on her situation and has been using all of her skills to survive so far. The likelihood is great that her abuser will retaliate or that the violence will escalate as she tries to engage the justice system. Keep in mind that testifying in court against an abuser can be a frightening and dangerous thing for a survivor to do. It might be the first time she faces her partner since the last attack or when she was able to leave. She has every reason to believe that his anger and violence will escalate as a result of the steps she is taking to free herself.

Because victims recognize the danger associated with testifying against their abusers, or because of threats from their abuser, they may recant accusations of abuse or refuse to cooperate with law enforcement and/or prosecutors. While recanting or refusing to cooperate may appear to be counter-intuitive—if he goes to jail, he cannot hurt her—abusers often threaten harm and have ways of controlling their victims even while incarcerated (e.g., using friends, family or children). Also, most batterers do not go to jail. And, those who do may seek revenge once they are released. Recanting or refusing to cooperate with the prosecution of their batterers is an often-misunderstood survival strategy sometimes employed by women victimized by domestic violence.



**Domestic violence is a pattern of assaultive and coercive behaviors that adults or adolescents use against their current or former intimate partners.**

Domestic violence occurs in intimate relationships where the perpetrator and the victim are currently or previously have been dating, living together, married or divorced. They might have children in common or not.

### **Concealing a survivor's address**

If a survivor does not want her abuser to know where she is living, she has the right to request her address not be disclosed in the court documents. She can also conceal her address by applying for the Safe at Home program through the Secretary of State's office. This program allows a survivor to establish a post office box in Jefferson City if she has relocated or is about to relocate to an address unknown to the assailant and that is not part of any public record. The Secretary of State will receive all mail sent to her, then forward the mail to her actual address.

More information can be found by calling the toll-free number for the Secretary of State's office 866-509-1409, or on the website, [www.sos.mo.gov](http://www.sos.mo.gov).

### **BENEFITS AND DRAWBACKS OF PROTECTION ORDERS**

It is important that survivors are informed about the benefits and drawbacks of getting an Order of Protection. It must be made clear to her that it is not an ironclad shield against the abuser's renewed assaults. Even law enforcement agencies that have strong resolve to respond to victims' needs cannot provide officers to be with her 24-hours a day. Furthermore, a woman's ability to rely on assistance from police and sheriff's deputies often depends upon the particular officer who answers a call. Even at best, the violence might happen so suddenly that she can call for help only after an assault has occurred.

Experience suggests that Orders of Protection might be most effective with men who ordinarily obey the law and have something to protect, such as their standing in the community or their employment. For the batterer who has contempt for all authority, has a history of other criminal behavior or is determined to control his partner at all costs, an Order of Protection might offer little increased safety to a woman.

On the other hand, having an Order of Protection can enhance local law enforcement's efforts to assist the victim, and repeated violations of a protection order eventually are likely to result in legal consequences for a perpetrator.

### **ENFORCEMENT OF PROTECTION ORDERS**

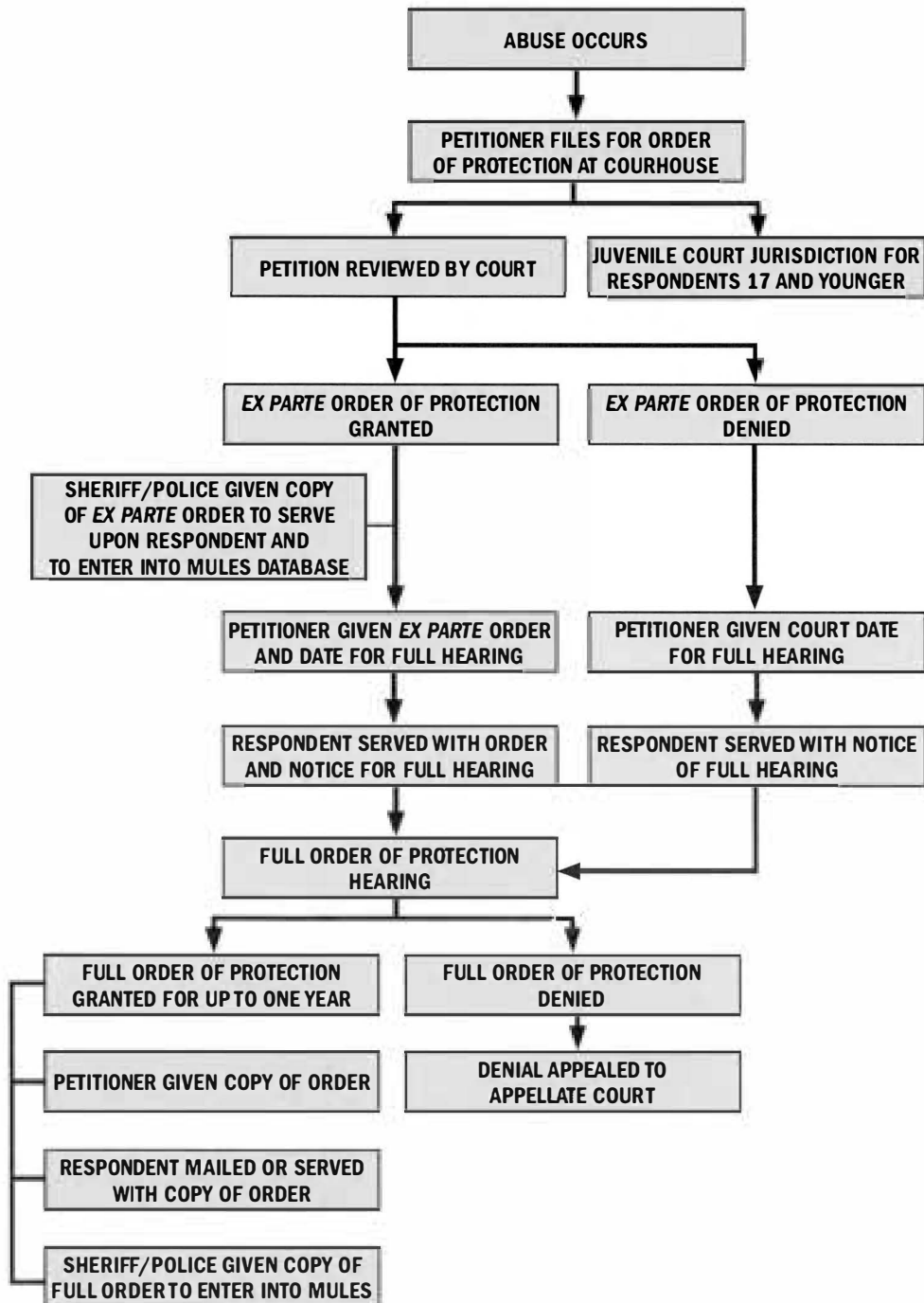
A violation of an Order of Protection is a criminal offense, and you should contact law enforcement immediately if the Order has been violated. Law enforcement should arrest the abuser if you show them you have an Order and they reasonably believe that the abuser has abusively violated it. If an Order has been abusively violated, your abuser can be arrested and prosecuted for certain crimes. The abuser can be arrested if he continues to contact you, frighten or stalk you, disregards any provision of the child custody order or enters your dwelling or place of employment or school, or goes within a certain distance of you or your child. If the violation involves the abuser's failure to surrender custody of the children to you as ordered, he can be arrested and the children turned over to you.

### **ACCOUNTABILITY FOR CRIMINAL OFFENDERS**

Domestic violence is a crime, and it ought to be accorded the same prosecution efforts as any other violent offense. Communities and the justice system have a critical interest in reducing the prevalence of domestic violence, particularly because such violence tends to escalate in frequency and severity if unchecked. According to the U.S. Department of Justice National Crime Victimization Survey, more than 1,640 women were murdered by a current or former intimate partner in 2007.

In addition to holding criminals accountable for their conduct, there are other significant reasons that underscore the importance of a diligent response to domestic violence from members of the criminal justice system. Offender prosecution in domestic violence cases can protect the victim from additional acts of violence, reduce children's exposure and possible injury, deter the abuser from committing further acts of violence and reinforce a community's refusal to tolerate domestic abuse.

## PROCEDURE FOR OBTAINING AN ADULT ORDER OF PROTECTION



## RELIEF AVAILABLE WITH PROTECTION ORDERS

**Missouri domestic violence law allows a victim of abuse to ask the court for the following types of help, as well as other types of help the court reasonably deems necessary to ensure the petitioner's safety, through an Order of Protection, such as prohibiting a Respondent from entering a Petitioner's place of employment or school or ordering that a Respondent stays a certain distance away from the Petitioner or the Petitioner's child. However, these orders are not always granted by the court.**

### EX PARTE ORDER OF PROTECTION (SECTION 455.045, RSMO)

- ▶ Temporarily restrains the Respondent from abusing, threatening to abuse, molesting, stalking or disturbing the peace of the Petitioner.
- ▶ Temporarily restrains the respondent from entering the premises of the dwelling unit of the petitioner when the dwelling unit is: a) jointly owned, leased or rented or jointly occupied by both parties; or b) owned, leased, rented or occupied by the Petitioner individually; or c) jointly owned, leased or rented by the Petitioner and a person other than the Respondent; provided, however, no spouse shall be denied relief under this section by reason of the absence of a property interest in the dwelling unit; or d) jointly occupied by the Petitioner and a person other than the Respondent; provided that the Respondent has no property interest in the dwelling unit.
- ▶ Temporarily restrains the Respondent from communicating with the Petitioner in any manner or through any medium.
- ▶ Awards temporary custody of minor children where appropriate.

### FULL ORDER OF PROTECTION (SECTIONS 455.050 AND 455.075, RSMO)

- ▶ Prohibits the Respondent from abusing, threatening to abuse, molesting, stalking or disturbing the peace of the Petitioner.
- ▶ Prohibits the Respondent from entering the premises of the dwelling unit of the Petitioner when the dwelling unit is: a) jointly owned, leased or rented or jointly occupied by both parties; or b) owned, leased, rented or occupied by the Petitioner individually; or c) jointly owned, leased, rented or occupied by the Petitioner and a person other than the Respondent; provided, however, no spouse shall be denied relief under this section by reason of the absence of a property interest in the dwelling unit; or d) jointly occupied by the Petitioner and a person other than the Respondent; provided that the Respondent has no property interest in the dwelling unit.
- ▶ Prohibits the Respondent from communicating with the Petitioner in any manner or through any medium.
- ▶ Awards custody of minor children born to or adopted by the parties when the court has jurisdiction over such child and no prior order regarding custody is pending or has been made, and the best interest of the child requires such order be issued. There is a presumption that the best interest of the child is served by placing him or her in the custody of the non-abusive parent.
- ▶ Establishes a visitation schedule for the non-custodial parent that is in the best interest of the child. The court can deny visitation if it finds that visitation would endanger the child's physical health, impair his or her emotional development or would otherwise conflict with the best interests of the child, or that no visitation can be arranged that would sufficiently protect the custodial parent from future abuse.
- ▶ Awards child support, when no prior order of support exists.
- ▶ Awards income maintenance, for no more than 180 days, to the Petitioner when the Petitioner and the Respondent are lawfully married.
- ▶ Orders the Respondent to make or to continue to make rent or mortgage payments on a residence occupied by the Petitioner if the Respondent is found to have a duty to support the Petitioner or other dependent household members.
- ▶ Orders the Respondent to pay the Petitioner's rent at a residence other than the one previously shared by the parties if the Respondent is found to have a duty to support the Petitioner and the Petitioner requests alternative housing.
- ▶ Orders the Petitioner be given temporary possession of specified personal property, such as automobiles, checkbooks, keys and other personal effects.
- ▶ Prohibits the Respondent from transferring, encumbering, or otherwise disposing of specified property mutually owned or leased by the parties.
- ▶ Orders the Respondent to participate in a court-approved counseling program designed to help batterers stop violent behavior or to participate in a substance abuse treatment program.
- ▶ Orders the Respondent to pay a reasonable fee for housing and other services that have been provided or that are being provided to the Petitioner by a domestic violence shelter.
- ▶ Orders the Respondent to pay court costs.
- ▶ Orders the Respondent to pay the cost of medical treatment and services that have been provided or that are being provided to the Petitioner as a result of injuries sustained to the Petitioner by an act of domestic violence committed by the Respondent.
- ▶ Orders one of the parties to pay the other's attorney's fees.

## MISSOURI ADULT ABUSE ACT AT A GLANCE

### ▶ WHO CAN OBTAIN RELIEF?

**Adult Order of Protection:** (§455.010) Any adult, defined as a person 17 years of age or older or otherwise emancipated. This person is called the Petitioner.

**Child Order of Protection:** (§455.010 & §455.503) Any parent, guardian, guardian *ad litem*, court-appointed special advocate, or juvenile officer on behalf of a child (any person under 17 years of age). This person is called the Petitioner.

### ▶ WHOM CAN THEY OBTAIN RELIEF AGAINST?

**Adult and Child Orders of Protection:** (§455.010) A family or household member (a spouse, a former spouse, any person related by blood or marriage, any person residing together or who resided together in the past, any person who is or has been in a continuing social relationship of a romantic or intimate nature with the victim, or anyone who has a child in common, regardless of whether they have been married or have resided together) or any person stalking the victim. This person is called the Respondent.

**New in 2011:** *An Adult Order of Protection and a Child Order of Protection can be filed against a person under 17.*

### ▶ WHAT ACTS BY THE ABUSER FORM THE BASIS FOR RELIEF?

**Adult and Child Orders of Protection:** (§455.010) Abuse, which includes, but is not limited to, the occurrence of any of the following acts, attempts, or threats against a person who may be protected under Missouri law: assault, battery, coercion, harassment, sexual assault or unlawful imprisonment, except abuse shall not include abuse inflicted on a child by accidental means by an adult or household member or discipline of a child, including spanking, in a reasonable manner. Stalking also is covered by this section of law.

### ▶ WHAT RELIEF IS AVAILABLE?

**Adult Order of Protection:**

(§455.045) *Ex Parte* Order of Protection.

(§455.050) Full Order of Protection.

**Child Order of Protection:**

(§455.520) *Ex Parte* Child Order of Protection.

(§455.523) Full Child Order of Protection.

### ▶ WHAT IS THE PROCEDURE FOR OBTAINING RELIEF?

**Adult Order of Protection:** (§§455.015–455.032) Petitioning court for Order of Protection. (§455.035) Obtaining *Ex Parte* Order of Protection if there is an immediate and present danger. An *Ex Parte* Order of Protection is not always granted, but the Court always should set a hearing date. (§455.040) Hearing on Full Order of Protection held within 15 days after petition is filed, unless there is good cause for a continuance.

**Child Order of Protection:** (§§455.503–455.510) Petitioning court for Child Order of Protection. (§455.513) Obtaining *Ex Parte* Child Order of Protection if there is an immediate and present danger. An *Ex Parte* Order of Protection is not always granted, but the Court always should set a hearing date. (§455.516) Hearing on Full Child Order of Protection within 15 days after petition is filed, unless there is good cause for a continuance.

**New in 2011:** *If an Order of Protection is filed against a person under 17, the case will be moved to juvenile court.*

### ▶ HOW LONG CAN AN ORDER LAST, AND IS IT RENEWABLE?

**Adult Order of Protection:** (§455.040) An Order of Protection lasts for a minimum of 180 days and a maximum of one year. It can be renewed twice; each renewal can last up to one year. No new incident of abuse is required if the Order is renewed before the old one expires.

**Child Order of Protection:** (§455.516) A Child Order of Protection can last for a minimum of 180 days and a maximum of one year. The Order can be renewed twice; each renewal can last up to one year. No new incident of abuse is required if the Order is renewed before the old one expires.

**New in 2011:** (§455.040 & 455.516) *Automatic One-Year Renewal. The Court may, upon a finding that it is in the best interest of the parties, include a provision that any Full Order of Protection for one year shall automatically renew unless the Respondent requests a hearing by 30 days prior to its expiration.*



## MISSOURI ADULT ABUSE ACT AT A GLANCE (CONTINUED)

### ▶ WHAT HAPPENS IF ANOTHER COURT MAKES A CUSTODY ORDER?

**Adult Order of Protection:** (§455.060) The portion of the Order of Protection relating to custody, visitation, support and maintenance is no longer valid, but the prohibitions regarding abuse remain in effect.

**Child Order of Protection:** (§455.528) The portion of the Order of Protection relating to custody, visitation, support and maintenance is no longer valid, but the prohibitions regarding abuse remain in effect.

### ▶ CAN AN ORDER BE MODIFIED?

**Adult Order of Protection:** (§455.060 & §455.065) Yes. Upon the filing of a motion and a showing of changed circumstances.

**Child Order of Protection:** (§455.528 & §455.530) Yes. Upon the filing of a motion and a showing of changed circumstances.

### ▶ ARE PROTECTION ORDERS FROM OTHER STATES ENFORCEABLE IN MISSOURI?

**Adult Order of Protection:** (§455.067) Yes. The Adult Abuse Act provides that orders from other states must be given "full faith and credit" in Missouri. A procedure for registering these "foreign orders" is contained in the statute. However, registration does not have to occur for such orders to be enforced.

**Child Order of Protection:** *Uncertain.* No statutory or legal precedent at this time. Child orders might be covered by the federal Violence Against Women Act. Consult an attorney.

### ▶ WHAT HAPPENS IF AN ORDER IS VIOLATED?

**Adult and Child Orders of Protection:** (§455.085 & §455.090) The violator can be arrested and prosecuted for a crime. Arrestable violations of the terms and conditions of a protection order include abuse, stalking, disregard of child custody provisions, communication initiated by the Respondent, or entrance upon the premises of the Petitioner's dwelling unit, place of employment or school, or being within a certain distance of the Petitioner or child of the Petitioner. If the violation involves the failure to surrender custody of a minor child to the person to whom custody is awarded, the violator must be arrested and the child turned over to the custodial parent. A contempt of court action can be brought in the issuing court and the violator can be held in contempt of court. (This sometimes results in a fine and can include jail time.) The Court may schedule compliance review hearings to monitor the Respondent's compliance with the order, whether or not there has been a violation.

## DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ASSAULT CRIMES

The Missouri General Assembly in 2000 established separate crimes for domestic assault. These categories of assaults acknowledge elements of power and control, and include enhanced penalties for prior or persistent offenders.

### FIRST DEGREE DOMESTIC ASSAULT (SECTIONS 565.063, 565.072 RSMo)

**DEFINITION** - A person commits the crime of domestic assault in the first degree if he or she attempts to kill or knowingly causes or attempts to cause serious physical injury to a family or household member or an adult who is or has been in a continuing social relationship of a romantic or intimate nature with the actor, as defined in Section 455.010, RSMo.

**PUNISHMENT** - Domestic assault in the first degree is a Class B Felony, unless the offender inflicts serious physical injury on the victim, in which case it is a Class A Felony.

Prior offender (1 prior offense within 5 years): Class A Felony; no probation or parole if serious injury inflicted.

Persistent offender (2+ previous offenses within 10 years): Class A Felony; no probation or parole.

### SECOND DEGREE DOMESTIC ASSAULT (SECTIONS 565.063, 565.073 RSMo)

**DEFINITION** - A person commits the crime of domestic assault in the second degree if the act involves a family or household member or an adult who is or has been in a continuing social relationship of a romantic or intimate nature with the actor, as defined in Section 455.010, RSMo, and he or she attempts to cause or knowingly causes physical injury by any means, including use of a deadly weapon or dangerous instrument, or by choking or strangulation; or recklessly causes serious physical injury; or recklessly causes physical injury with a deadly weapon.

**PUNISHMENT** - Domestic assault in the second degree is a Class C Felony.

Prior offender (1 prior offense within 5 years): Class B Felony.

Persistent offender (2+ previous offenses within 10 years): Class A Felony.

### THIRD DEGREE DOMESTIC ASSAULT (SECTION 565.074, RSMo)

**DEFINITION** - A person commits the crime of domestic assault in the third degree if the act involves a family or household member or an adult who is or has been in a continuing social relationship of a romantic or intimate nature with the actor, as defined in Section 455.010, RSMo, and he or she attempts to cause or recklessly causes physical injury; or with criminal negligence causes physical injury by means of a deadly weapon or dangerous instrument; or places the victim in apprehension of immediate physical injury by any means; or recklessly engages in conduct which creates a grave risk of death or serious physical injury to the victim; or knowingly causes physical contact knowing the other person will regard the contact as offensive; or knowingly attempts to cause or causes the isolation of such family or household member by unreasonably and substantially restricting or limiting such family or household member's access to other persons, telecommunication devices or transportation for the purpose of isolation.

**PUNISHMENT** - Domestic assault in the third degree is a Class A Misdemeanor.

Persistent offender (2+ previous offenses): Class D Felony. The offenses may be against the same family or household member or against a different family or household member.

*Probation is also a possibility for each of the charges listed above.*

**CRIME OF HARASSMENT - Harassment Law (565.090 RSMo)**

**In 2008 Missouri law was refined to expand the definition of harassment. Under this law, a person can commit the crime of harassment by any means of communication instead of only by written or telephone communication.**

**DEFINITION** - A person commits the crime of harassment if he or she:

- + Knowingly communicates a threat to commit any felony to another person which, in doing so, frightens, intimidates or causes emotional distress to that person; or
- + Knowingly uses coarse language offensive to a person of average sensibility which causes that person to be in apprehension of offensive physical contact or harm; or
- + Knowingly frightens, intimidates or causes emotional distress to another person by anonymously making telephone calls or by using any electronic communication; or
- + Knowingly makes repeated, unwanted communication to another person; or
- + Knowingly communicates with another person who is, or who purports to be, 17 or younger and recklessly frightens, intimidates or causes that person emotional distress; or
- + Without good cause, engages in any other act with the purpose to frighten, intimidate or cause emotional distress to another person that causes that person to be frightened, intimidated or emotionally distressed.

**PUNISHMENT** - Harassment is a class A misdemeanor, unless a person older than 21 commits harassment against a child 17 or younger or is a repeat offender, in which cases harassment would be a class D felony.

*Probation is also a possibility for each of the charges listed above.*

## CRIME OF STALKING - Stalking Law (565.225 RSMo)

**In 2008 Missouri law expanded the definition of aggravated stalking, amended definitions related to stalking crimes and changed the requirements for penalties for both.**

### DEFINITIONS:

**Stalking** - A person commits the crime of stalking if he or she purposely, through his or her course of conduct, harasses or follows with the intent of harassing another person.

**Aggravated Stalking** - A person commits the crime of aggravated stalking if he or she purposely, through his or her course of conduct, harasses or follows with the intent of harassing another person, and:

- Makes a credible threat to that person; or
- Violates a valid Order of Protection; or
- Violates probation or parole, pretrial release, or release on bond pending appeal; or
- The victim is 17 or younger and the perpetrator is 21 or older; or
- The person has previously pled guilty to or been found guilty of domestic assault, violation of an Order of Protection or any other crime where the other person was the victim.

In the above definitions, the following terms mean:

1. "Course of conduct" a pattern of conduct composed of two or more acts of communication by any means, over any period of time, evidencing a continuity of purpose.
2. "Credible threat" a threat communicated with the intent to cause the person who is the target of the threat to reasonably fear for his or her safety, or the safety of his or her family, or household members or domestic animals or livestock. The threat must be against the life of, or a threat to cause physical injury to, or the kidnapping of, the person, the person's family, or the person's household members or domestic animals or livestock.
3. "Harasses" to engage in a course of conduct directed at a specific person that serves no legitimate purpose that would cause a reasonable person under the circumstances to be frightened, intimidated, or emotionally distressed.

### PUNISHMENT

Stalking is a class A misdemeanor, unless an offender has committed or pled guilty to a subsequent offense, which would make it a class D felony.

Aggravated stalking is a class D felony unless an offender has committed or pled guilty to a subsequent offense, which would make it a class C felony.

*Probation is also a possibility for each of the charges listed above.*

**To see the complete version of any Missouri law, go to [www.moga.mo.gov](http://www.moga.mo.gov). Click on "Missouri Revised Statutes," and enter the statute number in the search field.**

CRIME	PUNISHMENT
Class A Felony	10 to 30 years or life imprisonment
Class B Felony	5 to 15 years imprisonment
Class C Felony	7 years imprisonment or less
Class D Felony	4 years imprisonment or less
Class A Misdemeanor	A term of imprisonment not to exceed 1 year

## Collaboration: Expanding Services with Community Partners

Working collectively provides opportunities to secure results we are more likely to achieve together than alone. These joint efforts, which are commonly known as collaborations, demand relating to and working with one another in innovative ways. In the context of addressing domestic violence, it is essential to bring together diverse service providers and community members, meld their resources, and stretch their minds to embrace new ideas and strategies.

For the sake of justice and human rights, communities have an interest and obligation to end domestic violence. The health, economic and social costs of domestic violence warrant attention as well. Living in an atmosphere dominated by domestic violence harms children and adults. Every community owes these individuals respect and competent services that provide safety and restore their well-being and sense of security.



**A key element to the success of addressing domestic violence is the existence of available resources.**

Domestic violence initiatives in any community require collaboration with other service providers and thereby offer opportunities to create and sustain new ways of working together.

Dozens of communities throughout Missouri are already effectively responding to domestic violence. Known as coordinated community responses, these efforts are often formed and maintained by individuals and organizations that most frequently serve women who have been battered. Groups of concerned civic leaders, law enforcement and justice system officials, social service and health care providers, educators, and clergy can have a significant effect upon their communities when

they unite for a common purpose. Some groups meet formally on a regular basis; others have an informal structure that relies upon regular and honest communication among the participants.

Collaboration is a process that gets people to work together in new ways. To most effectively collaborate, each community partner needs to know what resources partner agencies have to offer, how the referral and networking connections should be structured, and what services they can expect to be offered to the population of women and children all partners are striving to serve. To facilitate a cooperative alliance with domestic violence advocates, it is important to know something about the work they do and how they can assist survivors and their children by providing support and safety.

## DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PROGRAM SERVICES

**Domestic violence programs provide a range of services:**

- ▶ **Hotline.** Crisis intervention, information and referrals provided 24 hours a day, seven days a week on a telephone line answered by qualified, trained staff or volunteers.
- ▶ **Crisis intervention.** Interactions and activities performed by telephone or in person by qualified, trained staff or volunteers with an individual in crisis to stabilize emotions, clarify issues and provide support and assistance to help explore options for resolution of the individual's self-defined crisis and needs.
- ▶ **Shelter.** Emergency housing and related support services provided in a safe, protective environment for adult individuals and their children who have been victimized by domestic violence.
- ▶ **Transitional housing.** Non-emergency housing for a length of stay of more than six months that is free or low-cost subsidized and directly available through the program.
- ▶ **Support groups.** Interactive group sessions that may be non-directed, topic-oriented or informational and educational that are facilitated by a qualified, trained staff member or volunteer.
- ▶ **Services for children.** Structured programs that include information, activities, support and assistance provided to children.
- ▶ **Professional therapy.** Individual or group therapy delivered by an individual who is in compliance with state licensure rules and regulations pertaining to a psychologist, counselor or social worker and who has specific training in addressing domestic violence.
- ▶ **Ongoing advocacy.** Tangible, goal-directed interactions, advocacy and assistance provided to aid a survivor in obtaining needed services and developing short- and long-term resource and safety plans.
- ▶ **Court advocacy.** Provision of information, support, assistance, accompaniment and intervention with any aspect of the civil or criminal legal system on behalf of a service recipient.

It is important to understand that shelters and other domestic violence programs will not always be able to accommodate a woman and her children. Shelters are sometimes filled to capacity. Sometimes, after an in-depth interview and an assessment of alternatives, a domestic violence program advocate might not admit someone to the shelter, might not encourage getting an Order of Protection, or might not support your sense of urgency that she leave. Ultimately, all decisions regarding courses of action are up to the woman to make. She is the expert on her own life.

**Ultimately, all decisions regarding courses of action are up to the woman to make. She is the expert on her own life.**

## Internet and Computer Safety

If you are in danger, please try to use a safer computer that someone abusive does not have direct or remote (hacking) access to.

Computers can store a lot of private information about what you look at via the Internet, the emails and instant messages you send, Internet-based phone and IP-TTY calls you make, web-based purchases and banking, and many other activities. It is not possible to delete or clear all the “foot-prints” of your computer or online activities.

It might be safer to use a computer in a public library, at a trusted friend’s house, or an Internet café to research an escape plan, new jobs, apartments or bus tickets, or to ask for help.

If you think your activities are being monitored, they probably are. Abusive people are often controlling and want to know your every move. You don’t need to be a computer programmer or have special skills to monitor someone’s computer and Internet activities—anyone can do it. There are many ways to monitor computer usage with programs including spyware, keystroke loggers and hacking tools.

## Recommended websites

### STATE

- ▶ Missouri Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence, [www.mocadsv.org](http://www.mocadsv.org)

### NATIONAL/OTHER

- ▶ The Battered Women’s Justice Project, [www.bwjp.org](http://www.bwjp.org)
- ▶ The Domestic Abuse Intervention Project, [www.duluth-model.org](http://www.duluth-model.org)
- ▶ Faith Trust Institute, [www.faithtrustinstitute.org](http://www.faithtrustinstitute.org)
- ▶ Futures without Violence (formerly Family Violence Prevention Fund), [www.endabuse.org](http://www.endabuse.org)
- ▶ Minnesota Center Against Violence and Abuse, [www.mincava.umn.edu](http://www.mincava.umn.edu)
- ▶ National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, [www.ncadv.org](http://www.ncadv.org)
- ▶ National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs, [www.avp.org/ncavp.htm](http://www.avp.org/ncavp.htm)
- ▶ National Domestic Violence Hotline, [www.ndvh.org](http://www.ndvh.org)
- ▶ National Electronic Network on Violence Against Women (VAWnet), [www.vawnet.org](http://www.vawnet.org)
- ▶ National Network to End Domestic Violence, [www.nnedv.org](http://www.nnedv.org)
- ▶ National Resource Center on Domestic Violence, [www.nrcdv.org](http://www.nrcdv.org)
- ▶ National Stalking Resource Center, [www.ncvc.org/src](http://www.ncvc.org/src)
- ▶ PreventConnect, [www.preventconnect.org](http://www.preventconnect.org)
- ▶ U.S. Centers of Disease Control and Prevention Family and Intimate Violence Prevention Team, [www.cdc.gov/ncipc/dvp/dvp.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/dvp/dvp.htm)
- ▶ U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, [www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs)

# The Mission and Purpose of MCADSV

The Missouri Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence (MCADSV) is the membership coalition of those working in the Missouri movement to end violence against women. Founded in 1980, MCADSV has more than 100 member programs that provide services to victims of violence against women. Since its beginning, MCADSV has worked to ensure there is someone to talk to, someplace to go and someone to help women victimized by violence when they need it most. MCADSV's members—individuals and organizations from throughout the state—count on the Coalition to provide them with the resources, training and expertise to further social justice in their own communities as well as a unified voice at the state level to improve public policy, systems and responses to violence against women. To further these aims, MCADSV provides the following services to its members and the communities they serve:

## EDUCATION

- MCADSV educates the general public about domestic violence, sexual violence, dating violence and stalking; trains professionals; and advocates public policy to prevent and alleviate violence against women.

## ASSISTANCE

- MCADSV provides technical assistance, training and support to members and related communities of service providers.

## ALLIANCE

- MCADSV provides opportunities for communication among those working in the movement to end violence against women.

## RESEARCH

- MCADSV researches the extent of domestic violence, sexual violence, dating violence and stalking to more effectively reduce its impact and occurrence in the lives of Missouri's women.

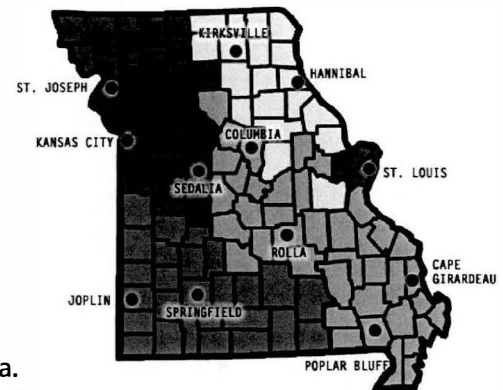
## History of MCADSV

Formed in 1980 to affect public policy relating to domestic violence in the state of Missouri, the Missouri Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence (MCADSV) formally expanded its mission in 2006 to also address the needs of women victimized by sexual violence, dating violence and stalking. MCADSV is the state's oldest and sole grassroots organization of community-based programs and advocates working to end violence in the lives of Missouri's women.



Need to find resources near you?  
**Go to WWW.MOCADSV.ORG**  
 and click on the  
**"HOW TO GET HELP" tab.**

Click on the Missouri map, which is broken out in regions, to pull up service providers in your area. You can also do an advanced search of service providers throughout the state by selecting more specific criteria.



## BECOME A MEMBER

*Together we are powerful.*

Your support furthers MCADSV's mission to end domestic violence and sexual assault in our state and communities. By becoming a member of MCADSV, you join a group of individuals and agencies committed to change in Missouri.

*Membership is open to individuals, organizations whose primary mission is the provision of domestic and/or sexual violence services; and supportive organizations whose missions indirectly support the provision of domestic violence and/or sexual assault services.*

### Individual Members Receive:

- Free statewide and regional trainings
- Technical support and training provided by MCADSV staff
- A copy of each MCADSV publication and manual
- Access to the MCADSV Resource Lending Library
- Access to members-only section of MCADSV website
- Public policy advocate presence at state and national level
- Regular updates on state and federal legislation relating to domestic violence and sexual assault
- Access to MCADSV listservs
- Discount on Annual Conference fees

Please make your check payable to MCADSV and mail to the address on the back cover. To pay by credit card, go to [www.mocadsv.org](http://www.mocadsv.org) and click on the "donate now" button. In the comments section, please type in "membership dues."

**Yes! I want to support MCADSV in the work to end violence against women and children.**

**SUPPORTIVE MEMBERSHIP**

**\$45 annually**

Individuals who support the mission and efforts of MCADSV.

**ADVOCATE MEMBERSHIP**

**\$35 annually**

Individuals who are employed by a member program of MCADSV.

**STUDENT MEMBERSHIP**

**\$25 annually**

Full-time students who support the mission and efforts of MCADSV.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Title \_\_\_\_\_

Organization \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail\* \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

\* Your e-mail address is **required** to process your application. **Your email address acts as your username for the members-only section of the MCADSV website.**

Providing your email address confirms your agreement to subscribe to the MCADSV listserv(s) and abide by MCADSV's listserv policy. Please check here to opt-out of the listserv.

As an individual member of the Missouri Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence, I agree with and support the Coalition's philosophy and mission.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

DSV101

Date received: \_\_\_\_\_ Check #: \_\_\_\_\_ Coalition Mgr.: \_\_\_\_\_ Region: \_\_\_\_\_ E-list: \_\_\_\_\_



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## Key issues in domestic violence

### Research in Practice no. 7

Anthony Morgan and Hannah Chadwick  
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- [Download full report \(pdf 1.66 MB\)](#)

#### Abstract

Domestic violence refers to acts of violence that occur within intimate relationships and take place in domestic settings. It includes physical, sexual, emotional and psychological abuse. Family violence is a broader term that refers to violence between family members, as well as violence between intimate partners. This summary paper focuses on the issue of domestic violence.

Domestic violence incurs significant social, emotional and economic costs to victims, their families and the broader community (Laing & Bobic 2002). Findings from victimisation surveys suggest that women are more likely than men to become victims of domestic violence, but that domestic violence can occur in a range of different relationship types, circumstances and settings. Research suggests that some women may be more vulnerable to becoming victims and less capable of exiting violent relationships, depending on their age, living arrangements and English language abilities. A number of factors have also been identified as increasing the risk that an individual will become a perpetrator of domestic violence. Understanding the complex interaction of attitudes, motives and situational factors underlying offender behaviour is helpful in developing effective prevention strategies.

This summary paper provides a brief overview of this area of research. Key research findings on the nature, prevalence and impact of domestic violence are presented, along with an overview of risk factors associated with an increased likelihood of offending or victimisation. The implications of these research findings for policy and practice are also briefly outlined.

#### What is domestic violence?

Domestic violence is traditionally associated with cases of physical violence occurring within intimate relationships and in a domestic setting. It is most commonly perpetrated by a male against a female partner, but it also includes violence against men. Domestic violence occurs in both heterosexual and homosexual relationships and includes married, de facto and separated adolescents and adults (Flood & Fergus 2008). Domestic violence is also commonly referred to as relationship violence, intimate partner violence and gender-based violence. In Indigenous communities, 'family violence' is often the preferred term as it encapsulates the broader issue of violence within extended families (Stanley, Tomison & Pocock 2003).

Domestic violence is not limited to physical violence and involves a range of different forms of abuse. These are outlined in Table 1. Definitions of domestic violence commonly include reference to:

- the presence of abuse between intimate partners, including both current and former partners;
- different forms of abuse including physical and sexual violence, threats and intimidation, psychological and emotional abuse, and social and economic deprivation;
- the unequal distribution of power whereby one person has control over the other and uses domestic violence to dominate and maintain that level of control;
- infrequent and relatively minor incidents through to more frequent and severe incidents resulting in serious physical harm or death; and
- the impact of domestic violence in terms of causing fear as well as physical and psychological damage and interfering with the victim's quality of life (Laing & Bobic 2002).

While most people consider domestic violence to be comprised of physical and sexual assaults, there is evidence that fewer people regard social, psychological and financial abuse as constituting domestic violence (VicHealth 2009).

Table 1 Different forms of domestic violence

Form of abuse	Characteristics of behaviour
Physical abuse	Threatening or physically assaults, including punching, choking, hitting, pushing and shoving, throwing objects, smashing objects, damaging property, assaulting children and injuring pets
Sexual abuse	Any unwanted sexual contact, including rape
Psychological abuse	Emotional and verbal abuse such as humiliation, threats, insults, swearing, harassment or constant criticism and put downs
Social abuse	Isolating partner from friends and/or family, denying partner access to the telephone, controlling and restricting partner's movements when going out
Economic abuse	Exerting control over household or family income by preventing the other person's access to finances and financial independence
Spiritual abuse	Denying or manipulating religious beliefs or practices to force victims into subordinate roles or to justify other forms of abuse

#### Prevalence of domestic violence

The main source of information regarding the prevalence of domestic violence is victimisation surveys. According to the ABS (2006) *Personal Safety Survey*, approximately one in three Australian women have experienced physical violence during their lifetime, nearly one in five women have experienced some form of sexual violence and nearly one in five have experienced violence by a current or previous partner. Findings from the *Personal Safety Survey* also demonstrate that females are more likely than males to experience an act of physical or sexual violence (actual, attempted or threatened) at the hands of a current or former partner:

- 4.7 percent of females (363,000) were physically assaulted in the 12 months prior to the survey and of these women, 31 percent (73,800) were assaulted by their current or former partner.
- 10 percent of men (779,800) were physically assaulted in the 12 months prior to the survey, 4.4 percent (21,200) of whom were assaulted by their current or former partner.
- 2.1 percent of women (160,100) and 0.9 percent of men (68,100) aged 15 years and over have experienced violence from a current partner and 15 percent of women (1,135,500) and 4.9 percent of men (367,300) have experienced violence from a former partner.
- 1.6 percent of women (126,100) had experienced sexual violence in the 12 months prior to the survey and 21 percent of these women (21,500) identified a previous partner as the perpetrator.

Another Australian survey found that one-third of women who have a former or current intimate partner reported experiencing some form of physical, sexual or psychological violence (Mouzos & Makkai 2004). It was also found that the levels and severity of violence perpetrated by former partners were higher than that experienced from current partners (Mouzos & Makkai 2004). Women who experienced violence from former partners were more likely to report sustaining injuries and feeling as though their lives were at risk (Mouzos & Makkai 2004). Injuries from assault committed by a spouse have been found to be more severe than injuries resulting from non-spousal assault (Borooh & Mangan 2006). The period during a relationship breakdown and separation is a particularly risky time for domestic violence between ex-partners (Flood & Fergus 2008).

Victimisation surveys are an important source of information on the nature and extent of domestic violence because the rate of reporting for domestic violence incidents is low. Recent estimates suggest that only 14 to 36 percent of victims reported the most recent incident of domestic violence to police, although the rate of reporting has increased over the past decade (Marcus & Braaf 2007). One possible explanation for the low reporting rate is that victims of physical or sexual violence committed by current partners may be less likely to perceive the incident as a crime than if it were committed by a stranger (Mouzos & Makkai 2004). Other reasons include a belief that the incident is too minor to report, shame or embarrassment, a desire to deal with the issue by themselves, fear of the perpetrator or of the consequences of reporting the incident, cultural barriers, and concern about having to relive the event by re-telling the story to multiple parties

(NCRVWC 2009a). While they more accurately estimate the prevalence of domestic violence, victimisation surveys may also underestimate the true extent of violence, particularly among certain vulnerable groups. Therefore, it is important that decisions regarding how best to prevent domestic violence and where to target resources are informed by multiple sources of information.

It is widely accepted that domestic violence is more commonly perpetrated by males and that women are more likely to suffer physical harm at the hands of their partner (Taft, Hegarty & Flood 2001; Tomison 2000). However, estimates of the distribution of violence vary. For example, according to the findings of the ABS (2006) *Personal Safety Survey*, 78 percent of persons who reported being a victim of physical violence at the hands of a partner in the previous 12 months were female. Similarly, research by Access Economics (2004) found that 87 percent of all victims of domestic violence are women and that 98 percent of all perpetrators are men.

In contrast, some research has found the rates of violence perpetrated by men and women against their partners to be of similar size (Headey, Scott & de Vaus 1999). That domestic violence is committed equally by males and females is a view shared by some sections of the community, particularly males. For example, one in five respondents to a recent national survey indicated that they believed that domestic violence is perpetrated equally by both men and women (VicHealth 2009).

Debate regarding the rates of violence against men committed by women in intimate relationships still exists, and there has been a growing body of research into the nature and prevalence of male victimisation and domestic violence in homosexual relationships. However the under-reporting of victimisation limits efforts to understand and prevent violence against men as well as those victims living in gay, lesbian and transgender relationships (Chan 2005; Nicholas 2005). Overall though, the consensus finding is that women comprise the majority of victims of domestic violence and they continue to be the focus of most research in the area.

Apart from differences in the prevalence of violence, there are differences in the nature of the violence perpetrated by males and females against their partners. Males are more likely to engage in different forms of violent behaviour against their partner (not limited to physical violence) and the violence is more severe and more likely to result in serious injury (Tomison 2000). James, Seddon & Brown (2002) examined the motivations of *male perpetrators* and concluded that domestic violence can be categorised as either:

- involving aggression, intimidation, verbal abuse and physical violence to assert domination and control over a partner; or
- an impulsive act committed in response to emotions of frustration and anger, with no real expectation of achieving a set objective.

However, women who are violent are more likely to be driven by frustration and anger rather than by a specific objective, and their violence is more likely to be committed in self defence, or in retaliation to provocation (James, Seddon & Brown 2002; Tomison 2000). Understanding the motivation of perpetrators of domestic violence is important in the development of effective interventions for working with different offenders to prevent future acts of violence.

The rest of this paper deals primarily with violence against women, committed by men, as this reflects the most common pattern of domestic violence, has been the primary focus of research, and is an issue that is receiving considerable attention among policy makers and practitioners nationally.

### Impact of domestic violence

In 2002–03 in Australia, the total cost of domestic violence to victims, perpetrators, friends and families, communities, government and the private sector was estimated to be in excess of \$8b (Access Economics 2004). In 2008–09, the total cost of all violence against women and their children (including non-domestic violence) was estimated to have cost the Australian economy \$13.6b and, if no action were to be taken to address the problem, will cost \$15.6b in 2021–22 (KPMG Management Consulting 2009). This includes costs associated with:

- pain, suffering and premature mortality (which accounts for almost half of all associated costs);
- provision of health services;
- the impact on employment and productivity;
- replacing damaged property, defaulting on personal debts and moving;
- exposure to domestic violence among children, child protection services;
- the response of the criminal justice system, support services and prevention programs; and
- victim compensation and financial support from a range of sources.

Domestic violence is associated with a range of health problems (Marcus & Braaf 2007) and is the single biggest health risk to Australian women aged 15 to 44 years (Access Economics 2004). In 2006–07, one in five homicides involved intimate partners and more than half of all female victims were killed by their intimate partner (Dearden & Jones 2008). Between 1989 and 1998, 57 percent of female deaths caused by violence were perpetrated by an intimate partner and women were five times more likely to be killed by their partners than men (NSW Office for Women's Policy 2008). Domestic violence has a significant impact on the general health and wellbeing of individuals by causing physical injury, anxiety, depression, impairing social skills and increasing the likelihood that they will engage in practices harmful to their health, such as self harm or substance abuse (NSW Office for Women's Policy 2008). Physical abuse also increases the risk of criminal offending and a significant proportion of women in prison have experienced some form of prior abuse, either as adults or children (NCRVWC 2009a).

Domestic violence is also the most common factor contributing to homelessness among women and their children. They may be forced from their homes in order to escape violence, disrupting social support networks as well as children's schooling and social networks (Marcus & Braaf 2007). Women who have lived with a violent partner are also more likely to experience financial difficulties or hardship as a result of the relationship (NCRVWC 2009a).

There is also an association between domestic violence and child maltreatment (child physical, sexual and emotional abuse) and neglect, which is related to a range of negative physical, psychological and emotional consequences, although further research is required to delineate the precise nature of the association (Tomison 2000). There is some evidence that observing significant others being maltreated (especially siblings and parents) by someone with whom a child identifies with closely (ie a parent), is a more significant factor in the intergenerational transmission of violence than the child actually being maltreated her/himself (Brown 1983, as cited in Hamilton 1989).

Research has identified that many victims perceive the emotional impacts of both physical and non-physical abuse—such as their degree of fear, their partner's intent to harm and their own self blame—as being more significant than any physical injuries incurred (Flood & Fergus 2008). The impact of violence can extend well beyond the period of abuse (VicHealth 2006). Relying on measures of the prevalence of violence, or methods that focus solely on recording instances of physical harm, their nature and severity, may therefore fail to reveal the full extent and consequences of the abuse (Flood & Fergus 2008).

### Victims of domestic violence

The prevalence, severity and form of domestic violence, access to services and capacity to leave violent relationships differs within a community, with certain groups more vulnerable than others. Domestic violence is more prevalent within certain communities, such as in rural Australia and some Indigenous communities (Carrington & Phillips 2006). The severity of offences also appears to differ between socioeconomic, age and cultural groups (NCRVWC 2009b; WA Department for Communities 2006; WESNET 2000). Some women may be more vulnerable to becoming victims and less capable of exiting violent relationships based on certain factors such as age, location, ethnicity, Indigenous status and their English language abilities (KPMG Management Consulting 2009). These issues are described below.

#### Indigenous women

Indigenous women are over-represented as victims of domestic violence, with victimisation rates estimated to be much higher than those of non-Indigenous women (Indermaur 2001; Mouzos & Makkai 2004; NCRVWC 2009a). In 2002, 20 percent of Indigenous women reported that they had been a victim of physical violence in the previous 12 months, compared with seven percent of non-Indigenous women (Mouzos & Makkai 2004). Indigenous women are as much as 35 times as likely to sustain serious injury and require hospitalisation as a result of violence committed by a spouse or partner and are more likely to access emergency accommodation or refuge (Al-Yaman, Van Doeland & Wallis 2006). However, efforts to develop reliable estimates as to the extent of domestic violence in Indigenous communities have been limited by methodological issues (Mouzos & Makkai 2004; Schmider & Nancarrow 2007).

The likelihood that an Indigenous woman will be a victim of violence can be understood as resulting from a confluence of risk factors relating to alcohol and substance use, social stressors, living in a remote community, measures of individual, family and community functionality and the resources available to the person (Bryant & Willis 2008). Indigenous women are more likely to report being a victim of physical or threatened violence if they are young, have been removed from their natural family, have some form of disability, have experienced a higher number of recent stressors and have financial difficulties (Al-Yaman, Van Doeland & Wallis 2006).

A key issue preventing Indigenous women from accessing counselling, legal and medical support services is the closeness and breadth of kinship groups. This can impact on an individual's anonymity and their decision to disclose offences for fear of social and physical repercussions, alienation and upheaval within the community and the family (WA Office for Women's Policy 2005). In addition, many Indigenous communities are not adequately resourced to deal with domestic violence issues, resulting in a lack of support for victims (Memmtt et al. 2001).

#### Women living in rural and remote areas

Research found that women living in remote and rural areas of Western Australia experience higher rates of reported violence than those living in metropolitan areas (WESNET 2000). For both Indigenous and non-Indigenous women in remote and rural areas, access to independent services can be limited due to their

geographical isolation and the limited availability of resources in local areas (NSW Office for Women's Policy 2008). The remoteness of some areas attracts only few trained professionals which limits the availability of important services and inhibits service delivery. It also raises issues with respect to maintaining confidentiality and safety (NCRVWC 2009a). These factors compound the isolation victims already experience as part of the abuse.

Women from culturally and linguistically different backgrounds

Studies have produced mixed findings with respect to the nature and prevalence of physical and sexual violence against women from culturally and linguistically different (CALD) backgrounds. Some studies have found that women from non-English speaking backgrounds experience higher levels of violence (O'Donnell, Smith & Madison 2002), whereas others suggest the rate of physical violence is lower than, or similar to, the rate among those women from English speaking backgrounds (Bassuk, Dawson & Huntington 2006; Mouzos & Makkai 2004). Drawing conclusions regarding the precise nature and extent of domestic violence in these communities is therefore difficult. What is clear is that immigrant and refugee populations should not be treated as a single homogenous group.

Research has shown that women from CALD backgrounds are less likely to report domestic violence victimisation to police or to access mainstream services because of a perception that these services would not understand their particular situation and respond appropriately (WA Department for Communities 2006). Besides perceptions of being misunderstood, other factors may prevent victims from CALD backgrounds from accessing important services. The limited availability of culturally sensitive translator and interpreter support services can prevent victims with English as a second language from seeking help and removing themselves and their children from dangerous situations (Runner, Yoshihama & Novick 2009). Access to support services for refugees or newly emigrated persons can be further limited in instances where the victim is dependent on the perpetrator for residential or citizenship status (WCFVVS 2006). Insufficient knowledge of English is often used as a tool of power and control by perpetrators (NCRVWC 2009a). Recent research has indicated that the level of understanding and awareness of domestic violence in CALD communities has increased due to a combination of community education and generational change, but that further work is required (Marcus & Braaf 2007).

Pregnant women

The ABS (2006) *Personal Safety Survey* identified that women may be at increased risk of domestic violence during pregnancy. Almost 60 percent of women who had experienced violence perpetrated by a former partner were pregnant at some time during the relationship; of these, 36 percent experienced the abuse during their pregnancy and 17 percent experienced it for the first time when they were pregnant. In addition, the frequency and severity of violence has been found to be higher among pregnant women and the onset of pregnancy has been found to increase the rate of psychological abuse among those women who had previously reported being abused (Burch & Gallup 2004; Martin et al. 2004). The risk to pregnant women has found to be greatest among those women with lower levels of education, from disadvantaged communities and with unintended or unwanted pregnancies (Taft 2002). The consequences of abuse while a woman is pregnant can include stress, drug and alcohol use and physical injuries, which can further impact upon a woman's health during pregnancy, the birth outcome and the health of their baby (Taft 2002). There is also an increased risk in the period immediately after a baby is born, due to the additional stress that may be placed on a relationship and each partner's mental health, wellbeing and lifestyle (O'Reilly 2007).

Older women

Older women experience violence and abuse at a rate two and a half times higher than older males (Boldy et al. 2002). Between one-fifth and one-quarter of elderly abuse incidents are committed by the victim's spouse or partner (Boldy et al. 2002). Evidence suggests that the majority of older people who are victims of physical, sexual or financial abuse are long term victims of abuse, often perpetrated by a partner who is in a duty of care relationship with the victim (WESNET 2000). Decision-making disabilities and physical disabilities are common among those people who are a victim of abuse (Boldy et al. 2002; Peri et al. 2008). Supportive families and community connectedness have been identified as important protective factors that reduce the risk of violence against older women (Peri et al. 2008).

Women living with a disability

Women with a physical or intellectual disability are more likely than women without disability to experience intimate partner violence and the violence they experience is also likely to be more severe and extend for longer periods of time (NCRVWC 2009a). Research has shown that many women with physical disabilities who experience domestic violence do not seek help, have limited access to appropriate support and fewer opportunities to leave violent relationships (Milberger et al. 2003).

Dating and relationship violence

Adults are the traditional demographic group most commonly associated with domestic violence, however the prevalence of violence in adolescent relationships has received more attention in recent times. Dating and relationship violence is common in adolescent relationships and within school-age communities (Indermaur 2001). Younger women are more likely to experience physical and sexual violence than older women, controlling for other factors (Mouzos & Makkai 2004; Roman et al. 2007). Young people's vulnerability to intimate partner violence is increased by sexist and traditional gender role attitudes, peer culture, inexperience and attitudes supportive of violence that can be shaped by the media, pornography and early exposure to aggressive behaviour by parents or role models (Flood & Fergus 2008).

Young women are more likely than young males to be subjected to psychological, sexual and physical violence perpetrated by their boyfriends or friends. An Australian survey of 5,000 young people aged 12 to 20 years revealed that of the 70 percent of respondents who had had a boyfriend or girlfriend at some stage, one-third reported incidents in their intimate relationships that involved some form of physical violence (Indermaur 2001). The same study also reported that 42 percent of young women aged 19 to 20 years admitted to being the victim of some form of physical violence from a boyfriend at least once (Indermaur 2001). Research has also found that dating violence, including both psychological and physical violence, is common among adolescent girls with a history of child sexual abuse, and was related to the severity of the abuse they had suffered as a child (Cyr, McDuff & Wright 2006).

However, support services and long term solutions may be less readily available to young people who are victims of domestic violence. Leaving an abusive relationship can be more difficult for young people due to age-related eligibility criteria for public housing and difficulties associated with accessing private rental accommodation or unemployment benefits (WESNET 2000). As a result, younger victims may be left unassisted, forced into homelessness or elect to remain in abusive relationships.

### Risk factors for domestic violence

There is no single cause or factor that leads to domestic violence. A number of risk factors have been identified as associated with perpetrators of domestic violence. These include age, low academic achievement, low income or exclusion from the labour market, social disadvantage and isolation and exposure to, or involvement in, aggressive or delinquent behaviour as an adolescent (Flood & Fergus 2008; NSW Office for Women's Policy 2008). Many of these same risk factors have been linked to an increased likelihood of aggressive behaviour and offending generally. Mouzos and Makkai (2004) found that, among those women who had experienced current intimate partner violence, the most commonly reported aspects of the male perpetrator's behaviour (and therefore risk factors for violence) were drinking habits, general levels of aggression and controlling behaviour. These issues are also common risk factors for violence in Indigenous relationships (Bryant & Willis 2008).

This section of the paper discusses the role of attitudes towards violence, situational factors, early exposure to domestic violence and the lack of access to support services in increasing the risk of domestic violence.

Attitudes toward violence

It is important that strategies are developed to continue to influence community attitudes towards violence against women. Research shows that men are more likely to engage in violence against women if they hold negative attitudes towards women and hold traditional gender role attitudes that legitimise violence as a method of resolving conflict or as a private matter (Flood & Pease 2006; NCRVWC 2009b). Violence-supporting attitudes are also more common among males who exhibit low levels of support for gender equality (VicHealth 2009). Similarly, women with traditional gender role attitudes are less likely to report violence.

The risk of violence varies across different communities. There is a greater risk of violence against women in communities where the following attitudes or norms exist:

- traditional 'macho' constructions of masculinity;
- notions that men are primary wage earners and the heads of the household whereas a woman's place is in the home;
- standards encouraging excessive consumption of alcohol; and
- standards that facilitate peer pressure to conform to these notions of masculinity (NCRVWC 2009b).

Negative attitudes towards women are different across cultural groups and are influenced by culturally-specific norms and social relationships. However they are:

- more commonly expressed among adolescent males than older males;
- stronger in particular masculine contexts, such as sporting subcultures, and are facilitated by group socialisation;
- influenced by exposure to pornography as well as television, music and film; and
- more likely among children who witness or are subjected to violence (Flood & Pease 2006).

Australian research suggests that while there have been improvements, attitudes condoning or trivialising violence against women persist (Taylor & Mouzos 2006). In addition, while the majority of people do not believe that physical violence against women is justified under any circumstances, around one in five respondents to a national survey were prepared to excuse physical and sexual violence where they believed that perpetrators had temporarily lost control or truly regretted what they had done (VicHealth 2009).

#### Situational factors

Various situational factors, while not direct causes, may increase the risk of domestic violence. Some of these factors include family or relationship problems, financial problems or unemployment and recent stressful events or circumstances, such as the death of a family member (Memmott et al. 2001).

Alcohol is a significant risk factor for domestic violence, with research suggesting that women whose partners frequently consume alcohol at excessive levels are more likely to experience violence (Marcus & Braaf 2007; Mouzos & Makkai 2004). The involvement of alcohol in domestic violence is an even bigger issue within Indigenous communities (Dearden & Payne 2009; Memmott et al. 2001). The risk of an Indigenous person becoming a victim of actual or threatened violence increases with high risk alcohol use and alcohol is the factor most strongly associated with the risk of victimisation among Indigenous people, controlling for other factors (Bryant & Willis 2008). Alcohol use is also prevalent among victims of domestic violence (Nicholas 2005; White & Chen 2002).

There is strong evidence of a relationship between heavy drinking and aggression (Wells & Graham 2003). However, not all people who consume alcohol become violent. One explanation for the role of alcohol in domestic violence is that the consumption of alcohol may facilitate an escalation of an incident from verbal to physical abuse because it lowers inhibitions and increases feelings of aggression (Nicholas 2005). There is also research that suggests that because of its impact on aggression the consumption of alcohol, either by the offender or victim, may increase the seriousness of a domestic violence incident, the severity of injuries and risk of death, with almost half of all intimate partner homicides found to be alcohol-related (Dearden & Payne 2009).

Research has attempted to link seasonal changes, calendar events and major sporting events to the rate of reported incidents of domestic violence (Braaf & Gilbert 2007). Australian research suggests that while there is some variation across states and territories:

- there is a higher number of reported incidents in December and January;
- there is a higher number of reported incidents on certain calendar events and holidays, including New Year's Day, the Christmas period and other public holidays, and Melbourne Cup Day; and
- some states experience higher rates of reported incidents coinciding with significant sporting events, but the findings are inconsistent and not as strong as those from international research (Braaf & Gilbert 2007).

Explanations of this relationship have focused on the increased contact between victims and perpetrators during holiday periods, increased issues associated with child contact arrangements for estranged families and increased consumption of alcohol.

#### Early exposure: Children and domestic violence

Research has found that, after controlling for other factors, there are higher rates of domestic violence in those households in which there are children present (Romans et al. 2007). According to the ABS (2006) *Personal Safety Survey*, 49 percent of men and women who reported experiencing violence by a current partner had children in their care at some time during the relationship and approximately 27 percent reported that these children had witnessed the violence. Sixty-one percent of victims of violence by a previous partner also reported having children in their care at some time during the relationship and 36 percent said that these children had witnessed the violence (ABS 2006).

These findings are concerning because exposure to domestic violence has been associated with a higher likelihood of the following problems among young people:

- issues related to cognitive, emotional and social functioning and development which can lead to behavioural and learning difficulties;
- an increase in the risk of mental health issues, including depression and anxiety disorders;
- issues related to education and employment prospects;
- more accepting of or willing to excuse the use of violence against women;
- involvement in violent relationships with peers and conflict with adults and other forms of authority;
- increased risk of becoming perpetrators or victims themselves; and
- a detrimental impact on their future parenting capacities (Flood & Fergus 2008; Tomison 2000; VicHealth 2006).

It has been recognised that exposing a child to domestic violence is a form of abuse in itself, regardless of whether the child is the target of such violence or not (Flood & Fergus 2008), and that such exposure is related to the intergenerational transmission of violence (Tomison 2000). Exposure to violence in the home can lead young people to develop inappropriate norms concerning violence and aggression, and to model the behaviour and attitudes to which they have been exposed, increasing the risk that an individual will enter into an abusive relationship in adulthood, either as the perpetrator or victim (Flood & Fergus 2008, Tomison 2000).

Experience of abuse during childhood also increases the likelihood of being assaulted or harmed as an adult. One study found that young people who had been exposed to violence in the home when they were growing up were twice as likely to have been forced to have sex and four times as likely to have admitted that they had forced a partner to have sex later in life (Indermaur 2001). According to the ABS (2006) *Personal Safety Survey*, around one in 10 males and females reported having experienced physical abuse before the age of 15 years, while 12 percent of women and five percent of men reported having been sexually abused. This is an important finding, as research has shown that women who reported experiencing some form of physical or sexual abuse during childhood are one and a half times more likely to report experiencing some form of violence in adulthood (Mouzos & Makkai 2004).

#### Access to support networks and services

Problems accessing important support networks or services can also increase the risk that someone will become a victim of domestic violence, or continue to experience violence because they are unable to leave a violent relationship. Research suggests that more than four in five women who experience domestic violence do not contact a specialised support agency, but are more likely to contact family and friends (Marcus & Braaf 2007; Mouzos & Makkai 2004). Further, young women who are connected to school or peer networks and who have links with supportive adult family members or friends also experience lower rates of violence (NCRVWC 2009a); while there is also evidence that men with strong social networks are less likely to be perpetrators of domestic violence (NCRVWC 2009a). While these informal support networks are important they are not always able to meet the needs of victims or offenders, and there are a range of potential barriers that can prevent a victim from seeking help from service providers, including:

- a lack of available services;
- the cost or limited availability of transport;
- limited awareness of available services;
- a lack of culturally appropriate services;
- a perception that services will be unsympathetic or judgemental;
- shame or embarrassment;
- fear that they will not be believed;
- fear of the perpetrator and the potential for retribution; and
- a perception that services will not be able to offer assistance (Marcus & Braaf 2007; Taft 2002).

Strategies to overcome these barriers are necessary to ensure that victims, particularly those within the most vulnerable groups, are able to access support services to reduce the risk of violence. For example, women who receive shelter services have been shown to experience shorter periods of violence than women who experience violence but do not access support shelters (Panchanadeswaran & McCloskey 2007). Improving service provision and support for victims is an important factor in reducing the impact of geographic or social isolation (NCRVWC 2009a). Similarly important is the need for services that work with perpetrators to reduce the likelihood of reoffending, particularly voluntary programs.

#### Implications for policy and practice

Approaches to preventing domestic violence should be informed by research from both Australia and overseas, demonstrating the effectiveness of different strategies. There is a growing body of evidence that shows that a range of strategies, including social marketing and awareness campaigns, early childhood and family based prevention, school-based programs, community mobilisation, regulations on the portrayal of violence in the media, interventions to reduce the availability of alcohol and alcohol misuse, and criminal justice responses can be effective in preventing violence against women or repeat victimisation (NCRVWC 2009b). It is important, however, that in adapting programs from overseas or other Australian communities, consideration is given to relevant characteristics of the local context in which programs are to operate and whether the program needs to be modified accordingly (Laing 2002).

There are barriers that have impacted upon the implementation and effectiveness of strategies to prevent domestic violence. The *National Council's Plan for Australia to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children* (NCRVWC 2009b) highlights a number of areas that need to be addressed in future domestic violence initiatives:

- Overcoming barriers to effective implementation of collaborative strategies and monitoring the effectiveness of partnerships in reducing domestic violence.
- Addressing legislative barriers that inhibit efforts to support victims and manage offenders.
- Encouraging a greater level of investment in primary prevention, including social marketing strategies that promote cultural and behavioural change.
- Ensuring that there is adequate long term funding for domestic violence services, that services are accessible to victims and their children, and that service systems are sufficiently integrated to address the complex needs of victims.
- Improving the evidence base with respect to effective interventions to reduce domestic violence, particularly in relation to primary prevention, victim support services, perpetrator programs, criminal justice interventions and risk assessment and management.
- Improving the quality of evaluation and performance monitoring.

Taken as a whole, the research findings presented in this summary paper suggest that there are a number of specific areas that can be targeted to prevent domestic violence and reduce repeat victimisation:

- Coordination and collaboration across sectors and across all levels of government and non-government should be a fundamental principle underpinning any approach to the prevention of, and intervention with, domestic violence (NCRVWC 2009a). Tasmania's *Safe at Home* program is one example of an integrated whole of government approach that has been found to improve the response to violence against women (Success Works 2009).
- Improve coordination between domestic violence and child protection services to assist in preventing early exposure to domestic violence in intimate relationships (Humphreys 2007). Strategies must focus not only on the prevention of early exposure to domestic violence, but deal with any associated physical and sexual abuse, neglect and emotional abuse in a holistic manner (Tomison 2000). A holistic approach that deals with the effects of children's exposure to domestic violence and other maltreatment will help prevent the intergenerational transmission of violent attitudes and behaviours and/or subsequent victimisation.
- Increase the availability and awareness of services for victims and perpetrators, enhance referral mechanisms and improve collaboration between service providers to ensure that the complex needs of all parties can be met through an integrated service system. This includes (but should not be limited to) services such as advocacy, support, accommodation, skill development and counselling for both women and children who are exiting or attempting to exit violent relationships, as well as programs for perpetrators of domestic violence to reduce repeat victimisation (Humphreys 2007).
- Enhance linkages between criminal justice processes, support services and prevention programs. There has been considerable work undertaken to improve the legal response to domestic violence and an integrated response from criminal justice agencies (NCRVWC 2009b). This includes the introduction of pro-arrest police policies, specialist courts and support services for victims. It is important that a greater level of support is offered to women and their children throughout the legal process, and that barriers preventing access to justice, particularly for vulnerable women, are overcome (NCRVWC 2009b; Success Works 2009).
- Implement early intervention and education programs targeted at young people, including school-based programs that aim to shape appropriate attitudes towards women and violence, which have been identified as the most important strategies in breaking the cycle of violence (Indermaur 2001; National Crime Prevention 2001).
- A greater focus on secondary prevention programs that target families that have been identified as being at risk of domestic violence, which requires processes and risk assessment tools to identify early signs or risk factors for violence (Tomison 2000).
- It is particularly important that there are programs targeted towards and tailored to the needs of those women at an increased risk of domestic violence or who may be less likely to access support services, including Indigenous women, women from CALD backgrounds, pregnant women, younger women and women living in rural and remote communities.
- Strategies to address the disproportionate rate of intimate partner violence among Indigenous people should also take a holistic view and aim to address the range of societal, cultural, community, family and individual factors found to increase the risk of domestic violence for Indigenous women (Stanley, Tomison & Pocock 2003).
- Address alcohol and other substance use problems among both perpetrators and victims of domestic violence, including through the development of partnerships between treatment services and domestic violence programs (Nicholas 2005). Strategies to address the excessive consumption of alcohol in the wider community are also important.
- Continue efforts to improve community attitudes towards violence against women and address prevailing misconceptions regarding the prevalence, nature and acceptability of violence against women. This cannot be achieved through social marketing and communication alone and requires investment in other primary prevention programs, such as community development initiatives (VicHealth 2006; VicHealth 2009).
- Increase the involvement of men and boys in the development of programs designed to prevent violence against women by changing male attitudes and behaviours (Memmott et al. 2006; NCRVWC 2009b).

In order for these strategies to be effective, it is important that lessons from past programs are heeded and the implementation problems described above are addressed. In addition, further in-depth research should be undertaken into the nature and extent of domestic violence, particularly in vulnerable communities, and programs should be subject to ongoing monitoring and evaluation to determine what is effective and in what circumstances.

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All URLs were correct at 9 December 2009

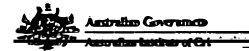
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## Emerging issues in domestic/family violence research

### Research in Practice no. 10

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#### Abstract

This paper presents an overview of the key emerging issues in Australian domestic and family violence research. In particular, the paper considers this research in the context of gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex communities; the elderly; those with disabilities; people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds; Indigenous communities; homelessness; the impact on children; and issues around perpetrator programs.



This paper presents an overview of some of the key emerging issues in Australian domestic and family violence (D/FV) research. In particular, the paper considers research in the context of gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex (GLBTI) communities; among the elderly; those with disabilities and people from cultural and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds; family violence and Indigenous communities; the relevance of homelessness; the impact of D/FV on children; and issues around perpetrator programs.

In March 2009, the National Council to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children (NCRVWC) released *Time for Action: The National Council's Plan for Australia to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children, 2009–2021*, which identified six key outcome areas:

- communities are safe and free from violence;
- relationships are respectful;
- services meet the needs of women and their children;
- responses are just;
- perpetrators stop their violence; and
- systems work together effectively (NCRVWC 2009).

The strategies for each of these outcome areas include 'build[ing] the evidence base', noting that

data relating to violence against women and their children in Australia is poor. Data on services sought by, and provided to, victims is not readily available, and the way in which information is reported is generally inconsistent and does not allow for a comprehensive understanding of violence against women (NCRVWC 2009: 47).

Some of the means proposed for improving the evidence base include:

- establishing a minimum dataset disaggregated by sex and segmented by marginalised groups (eg ATSI and CALD communities and women with disabilities) wherever possible. Where this is not possible, this should be complemented by targeted research (Strategy 1.5.2);
- developing a national evaluation approach to assess the effectiveness of service responses to women and children who have experienced violence, including women with disabilities, living in a range of settings (3.4.1);
- research on the specific needs of older women affected by violence, especially sexual violence, to ensure services are responsive to their particular needs (3.4.4);
- reviewing, updating and promulgating standards and good practice guidelines to support programs for women and children who have experienced violence to assure quality service (3.4.5);
- national benchmarking of substantive law, evidence and procedure, including which provisions are best able to provide a just legal response for victims (4.5.1);
- funding and delivering a perpetrator research agenda, including longitudinal research on what changes problem behaviour; what maintains behavioural change; the utility of risk assessment tools and the effectiveness of various recidivism reduction strategies, taking account of different offender characteristics and cultures (5.4.1) and evaluation of programs consistent with Indigenous cultures (5.4.3);
- undertaking research to identify the impacts of daily trauma on the neurological development of children who are victims of sexual assault and D/FV and the intersection of these impacts on their long-term ability to self-regulate and control their behaviour (5.4.2); and
- investigating and establishing the minimum level of services and infrastructure required in different geographical settings to achieve minimum prevention and response outcomes (6.3.4; NCRVWC 2009).

Morgan and Chadwick (2009) recently called for further in-depth research into the nature and extent of domestic violence, particularly in vulnerable communities, while Tually et al. (2008) identified the following as areas for further research in a report prepared for the Office of Women:

- the extent and impact of D/FV on women in remote mining communities and the capacity of regional domestic violence services to meet the needs of women in these areas;
- how to better support women from CALD backgrounds on 457 visas;
- a national study investigating the accessibility of D/FV services for women with disabilities;
- long-term research on the housing and support needs of women affected by family violence in remote Indigenous communities;
- income support measures for women affected by D/FV;
- housing assistance measures for women affected by D/FV;
- what long-term support is needed by, and what works for, women affected by D/FV; and
- an extensive examination (and ongoing examination) of the support and housing models/ programs assisting women affected by D/FV across Australia and overseas.

Gaby Marcus, Director of the Australian Domestic and Family Violence Clearinghouse (ADFVC), recently suggested the following key research priority issues, some of which are considered in this paper:

- victims' compensation and access to legal and support services generally (see Barrett Meyering 2010);
- prevention issues, especially in relation to homicide;
- data collection and the need for common datasets;
- consideration of women as perpetrators; and
- the unintended consequences of law reform measures, including pro-arrest policies (G Marcus personal communication 13 Jan 2010).

On 28 January 2010, the Commonwealth Attorney-General, Robert McClelland (2010), released three reports examining the operation of the family law system and how the family law courts deal with cases involving family violence, namely:

- *Evaluation of the 2006 family law reforms* (Kaspiew et al. 2009);
- *Family courts violence review* (Chisholm 2009); and
- *Improving responses to family violence in the family law system: An advice on the intersection of family violence and family law issues* (Family Law Council 2009).

All three reports found that 'the family law system has some way to go in effectively responding to issues relating to family violence' (McClelland 2010: np). In light of these reviews, research on legal issues, such as the consequences of law reform measures and courts, will not be explored in detail here, although the importance of such research (eg see David et al. 2009; Douglas 2007) is acknowledged.

### Key issues in domestic and family violence research

This section presents a brief overview of some of the principal emerging issues in D/FV research, which have been selected for their topicality and their relevance to the NCRVWC priorities.

#### Domestic and family violence in rural and remote communities

There is conflicting evidence on the prevalence of D/FV in rural and remote areas, with some research indicating higher rates than in urban areas (see Bureau of Transport and Regional Economics 2006; Cripps et al. 2009; Women's Services Network 2000), while other research suggests the contrary (Henstridge et al. 2007). The prevalence and incidence of D/FV in rural communities has been given limited attention in Australia (see Cheers et al. 2006; La Nauze & Rutherford 2000; Wendt 2009, 2008).

The available research has focused predominantly on factors that keep rural women trapped in violent relationships, such as financial insecurity, dependency, and stress; a perceived lack of confidentiality and anonymity; and stigma attached to the public disclosure of violence. Carrington (2007: 91) has likewise examined the key factors which contribute to a 'cloak of silence' in respect of D/FV which operates to sustain the architecture of rural life'. As Women's Health Victoria (WHV) noted recently, lack of transport options coupled with often poor telecommunications services can make it difficult to escape or seek help for violence and women in isolated areas may have fewer opportunities to be economically independent of their partners (WHV 2009). It should be noted that while most of these issues, especially in respect of service provision, are equally apposite in respect of Indigenous perpetrators and victims, there are also separate issues in such contexts, such as enhanced visibility due to more time spent in public space (Carrington 2007).

There is more limited research available about rural men and D/FV and a dearth of perpetrator programs in such settings (NCRVWC 2009). Jamieson and Wendt (2008) recently examined men's perpetrator programs in small rural communities and found that there was an urgent need for a holistic approach to address D/FV in such settings, as well as for funding for transport to enable rural men to attend perpetrator programs in other locations. Wendt and Campbell (2009) have noted that isolation, beliefs about rural masculinity which encourage stoicism and repressed emotions, and limited access to, and use of, medical and health facilities all indicate that rural men require different assistance to men from urban areas to understand and address their use of violence against their partners and families. They argued that further empirical research is needed to explore the connections between D/FV and rural ideologies and masculinities. As noted above (Tually et al. 2008), research is also required into the extent and impact of D/FV in remote communities and the capacity of regional D/FV services to meet women's needs. Critically, research in this area should be formulated in a way which determines necessary service requirements for prevention and response outcomes in rural and remote settings, in accordance with Strategy 6.3.4 (NCRVWC 2009).

#### Domestic and family violence in gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex communities

Jeffries and Ball (2008) argued that the Australian criminological and social science research community has largely been silent on the issue of same-sex domestic violence (SSDV). Pitts et al. (2006) conducted an online survey with 5,476 Australians who identified as GLBTI and described D/FV as a hidden issue in the gay and lesbian community. Indeed, the authors suggested that 'many GLBTI people do not identify family violence when they experience it because of a lack of recognition of its existence in same sex relationships' (Pitt et al. 2006: 51). Notwithstanding this limitation, the report found that 33 percent of respondents had been in a relationship with an abusive partner, although it was not clear whether this was within the context of a same-sex relationship. In a later study of 390 Victorian respondents, 31 percent of GLBT respondents had been in a same sex relationship where they were subject to abuse by their partner, with lesbians more likely than gay men to report such abuse (41% vs 29%; Leonard et al. 2008). A recent study has found that the prevalence, types and contextual triggers of violence in male same-sex relationships parallel abuse in opposite sex relationships (Kay & Jeffries forthcoming).

WHV noted that one form of violence which is specific to GLBTI relationships is the abusive partner 'outing' or threatening to 'out' their partner to family, friends, colleagues or the general community (WHV 2009); similar issues may arise in terms of disclosing HIV positive status (Chan 2005). Irwin (2008: 208) found that the lesbians she interviewed were unsure about 'what was acceptable, unacceptable or normal behaviour' in such relationships. In addition, SSDV victims may be particularly vulnerable due to isolation from their support networks and may feel that acknowledging the existence of the violence may further feed any homophobia (WHV 2009).

In a study by Pitts et al. (2006), of those participants who had experienced abuse, only one in 10 had reported the abuse to the police; this rose to 18 and 19 percent respectively for those who reported being hit or forced to have sex. Pitt et al. (2006: 52) acknowledged police measures to improve relationships with GLBTI people which 'appear to be having some positive impact and should be developed further'. By way of example, the NSW Attorney-General's Department (2003) Domestic Violence Interagency Guidelines state the importance of police officers contacting gay and lesbian liaison officers in appropriate circumstances. It was also recently reported that NSW Police and the Anti-Violence Campaign would collaborate in 2010 on a campaign to encourage GLBT victims of crime to come forward, with specific reference to D/FV incidents (Potts 2009).

One issue of concern to Pitt et al. (2006) was the lack of referral options for female perpetrators and male victims within mainstream services. Leonard et al. (2008) found that only six percent of GLBT people who reported same-sex partner abuse to police were referred to advice or support services. In 2006, Victoria Police reported that there were no publicly-funded family violence counselling agencies to which they could refer male victims of same sex partner abuse and Leonard et al. (2008: 50) inferred that 'domestic and sexual violence services may not be meeting the needs of victims of same sex partner abuse'.

Zhou (2009) has suggested that although the NCRVWC's Plan of Action explicitly acknowledges domestic violence in lesbian relationships (eg see Zhou 2009: 138), it excludes such violence in gay male relationships and does not recognise the unique aspects of SSDV. Future research in this context should include research on the frequency and prevalence of GLBTI D/FV and the contexts in which it occurs; consideration of the impact of such violence on the individual and community generally; information on help seeking and the provision of safe and relevant services; furthering awareness of the incidence and perceptions of and responses to GLBTI domestic violence; and the development of inclusive policy responses (see Irwin 2008; Jeffries & Ball 2008).

#### Domestic and family violence and the elderly

In 2005, the *Personal Safety Survey Australia* (ABS 2006) found that the proportion of women aged 45 years and older reporting physical violence against themselves in the past 12 months had increased significantly since 1996 (from 15% to 25%), while the rate for women aged 55 years and over increased even more markedly (4% vs 10%; McFerran 2009a). In addition, 26 percent of women aged 55 years and over had experienced violence from their current partner (ABS 2006). Morgan and Chadwick (2009) noted that older women are much more likely to experience violence and abuse than their male counterparts and the majority of victims are long-term victims. According to WHV (2009), however, there may be a change in perpetrators, with women reporting children, grandchildren, other relatives and carers, as abusers. Kurlle (2004) suggested that up to 90 percent of abusers of older people in Australia are close family. In addition, the nature of the abuse may change, for example, from physical and sexual abuse to more emotional and financial abuse, with the latter the most commonly suspected form of abuse (Bagshaw, Wendt & Zannettino 2009b).

In 2009, the ADFVC released two papers on violence against older people, which identified many of the barriers older people face in reporting abuse and leaving abusive situations, including:

- diminished cognitive functioning and mental or physical disability;
- lack of awareness of what amounts to abuse;
- social alienation;
- being too old to re-enter the workforce;
- having too much invested in families or partners to leave; and
- a perceived or actual lack of access to services (see Bagshaw, Wendt & Zannettino 2009b; McFerran 2009a, 2009b).

A current project funded by the Australian Research Council is seeking to develop, trial and evaluate models of mediation to prevent financial abuse of older people by their families (see Bagshaw, Wendt & Zannettino 2009a). The authors of that project also call for qualitative research to explore older people's experiences of abuse to recognise the social and cultural context and diversity of experiences and develop appropriate responses (Bagshaw, Wendt & Zannettino 2009b). Research on this topic should be referable to Strategy 3.4.4 (NCRVWC 2009).

#### Domestic and family violence and disability

Women with physical and/or intellectual disabilities are more likely than those without disabilities to experience D/FV and such violence is also likely to be more severe and continue for longer (Morgan & Chadwick 2009 citing NCRVWC 2009; Tually et al. 2008; Women with Disabilities Australia 2008). Healey et al. (2008) found that women with disabilities continue to be at risk of being assaulted, raped and abused at a rate of at least twice that of non-disabled women, regardless of their age, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation or class, while international research has suggested that as many as 90 percent of women with developmental

disabilities will experience sexual assault (Milberger et al. 2003). In addition, such women experiencing violence generally have fewer support options for leaving the relationship (Morgan & Chadwick 2009).

The key finding in the research of Healey et al. (2008: 10) was that there 'are major gaps in knowledge, policy and processes that will require significant resourcing in order to improve services to women with disabilities'. In addition, most services do not routinely collect data on disability and D/FV. Little is known about the help-seeking experiences of women with disabilities experiencing violence, although Victorian Public Hospital emergency presentations for family violence (VEMD) now enables analysis of family violence among women with a disability (ADFVC 2009c). Healey et al. (2008: Rec 10.1) called for nationwide research to ascertain the prevalence and extent of violence against women and children with disabilities in the full range of residential settings; and understand the help-seeking experiences of women with disabilities living with violence and the experiences of family violence workers in supporting women with disabilities. Additional data collection will also be consistent with research priorities 1.5.2 and 3.4.1 (NCRVWC 2009).

#### Domestic and family violence in culturally and linguistically diverse communities

The research on the prevalence of D/FV against women from CALD backgrounds is unclear and drawing conclusions on the nature and extent of D/FV in such communities is therefore difficult (Morgan & Chadwick 2009). The research does indicate, however, that cultural values and immigration status enhance the complexities normally involved in D/FV cases (Pease & Rees 2008) and women from CALD backgrounds are generally less likely than other groups of women to report cases of D/FV (Morgan & Chadwick 2009; Tually et al. 2008). The factors which may influence this include the limited availability of appropriate translator/interpreter services and access to support services; limited support networks and reluctance to confide in others; isolation; lack of awareness about the law; continued abuse from the immediate family; cultural and/or religious shame; and religious beliefs about divorce (Benevolent Society 2009; Morgan & Chadwick 2009; Pease & Rees 2007). Some women may be geographically isolated from extended family and women who do not have permanent residency in Australia may fear deportation if they report the abuse (Office of Women's Policy Victoria 2002). In addition, Taylor and Mouzos (2006) found that definitions of domestic and sexual violence differ with diversity, with females in a selected CALD sample of respondents less likely than those in the main sample to regard forcing one's partner to have sex to be an example of domestic violence.

A recent study involving interviews with three women from CALD communities who had left a D/FV situation found that the interviewees had not shared their experience with anyone outside their immediate family and had very limited social support on which they could draw (Benevolent Society 2009). A significant theme that emerged in the study was the role of religion and the 'rules' imposed on the women by her and her family's religious beliefs. As the report noted, discussion 'focused around the unaccepted and sinful act of divorce, even when it meant women escaping the most unimaginable acts of violence' (Benevolent Society 2009: 46). Pease and Rees' (2007) study with 78 refugees from Iraq, Sudan, Ethiopia, Bosnia, Serbia and Croatia should also be noted. Male participants in the study reported that government intervention to address 'family conflict' undermines their authority and family cohesiveness. Male and female participants also felt that women who seek assistance for D/FV usually have a negative experience, while women believed that if they sought assistance within the mainstream community, they would not be believed (Pease & Rees 2007).

Pease and Rees (2008) argued that cultural, social and political contexts are important factors in understanding the nature and occurrence of D/FV among CALD populations. Future research should examine the incidence of, and factors associated with, D/FV in CALD communities, as well as exploring the role of religion and cultural mores more widely; coping with and managing cultural change; effective strategies to enhance victim safety; and prevention approaches (Pease & Rees 2007; Runner, Yoshihama & Novick 2009). In this context, NCRVWC research priorities 1.5.2 and 5.4.1 should be borne in mind; the latter, which relates to culturally appropriate recidivism reduction strategies, is particularly relevant, given that there are reportedly no language specific men's behavioural change programs available (Morris 2007).

#### Domestic and family violence and Indigenous communities

There is ample evidence to suggest that Indigenous women are over-represented as victims of domestic and family violence (see Morgan & Chadwick 2009), although there may be methodological issues with attempts to develop reliable estimates of the extent of such violence (Mouzos & Makkai 2004; Schmider & Nancarrow 2007). In addition, there is also no clear measure of the extent to which Indigenous family violence is under-reported, but it is expected to be higher than for the general population (Cripps 2008; Cunneen 2009). The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner (ATSISJC) has noted that 'there are significant deficiencies in the availability of statistics and research on the extent and nature of family violence in communities' (ATSISJC 2006: 6). In an earlier report to the Australian Government about Indigenous violence, it was suggested that 'priority should be placed on implementing anti-violence programs, rather than on further quantitative research' (Memmott et al. 2001: 9). As noted above, however, the NCRVWC has called for the establishment of a minimum data segmented by Indigenous status (NCRVWC 2009: Strategy 1.5.2).

The key risk factors for Indigenous family violence relate to substance use; social stressors; living in a remote community; levels of individual, family and community (dys)functionality; availability of resources; age; removal from family; disability; and financial difficulties (Al-Yaman, Van Doeland & Wallis 2006; Bryant & Willis 2008; cf Cripps et al. 2009).

A research team at Griffith University is currently undertaking a three year national study of intimate partner homicide, funded by the Australian Research Council. The study is considered to be especially important for Indigenous people and communities, given their over-representation among those involved in and incarcerated for violent offending (ADFVC 2009a).

Victoria's 10 year plan, *Strong Culture, Strong Peoples, Strong Families*, calls for improving 'the effectiveness and efficiency of responses to Indigenous family violence through ongoing research and evaluation' (Victorian Department of Planning and Community Development 2008: 32). More specific requirements for future research in this context include:

- analysing the incidence of, and reasons for, under-reporting of family violence in Indigenous communities (Cripps 2008);
- developing a better understanding of the processes for coordinated and coherent service delivery (ATSISJC 2009);
- improving support services to ensure they are culturally appropriate, sustainable and effective and developing responsive programs in consultation with community (K Cripps personal communication 2 Feb 2010; Cripps 2007);
- examining Indigenous people's engagement with, confidence in and ownership of the legal process (Cunneen 2009);
- considering the appropriateness of applying restorative justice for D/FV cases (NCRVWC 2009; Victorian Law Reform Commission 2006a);
- ensuring support services are provided for children exposed to D/FV (K Cripps personal communication 2 Feb 2010);
- evaluating 'healing' programs (Cripps & McGlade 2008; Nungarrayi Price 2009);
- reviewing the role of Indigenous sentencing courts and circle sentencing (Marchetti 2008); and
- reviewing community-oriented solutions, such as the involvement of community leaders and elders in matters involving minor sex offences, prevention intervention with men and rehabilitative initiatives with offenders (Taylor & Putt 2007).

One noteworthy development is the NPY (Ngaanyatjarra, Pitjantjatjara, Yankunytjatjara) Family Violence Program, which arose from the Cross Border Justice Project of the Western Australian, South Australian and Northern Territory Governments. The project aims to address D/FV in the NPY lands and involves travelling to remote Indigenous communities to conduct month-long perpetrator programs (ADFVC 2009b). Further research is required into the development and operation of such programs.

#### Domestic and family violence and homelessness

Domestic violence is the most common factor contributing to homelessness among women and their children (AIHW 2008; Morgan & Chadwick 2009). A recent study by the NSW Women's Refuge Movement Resource Centre and the UWS Urban Research Centre (2009) found that generally housing for women and children experiencing D/FV has deteriorated significantly. The key concerns were the affordability, length of stay, the physical condition of the housing, the neighbourhood, safety and the availability of maintenance.

Accommodation is often a critical factor in women's decisions about whether to leave a violent relationship (Macdonald 2007). The Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) is the major government response to homelessness and in 2003-04, a third of people accessing such services were women escaping from domestic violence (AIHW 2005). Accordingly, SAAP services need to ensure that the issue of domestic violence 'has a central position in their response to homelessness', including increasing the visibility of D/FV in data collection (Macdonald 2007: 22). Recent research indicated that there were four issues seen as critical to preventing women from entering the homelessness service system, namely:

- police should enforce intervention orders more diligently;
- more options for women seeking refuge, for example, being able to choose whether to go to a communal refuge or stay in their own unit;
- raise awareness of what refuges can offer to clients in terms of support services; and
- better financial support for women leaving D/FV situations (Oberin 2008).

All Australian jurisdictions now have laws which provide for exclusion orders as a condition of a domestic violence orders, which allow the person seeking protection from domestic violence to remain in the family home, while the perpetrator is required to seek alternate accommodation, an approach which appears to enjoy significant popular support (see VicHealth 2006). There is research to suggest, however, that such measures are rarely used, at least in New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland (see Edwards 2004; Field, Carpenter & Currie 2003; Victorian Law Reform Commission 2006b). Future research in this context should develop the knowledge base in respect of the effectiveness of exclusion orders in preventing family homelessness. Research is also required to examine housing needs and

services in urban, rural and remote settings and for particularly vulnerable D/FV victims (eg Indigenous, the elderly, CALD and people with disabilities; Tually et al. 2008).

#### The impact of domestic and family violence on children

Data analysed by the AIC (2006) has indicated that for 2003–04, children were recorded as being present at 44 percent of D/FV incidents. Notwithstanding the prevalence of children's exposure to such violence, there is currently little research that 'improves our understanding of the long-term impacts of continued exposure to trauma on the psychological, physical and brain development of children, or how this exposure impacts their personality, impulse control and, ultimately, their propensity to perpetrate violence in the future' (NCRVWC 2009: 83) and Strategy 5.4.2 seeks to overcome this knowledge gap.

What the available evidence indicates is that witnessing violence in the home poses a threat to children's physical, emotional, psychological, social, educational and behavioural wellbeing (see McGee 2000; Morgan & Chadwick 2009; Richards forthcoming; Tomison 2000; Tucci et al. 2005; Zerk, Martin & Proeve 2009). Browne and Winkelmann (2007) noted that child abuse and neglect have been associated with insecure attachment in both childhood and adulthood, as well as cognitive distortion associated with safety (eg preoccupation with danger), controllability (eg perceptions of hopelessness) and internal attribution (self-blaming). They also acknowledged that 'long after trauma victims regain environmental control over their lives, they continue to suffer from perceptions of powerlessness, helplessness, ineffectualness, and vulnerability to poor psychological adjustment' (Browne & Winkelmann 2007: 693).

Zerk, Martin & Proeve (2009) have suggested that enduring stress in the early years may adversely impact on brain development and organisation, arguing that more research is required to determine the effects of stress on the developing nervous system, how these effects are manifested through observable symptoms and what factors in the child's environment may either enhance or modify these effects. They examined 60 pre-school children who lived in households where D/FV was present. They found a modest relationship between the levels of reported violence and the mothers' emotional distress levels but no relationship between violence levels and parenting stress. The authors suggested that future research should examine trauma symptoms in young children and develop more appropriate and standardised means of assessing trauma symptoms. Research should also focus on the extent to which the primary carer's distress and possibly diminished coping abilities as a result of family violence may influence their perceptions of their children (Zerk, Martin & Proeve 2009).

In an English study, McGee (2000) conducted interviews with 54 children and 48 mothers who had experienced domestic violence and listed the following as some of the effects of such violence on children: fear; sadness; anger; adverse effects on identity, health, education; and impacts on relationships with their mother, father, extended family and friends. McGee's study did not include adolescent boys and she therefore considered it appropriate for future research to examine the impact of family violence on 'young people's socialisation and relationships' (McGee 2000: 94). Such research would clearly also be valuable in the Australian context.

Bedi and Goddard (2007) noted that future research also needs to focus on the effects of situational characteristics and called for greater precision in identifying the types and nature of the violence experienced, which may clarify whether certain attributes of the violent home environment are particularly damaging. In particular, they suggested that the examination should include the different violent and neglectful circumstances experienced by children, as well as the impact of time in out-of-home care and contact with social and protective services. The authors also called for 'timely and effective multisystemic interventions' (Bedi & Goddard 2007: 74). This would serve to fulfil the NCRVWC's recommendation that the Australian Government work with state and territory governments to ensure the National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children meets the needs of children who witness and experience D/FV (NCRVWC 2009: Recommendation 9). It also accords with Wilcox's (2007: 5) assertion that '[o]ur knowledge of the serious impacts of violence on children means little, if their needs in this regard are not addressed as a national priority'.

#### Perpetrator programs

Day et al. (2009) have observed that there is a broad range of responses to F/DV, ranging from community-based and voluntarily-attended programs through to court-mandated programs (some of which are administered in prison). The programs also vary in their stated purpose, disciplinary emphases and core understanding of domestic violence. Howells et al. (2004) have conducted an overview of Australian perpetrator programs, but not enough is known about such programs and the evidence of their efficacy is unconvincing and incomplete (Day et al. 2009). Indeed, a recent report on prison-based rehabilitation programs found that the literature generally reports no differences in recidivism between the treatment group and the experimental group, but that there does appear to be a positive link between the number of sessions completed and the likelihood of domestic violence recidivism, which 'highlights the importance of treatment retention' (Heseltine, Sarre & Day forthcoming: 63). They reviewed the nature of the programs currently in place around Australia, noting that Queensland, the Northern Territory and Western Australia also have Indigenous-specific programs in place (Heseltine, Sarre & Day forthcoming: 65).

Morgan and Chadwick (2009: 10) argued that 'programs should be subject to ongoing monitoring and evaluation to determine what is effective and in what circumstances'. The NCRVWC (2009: 133) also stated that:

We know little about the ways that the many different sectors and professions involved with perpetrators can complement and enhance each other's work, and what sort of social policy will facilitate this endeavour...the best means to undertake specific interventions requires future research.

The NCRVWC proposed the following specific avenues for future research on perpetrator programs:

- the effectiveness of incarceration, deterrence and community restraint in reducing recidivism in cases of violence perpetrated against women and their children;
- research into the characteristics of programs that are proven to be effective in changing men's behaviour;
- developing and evaluating best practice prison-based perpetrator programs; and in particular, evaluations should include:
  - examination of the principles and theory underpinning the program content and the approach it takes to working with women partners and managing issues of safety;
  - a focus on the capacity of the program to respond appropriately to perpetrators from a range of backgrounds and from different geographical locations (eg urban, rural and remote areas); and
  - an assessment of the impact the program is having on reducing violence against women and their children (NCRVWC 2009).

A recent Campbell Collaboration review recommended that research be undertaken in relation to larger representative samples, instead of small samples; that victims be retained longer to determine positive and negative outcomes and that the validity and reliability of official and victim reports be measured (Feder, Wilson & Austin 2008). The ADFVC has also raised a number of good practice issues for evaluations of perpetrator programs, for example, ensuring evaluators have an in-depth understanding of violence within families, its dynamics and impacts (Braaf 2007). Finally, bearing in mind the foregoing discussion on the impacts of D/FV on children's development, the very long-term impacts of perpetrator programs and prevention programs generally should be examined. As Schwartz and DeKeseredy (2008: 182) noted, 'one important area for study in the future is the extent to which ending interpersonal violence against women can be seen as a strategy for reducing adolescent and adult criminal behavior in later years'.

#### Conclusion

This paper presents the criminological community with a research agenda on some of the key issues in domestic and family violence, including violence in rural, GLTBI, Indigenous and CALD communities and among the elderly and disabled, as well as the impacts on children and perpetrator programs. It follows that the research, policy and practical issues which may arise are compounded where multiple circumstances coincide, for example, in the context of violence committed against elderly migrants in a rural setting. Accordingly, further research is required to better understand not only the prevalence of the issues discussed in this paper and the best responses to them, but the intersection of these issues and contexts.

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## Fact sheet

# Domestic violence - why men abuse women

Domestic violence is an under-reported crime, so it is difficult for agencies to keep accurate statistics. However, the perpetrators of this crime are usually men and the victims are usually women and children. Researchers believe that around one in four Australian women will experience domestic violence at some time in their life.

Although domestic violence can affect anyone, regardless of their socioeconomic status or their racial and cultural background, women who are young, Indigenous, have a disability, or who live in rural areas are at greater risk.

## Common factors in domestic violence

There is no such thing as a 'typical' perpetrator of domestic violence. However, researchers have found that men who abuse family members often:

- Use violence and emotional abuse to control their families.
- Believe that they have the right to behave in whatever way they choose while in their own home.
- Think that a 'real' man should be tough, powerful and the head of the household. They may believe that they should make most of the decisions, including about how money is spent.
- Believe that men are entitled to sex from their partners.
- Don't take responsibility for their behaviour and prefer to think that loved ones or circumstances provoked their behaviour.
- Make excuses for their violence: for example, they will blame alcohol or stress.
- Report 'losing control' when angry around their families, but can control their anger around other people. They don't tend to use violence in other situations: for example, around friends, bosses, work colleagues or the police.
- Try to minimise, blame others for, justify or deny their use of violence, or the impact of their violence towards women and children.

Some men who use violence have grown up in an abusive household themselves, but the majority have not. Some come from lower socioeconomic groups and some have problems with alcohol. However, this is not the case for all men who use domestic violence.

## The alcohol myth

It is commonly assumed that domestic violence is primarily caused by alcohol abuse. This isn't true. While alcohol can be a trigger, it is seldom the cause. The perpetrator is sober in about half of domestic violence cases where the police are called. Also, not all alcoholics or binge drinkers resort to violence when angered or frustrated.

It is how the perpetrator sees himself and his rights that lead to the violence. If a man abuses his family and also tends to have difficulty with controlling his alcohol consumption, he needs to recognise that he has two separate problems.

## Men resist seeking help for violence

Research suggests that while some men who are violent may think about getting help, the majority of them don't. Some of the reasons men do not seek out help include:

- Acceptance of violence – a man who thinks that he is entitled to dominate family members, and that it is okay to solve problems with violence, may not believe that he needs help. He may blame the victim for 'provoking' his behaviour.
- Notions of masculinity – the idea of what it means to be a man, for many men, includes silence and strength. A man may avoid seeking help because he doesn't want to look 'weak' or feminine.
- Ignorance – about half of the men who get help or counselling for their violent behaviour report that they had tried unsuccessfully in the past to find help but didn't know where to go.
- Fear – most men who don't seek help report that feeling ashamed stops them from seeking help.

## Getting help for domestic violence

Regular counselling with a trained counsellor can help men who use violence towards family members to understand and change their behaviour. Counselling and behaviour-change programs focus on examining and addressing the man's deeply held beliefs about violence, masculinity, control of others, the impact of their use of violence towards others, self-control and responsibility for one's actions.

The man is encouraged to examine his motivations for the violence and is taught practical strategies, including:

- learning that violence and abuse is not caused by anger, but the desire to hurt or dominate others
- learning how violent behaviour damages his relationship with his partner and children, and how he can behave in more respectful ways
- self-talk and time out – the man is taught how to recognise signs of anger, and how to use strategies like self-talk and time out. A man can use self-talk messages, such as '*Anger will not solve this problem*', to remind himself to remain calm.

A trained counsellor can help a man find his own effective self-talk messages. Time out means walking away from the situation until the man feels calmer. Time out must be discussed with the man's partner so that both parties understand how and why to use it. However, time out is not an avoidance technique and the man



• must try and work out the problem at a later opportunity.

## Rehabilitation after domestic violence

Women and children who live with violent men live in a constant state of anxiety and fear. A man who is undergoing counselling for his violent behaviour needs to recognise that regaining the trust of his family, and the behaviour-change process, will take time. He also needs to accept that his partner has a right to end the relationship if she wishes.

## Where to get help

In an emergency:

- Call the police in an emergency. Dial triple zero. Tel. 000

For men:

- Men's Referral Service Tel. (03) 9428 2899 or 1800 065 973 (free call within Victoria) – a confidential and anonymous telephone service for men who want to stop their violent or abusive behaviour towards family members, 9 am to 9 pm Monday to Friday

For women:

- Women's Domestic Violence Crisis Service (WDVCS) is the Victorian statewide service for women experiencing violence and abuse from a partner or ex-partner, another family member or someone else close to them. Crisis Line Tel. (03) 9322 3555 or 1800 015 188 (24 hours)
- To find out about local support services, contact the **Domestic Violence Resource Centre Victoria** Tel. (03) 9486 9866 - 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday
- National Sexual Assault, Domestic Family Violence Counselling Service (Australia) Tel. 1800 737 732 – free telephone counselling hotline (24 hours, 7 days)

## Things to remember

- The causes of domestic violence include deeply held beliefs about masculinity.
- Men who abuse loved ones tend to blame other people, alcohol or circumstances for their violent outbursts.
- Men often minimise, blame others, justify or deny their use of violence or the impact of their violence towards women and children.
- A man who is undergoing counselling for his violent behaviour needs to recognise that regaining the trust of his family will take time, and that his partner has the right to end the relationship if she chooses to.

**This page has been produced in consultation with and approved by:**

Domestic Violence Resource Centre

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# Hidden Hurt

## Domestic Abuse Information

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 Search


## Male Victims of Domestic Violence

### Men can be victims too!

Male victims of domestic violence can and are frequently victims of abuse in the home, either at the hands of their female or, in the case of same-sex relationships, their male partner. Abuse is a control issue - abusers believe they have the right to manipulate, control and humiliate another person, and this belief is not only held by some men but also by some women.

This page is not questioning statistics, or asking whether more male victims of domestic violence than women victims or vice versa. At the end of the day the question is almost inconsequential. We know that there are many men who DO experience Domestic Abuse at some stage in their lives, and whether there are 1000 or 100,000 per year in the UK alone doesn't make any difference to the individual suffering and fear and pain experienced by any one man in an abusive relationship. What is important, is that their suffering is taken seriously, and that support and help is available when needed, regardless of gender.

Many of the effects of abuse for the male victim of domestic violence are the same as for women. They are likely to feel deeply shamed, frightened, experience a loss of self-worth and confidence, feel isolated, guilty and confused about the situation.

*"At first, she discouraged me from seeing old friends, especially female friends. She threatened to use violence against them. For example "If so and so visits here, I'll be putting a knife in her guts." ... She would flirt with my friends, but then tell me that they were trying to seduce her behind my back. This left me feeling distrustful of my friends. Later on, I found out that she had been telling them that they shouldn't come round because I was insanely jealous. All this had the effect of damaging my social network." (Thomas)*

A lot of male victims of abuse however, have great difficulty defining it as such. This is partially due to the image our western society generally has of Man. Men are often thought of as strong, domineering and macho. Boys, even at a young age, are taught that it

### In This Section:

[Abuse Victims Who We Are](#)  
[Why We Stay](#)  
[Male Victims of DV Myths and Facts](#)  
[Animal Abuse and DV](#)  
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[Not Changing Abusive Behaviour](#)  
[Why Abuse Victims Go Back](#)

### Related Pages:

#### Personal stories from men suffering abuse:

[Mark's Domestic Abuse Story](#) - Elegantly and in great detail, Mark looks back on snapshots of his abusive marriage, carefully documenting the abusive relationship in which he found himself trapped, his thoughts and feelings both towards himself and his wife.

[Thomas' Domestic Violence Story](#) - "Betty always had an unpredictable and spirited personality, but I and most of our friends thought it was one of her endearing charms. A few months after Derek was born, Betty's endearing spirit started to turn scary."

[Domestic violence - but I'm a man!](#) - Bryan was a happy go-lucky comedian with a job and a blossoming artistic career until he met the

is unmanly to cry ("big boys don't cry"). To many, the idea of a grown man being frightened or vulnerable is a taboo, the idea of a man - usually physically the stronger - of being battered, ludicrous. Hence many male victims of abuse may feel "less of a man" for suffering abuse, feel as though they are in some way not manly enough and ought to have the ability to prevent the abuse.

*"... she used to regularly scream at me and hit me, but when I needed stitches in my head after she had attacked me with a knife while drunk, I had to leave." (Anon)*

*"I told my colleagues that I had scratched myself during the night due to a change in washing powder - actually it was my wife who did it, but I couldn't tell them that." (Anon)*

*"After Betty had threatened me with a knife on more than one occasion, and I'd successfully ducked missiles, she finally got her aim right one morning and hit me with a bowl about one centimetre from my eye. I turned up to work that morning with blood-stained clothing and had to explain my fragile situation." (Thomas)*

The reality though is that even if a man is physically attacked by their wives or partners, many men will take a beating rather than hitting back to defend themselves and risk harming their attacker, and even if they do, they are aware that they then risk being accused of being an abuser themselves. But abuse is not always physical, and a lot of men, in common with many women, face daily emotional, verbal and psychological abuse in silence for years, their self-esteem being slowly eroded away, more and more isolated from those around them.

Men can also be victims of sexual abuse. A gay victim may be raped by their partner, suffering all the agonies any other rape victim would. Many men in abusive relationships do not feel in control of their own sex life, their partners may demand or coerce intercourse, may make derisory comments about their manhood or ridicule them in public. Any form of sexual contact which is knowingly without consent can be experienced as sexual abuse - regardless of gender! Many men also experience "sex as a reward for good behaviour" and the opposite of being denied any intimacy if they have (knowingly or not) done something to displease their partners, as being an abusive use of sexuality. In an abusive relationship, sex is often used as another form of manipulating and controlling the other person, whether male or female, and that is abusive.

*"We only ever had sex on her terms. And each time she would call it off before I had come. I would be so frustrated, I would get up and make myself some tea and toast and try to cool off, but she didn't like me getting up either, I was just meant to stay there and hold her but do nothing! I don't know ..."*

woman who was to change his life. Read his story told in his own words on BBC Leeds.

### **Recommended Reading:**

**Books other Male victims of domestic violence found helpful in the US:**

[Abused Men: The Hidden Side of Domestic Violence](#)

**In the UK the following books have proven helpful to women trying to survive domestic abuse:**

[Abused Men: The Hidden Side of Domestic Violence](#)

and

[Men Who Beat the Men Who Love Them: Battered Gay Men and Domestic Violence \(Haworth Gay & Lesbian Studies\)](#)

*that really screwed me up at the time and still affects me now." (Anon - eight years after the end of the marriage)*

*"I had had sexual intercourse against my will. ... One can say that men cannot be raped due to the probable inability to gain an erection when undergoing that kind of ugly abuse. Whatever the speculative thought process may reveal, I cannot get passed the fact that I did not want to have sex. I think that I have been raped." (Mark)*

Quite apart from any other of the myriad of reasons for not leaving (see [Why We Stay](#)), many men with children feel trapped in an abusive relationship because they fear that if they leave, they will lose contact with their children. They may also be afraid that their abusive partner will continue to abuse the children if they are gone (especially if this is already the case). They are aware that in most cases, residency is given to the mother, and they are afraid that even if they do disclose the abuse they have suffered in Court, that they will either simply not be believed, or, worse, that their abusive partner will somehow 'turn the tables' on them, and they will be condemned as abusive and have an even harder time gaining any adequate contact, let alone residency of their children.

#### **If you are being abused**

If you are a man and are being abused or have recently escaped an abusive relationship, please know that you are not alone. There are many of you out there, and many, like you, feel as though you are the only one to experience this sort of abuse. It is okay to be frightened, confused and hurt. Someone you love, care about and trust has broken that trust, turned against you and hurt you.

You don't have to suffer in silence, there are agencies and people who do care and can offer you help, support and advice. Check out the helplines and links at the bottom of this page which are specifically designed with you in mind. They are there to help you. Just because you are a man does not mean you are impervious to pain!

If you are no longer in the abusive relationship, know that you can 'get over this', but you may find that it still gives you nightmares and makes it difficult establishing a new relationship, learning to open up and trust someone again. It may help to talk to a counsellor about what happened and how you feel.

Please don't worry if you are disbelieved or ridiculed by some of the people you approach. Sadly many people do not want to or cannot (due to their own insecurities) believe that men can and do suffer abuse, remember that it is their personal problem if they don't believe you, not yours. It does not make your experiences any less painful or devastating or valid. Try to disregard their attitude and try someone else. You will find many people who DO take you

seriously and can understand what you have suffered.

If you are frightened that your partner will hurt you further, you have the same rights as any other person, whether man or woman, under the law for protection. The same orders to prevent male on female violence are also there to protect you. Insist on your rights to be free from fear and live in safety. In the same way, the Family Courts have a responsibility to take ALL allegations of Domestic Abuse into account when considering residency and contact orders, whether they are against the father or the mother.

And finally, please realise that it is not your fault. You do not deserve to be hit, to be insulted and ridiculed, to be touched intimately if you have asked not to be, to be treated like a doormat, to be threatened, attacked with a weapon, shamed in front of your mates, told what to do when and with whom. You do not deserve to be abused in any way, shape or form.

#### **Some useful links:**

[MensAid](#) - A UK-based site for dealing with Domestic Violence and child contact issues with an emphasis on men's issues, though an excellent resource site for all concerned.

[Hitting Home](#) - the BBC site on Domestic Violence and Abuse. This link will take you straight to the page on male victims of abuse. Check out the Personal Stories page too.

[MenWeb](#) - A site for battered or abused men. Very comprehensive with loads of personal stories and articles.

[Male Victims of Domestic Violence](#) - A UK-based Domestic Abuse site specifically for male victims and survivors. Includes information on types and effects of abuse, coping mechanisms & more.

[Survivors Swindon](#) - A regionally based, nationally recognised agency, offering a confidential telephone helpline to male survivors of child sexual abuse and adult sexual assaults.

[Support Line](#) - offers advice on steps to be taken if you are being abused together with a list of UK agencies which can give further advice, help and a list of counsellors. Tel. 020 8554 9004.

#### **Some Helplines:**

**Men's Advice Line and Enquiries - 020 8 644 9914**  
Information, support and advice to men experiencing domestic violence. Open from 9am to 10pm, Monday and Wednesday (answerphone at other times). Local projects for men are available in some areas.

**Survivors (Swindon) - 0845 430 9371**  
Telephone helpline for adult (17+) male survivors of child sexual abuse and adult rape. Answerphone messages are returned as soon as possible.

**Victim Supportline - 0845 30 30 900**  
Nationwide lo-call service, 9am–9pm Mon–Fri, 9am–7pm weekends and bank holidays from 9am–5pm; Provides information and support to victims of all

reported and unreported crime, including sexual crimes, racial harassment and domestic violence.

**Victim Support's Male Helpline - 0800 328 3623**  
Freephone number for men, 12 noon to 2 pm, Mon to Fri

**Rape and Sexual Violence Project - 0121 233 3818**  
A charity supporting female and male survivors of rape, sexual assault and childhood sexual abuse: offering information, telephone support and face to face counselling (7 days per week). Both male and female counsellors available.

**Sheaf Domestic Violence Project - 0114 249 8881 or 0114 249 8882**  
Works directly with women, children and Men who have been or still are suffering from domestic violence. Offers face to face visits, an escort service to court / hospital / etc.

**M.A.L.E (Men's Advice Line Enquiries) - 0845 064 6800**  
Based in Plymouth, Devon. Calls are charged at the local rate and the number will appear on your phone bill. Mon 10am -9pm, Tuesday - Thurs 10am - 5pm (answer machine at all other times).

**Men's Aid - 0871 223 9986**  
Based in Milton Keynes. A registered charity providing advice on what to do if you are in an abusive relationship. The helpline provides someone to talk to in the strictest of confidence, helpful and constructive advice, and information on other useful contacts specific to your individual needs. Tel. .

#### Hidden Hurt Message Forum

Please note that the **Hidden Hurt Message Forum** is open for both male and female victims and survivors of Domestic Abuse, their friends and family. You are welcome to leave a message or just browse.

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[Return from PTSD to Abuse Victims](#)


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| Confidential Case Information Form |

**Australia's Men's Rights Association  
A Non-Profit Association Promoting  
Gender Equality for Men and Their  
Children**

| Home | Newspaper Articles | Newspaper Archives | DNA Paternity Testing | Government Inquiries | Media Releases | Men's Rights Groups |

**Hot Topics:**
 

<b>Fatherlessness in Australia - Statistics</b>
<b>Male Suicide Rate in Australia 4 Times That of Females</b>
<b>Court Training - Self Represented Litigants</b>
<b>Child Support Agency (CSA) of Australia</b>
<b>Child Support Calculator - Child Support Agency (CSA) of Australia</b>
<b>Family Law Amendment (Family Violence) Bill 2010</b>
<b>Family Law in Australia</b>
<b>Paternity Fraud, The Case for Mandatory DNA Testing and Family Law in Australia</b>
<b>Domestic Violence Statistics for Australia</b>
<b>Government Inquiries - Family Law</b>
<b>Family Courts Violence Review - Australian Government (2009)</b>
<b>Domestic Violence Statistics - Newspaper Articles</b>
<b>White Ribbon Campaign Day Unfairly Targets Boys</b>
<b>Men's Health Issues and Gender Equality</b>
<b>Men's Rights Groups Gaining Influence in Australia</b>
<b>Violent and Abusive Women - Crime Statistics</b>

**Domestic Violence in Australia: ARE WOMEN AND MEN EQUALLY VIOLENT?**

Study - University of Melbourne, La Trobe University

Study by Bruce Headey, Dorothy Scott, David de Vaus, University of Melbourne, University of Melbourne, La Trobe University

Conventional wisdom holds (i) that physical domestic violence is mainly perpetrated by men against women; (ii) that violent men, being physically stronger, inflict more pain and serious injuries than violent women; and (iii) that physical violence runs in families. To examine all three beliefs, we bring to bear nationwide sample survey data.

In investigating domestic violence, three different types of data have been used, each with limitations, each leading to somewhat different accounts. First, crime statistics focus on the extreme end of the spectrum: homicides committed by a husband, wife, or lover. There, the preponderance of male perpetrators is clear. In Australia, 3.6 times as many women as men are killed by their partners (James and Carcach 1997). The same pattern holds in North America, although the gender difference is smaller (Straus 1986).

The second major source of data on domestic violence is clinical studies. In Australia these feature medical settings and mostly women patients (for example Webster, Sweett & Stolz, 1994; Mazza, Dennerstein & Ryan, 1996). Among injury presentations positively identified as domestic violence in a large, recent study of five Victorian hospitals, women outnumbered men by nearly 5 to 1 (Monash University Accident Research Centre, 1994). However the disproportion in serious injuries was less extreme, with 24% of the men and 13% of the women requiring hospital admission. Issues of labelling, misreporting by patients, and selectivity in willingness to seek help make it difficult to generalise from clinical studies.

The third major source of data on domestic violence is sample surveys. They have the advantage of covering the full range of domestic violence, not just the extremes revealed in homicide statistics or clinical studies. One important limitation is that they may under-report extreme violence, and previous studies in Australia also suffer from having just sampled women, even though two National Family Violence Surveys in the United States a decade ago showed no significant difference between physical assault rates experienced by male and female partners (Gelles & Straus 1988; Straus & Gelles 1986, 1990).

Is women's violence towards men best understood as self-defence? Conventional wisdom might say yes. But, reflecting on US studies, Straus (1993) concludes that "*research on who hit first does not support the hypothesis that assaults by wives are primarily acts of self-defence or retaliation*".

Most have concluded that domestic violence is intergenerational (Chappell & Heiner 1990; Straus, Gelles and Steinmetz 1980). Many argue that women who witnessed violence by their fathers against their mothers became more likely than other women to expect or tolerate it in their own marriages (Gelles 1987).

The hypotheses we test are thus based on "majority" professional and public opinion:

Men are significantly more likely to physically assault their female partners than vice-versa.

The injuries inflicted by male partners are significantly more serious than those inflicted by female partners.

Men who physically assault their partners are likely to be the sons of fathers who were violent to their own wives.

Women who are physically assaulted are likely to be the daughters of violent fathers and of mothers who were assaulted.

**DATA AND METHODS****The International Social Science Survey/ Australia 1996/97**

The "*Family Interaction*" module was developed to examine patterns of parental interaction, including domestic violence, and their intergenerational impact (Headey, Funder, Scott, Kelley, and Evans 1996). In the sample of 2151, 1643 respondents (804 men and 839 women) had been partnered during the last year, and hence were asked questions about domestic violence. Only one respondent was obtained from each household, so the male and female respondents, while both representative sub-samples, did not include people married or partnered to each other. For details on the ISSA surveys see page XXX and Kelley and Evans (1999).

**Measures**

In order to get an accurate measure of the annual incidence of physical domestic violence, we asked about the frequency of various kinds of assault (see below):

No - Never in the last 12 months

1 - Once in the last 12 months

2 - Twice in the last 12 months

**DV - Male Victims****Battered Men**

American Television Programme About Men Who Are Victims of Domestic Violence

ABC television show 20/20

Men Battered by their wives

Barbara Walters: "We focus a lot of attention on battered women in our society, because their plight is so common. But strange as it may sound, MEN are also victims of spousal abuse in surprisingly high numbers."

"If you find this hard to believe that a woman smaller and weaker than a man could beat up on him, then you're not alone.

As news anchor Lynn Shurn discovered, that perception is instilled in us from an early age. Maybe the stories you're about to hear will change what turns out to be a misperception." Read More ...

**Moms Who Kill**

**Biological Mothers Murder More of Their Own Children Than Do Biological Fathers**

Australian Institute of Criminology statistics show there were 270 child homicide incidents in Australia from July 1989 to June 1999, involving 287 identified offenders and resulting in the deaths of 316 children under 15.

For example, the revised National Homicide Monitoring Program 2006-07 Annual Report states 11 homicides involved a biological mother and 5 involves a biological father.

The Western Australian figures shed light on who is likely to abuse children in families. Mothers are identified as the perpetrator of neglect and abuse in a total of 73% of verified cases.

Biological mothers account for about 35 per cent of all child murders, while biological fathers account for 29 per cent Read More ...

**DV - Male Victims**

**BBC - The One Show on Male Victims of Domestic Violence**

4 - Three to five times in the last 12 months

6+ - Six or more times in the last 12 months

So few respondents had committed (or suffered) multiple assaults, that we dichotomized the scale into "no assault" versus "any assault".

Domestic violence -- both given and received -- is best assessed by asking about specific acts. To allow respondents to feel more comfortable reporting negative things about themselves and their spouses, we first asked about a series of positive acts (for example, "...bought a present for your husband or wife? Did they buy one for you?"). Then, on domestic violence, we asked:

	I DID				SPOUSE DID					
j. You slap, shake or scratch them? They do to you?	No	1	2	4	6+	No	1	2	4	6+
k. Hit with fist or with something held in the hand, or thrown - you do it? They do it?	No	1	2	4	6+	No	1	2	4	6+
l. Kicked?	No	1	2	4	6+	No	1	2	4	6+

Directly following these questions, respondents were asked whether "On any of these occasions, did you injure them -- so that they needed first aid? They injure you?". Next, they were asked whether "they needed treatment by a doctor or nurse? They injure you that much?" Finally, respondents were asked whether they had reported an assault to the police or other government authorities. Levels of missing data on these questions were at about the normal level for the survey as a whole, indicating that people were not especially reluctant to answer them.

To discover whether results from our female respondents parallel those from the Australian Bureau of Statistics, much later in the questionnaire we replicated two of their questions (ABS 1996). Because the ABS is well known for high response rates and good samples, a close match between their results and ours would enhance confidence in the data provided by both our female and male respondents.

Finally, we asked respondents about violence by their parents towards each other. They were asked whether, when they were around 10 or 11 years old, their mother had 'slapped or scratched their father in anger', and whether their father had done these things to their mother. A subsequent question asked about 'hitting with the fist or something held in the hand, or thrown'. By asking about violence at a specific time in children's lives, we hoped to make a rough estimate of the prevalence of violence in the previous generation, as well as to assess the extent to which domestic violence runs in families. Clearly, however, respondents' memories of their parents' behaviour would not be completely accurate.

**RESULTS**

**Male and Female Assault Rates**

Our first hypothesis is that men are significantly more likely to physically assault their partners than vice-versa. Table 1 gives the percentage of respondents who report that they were assaulted in each of several ways in the last twelve months.

**Table 1: Percent Assaulted By Their Partner<sup>a</sup>: Self-Reports by Men (N=804) and Women (N=839) on Assaults In Last 12 Months. Australia, 1996/97.**

Type of assault	% Experiencing this type of assault:		Gender difference significant <sup>b</sup> ?
	Men	Women	
Slap, shake or scratch	5.1	3.2	no
Hit with fist, or with something held in hand or thrown	4.1	2.5	no
Kicked	2.1	1.4	no
Any physical assault? (victim of one or more types of assault shown above)	5.7	3.7	no

Notes:  
<sup>a</sup> Includes husbands, wives and de facto spouses  
<sup>b</sup> Significance at .05 level of phi (2 x 2 table).  
 Source: IsssA 1996/97

Men and women report approximately equal rates of being assaulted by their partner, for all three types of assault we asked about. These results are in line with American data, which also show no significant differences.

Moreover, the summary measure of experiencing any of these forms of assault also fails to reveal a preponderance of assaults on women: 4.7% of the sample reported being assaulted in some way during the last 12 months; 5.7% of men and 3.7% of women. This remains an unacceptably high rate of domestic violence, although it is not quite the "War on Women" referred to in the media (e.g. The Age, June 4, 1993).

In addition to asking about actual violence, the survey also asked about threats and feelings of intimidation. Similar percentages of men and women-5.7% and 6.0%-reported that their partner had threatened "to slap, hit or attack" them, but more women (7.6%) than men (4.0%) said they felt "frightened and intimidated". This latter difference was significant at the .05 level, and indeed was the only statistically significant gender difference in domestic violence.

**Violence Runs in Couples**

An important but unanticipated finding was that violence runs in couples. 54% of respondents who reported that they had been assaulted, also admitted that they had assaulted their partners.

- 94.4% report being neither perpetrators nor victims of violence.
- 2.5% report both assaulting and being assaulted.
- 2.1% report being assaulted but not committing assault.
- 1.0% report assaulting their partner but not being assaulted.



BBC programme 'The One Show', in which the subject of domestic violence against men is discussed.

September, 2009

UK - not politically correct to fund shelters for men and their children who are victims of domestic violence.

[Read More ...](#)

An important point is that the couples who assault each other are the second largest group (2.5% of the sample). Rather small minorities claim to be assaulted without striking back (2.1%), or admit being violent while reporting that their partner does not hit back (1.0%).

#### Do Men's and Women's Responses Corroborate Each Other?

Many of the results reported here run counter to conventional wisdom, so it is especially important to establish that the estimates are accurate.

First, how do the IsssA results compare to women's reports in previous violence surveys? In Table 2 we juxtapose women's answers to two questions in the Australian Women's Safety Survey (1996) with their replications in the IsssA data. The ABS is well known for the high quality of its samples and high response rates, so this survey provides a convenient benchmark.

**Table 2. Women's Reports of Domestic Violence in Two Surveys: Percent. Australia 1996 - 1997**

	IsssA 1996/97 (N=1,643) <sup>a</sup>	Australian Bureau of Statistics Women's Safety Survey (N=6,300), 1996
Hit or physically attacked by your husband or defacto in the last 12 months	1.6	2.2 <sup>b</sup>
Have you ever been hit or physically attacked by your husband or de facto	8.6	7.2 <sup>c</sup>

a These questions were only put to currently married or de facto respondents in our survey. Therefore comparisons with the ABS survey relate only to assaults by current partners. Threats of assaults are not included.  
b Calculated from Australian Bureau of Statistics, Women's Safety Australia (1996) p.9,19.  
c Australian Bureau of Statistics, Australian Women's Yr Book (1997) pp. 159-60.

The two surveys yield very similar results. The ABS survey gives a slightly higher estimate of violence "*in the last 12 months*", while the IsssA data provides a slightly higher estimate of "*ever*" having experienced violence. This close match is not surprising, since prior research has found that the IsssA samples closely match ABS population estimates on objective characteristics (Sikora 1997).

A second approach (see Table 3) involves comparing men's and women's responses within the IsssA. If the women's reports are to be believed (as they have been in previous work), and if men and women report similar rates of violence, then the men's reports probably have to be believed too. This is quite a stringent test since some previous research on sexual behaviour has found large discrepancies between men's and women's reports (Lewontin 1995). The IsssA male and female respondents were not married to each other, but they are both nationally representative sub-samples. So if both men and women are being truthful, the percent of women who say they were assaulted should agree with the percent of men who admit assault (within the limits of sampling error).

**Table 3. Do Men and Women's Reports Agree in the IsssA 1996/97?**

	Women who say they were assaulted	Men who admit assault	Sig At .05 level?	Men who say they were assaulted	Women who admit assault	Sig. at .05 level?
Slap, Shake or scratch	3.2	3.1	No	5.1	2.7	Yes
Hit with fist, or with something held in hand, or thrown	2.5	2.2	No	4.1	2.8	No
Kicked	1.4	1.6	No	2.1	1.3	No
Any physical assault?	3.7	3.4	No	5.7	3.6	Yes

For assaults on women, there is virtual agreement between the sexes: almost exactly the same percentage of men admit assault as there are women who report being assaulted. 3.4% of men admit violence and 3.7% of women say they were assaulted. Statistical tests confirm that the difference is not significant.

For assaults on men, the results are quite different. More men claim to be assaulted, than there are women who admit assault. In terms of overall numbers (row 4 of Table 3) the difference is just statistically significant at the .05 level. It is hard to interpret the finding.

The key finding here is that men's and women's reports corroborate each other in the case of assaults on women, and thus partially validate each other. That encourages confidence in the truthfulness and accuracy of the responses.

#### Injury, Pain and Reporting Violence to Authorities

Our second hypothesis is that male assailants inflict more serious injuries than female assailants. We strove to avoid the issue of gender differences in willingness to seek help by focusing on the occurrence of injury and pain rather than on the action respondent took about them.

**Table 4. Injury and Pain Due to Assaults (N=1643). Australia 1996/97.<sup>a</sup>**

	% Victims		Sig. at the .05 level? <sup>b</sup>
	Men	Women	
Injured, needed first aid	1.8	1.2	No
Needed treatment by a doctor or nurse	1.5	1.1	No
Pain as bad as hitting thumb with a hammer or worse	1.9	1.9	No
Called the police or other government authority	1.3	1.7	No

<sup>a</sup> All result in Table 4 are reports by 'victims' of assault.  
<sup>b</sup> Significance of phi (2 x 2 table).  
Source" IsssA 1996/97.

Men are at least as likely as women to be victims of domestic assaults that lead to injury and pain (Table 4). Consistent with victimization rates (Table 1), the results here suggest that women inflict serious injuries at least as

frequently as men. The evidence in Table 4 needs treating with caution because it runs counter, not just to conventional belief, but also to medical and police records. Clearly, established beliefs cannot be overturned by one set of findings. These issues need further research.

Is domestic violence intergenerational?

The explanation most frequently offered for domestic violence is that men who had violent fathers are violent towards their own wives. And some would argue that daughters of violent parents are likely to be in violent relationships themselves.

**Table 5. Relationships Between Parental Violence and Own Domestic Violence, Australia 1996/97: Pearson Correlations**

	Male		Female	
	Father Violent <sup>a</sup>	Mother Violent <sup>a</sup>	Father Violent <sup>a</sup>	Mother Violent <sup>a</sup>
Respondent Violent	.13**	.11**	.06 ns	.08*
Respondent Victim of Violence	.09*	.08*	.10**	.05 ns

Notes:  
 ns = not significant at the .05 level. \* p < .05. \*\* p < .01  
<sup>a</sup> A parent who had either slapped, scratched or shaken the other parent, or hit him/her when the son/daughter was around 10 or 11 years old is classified as violent. Retrospective report by son/daughter.

Intergenerational transmission is weak: All the Pearson correlations in Table 5 are quite small (the largest is 0.13). The vast majority of people who had violent parents do not assault their own partners. Also, the vast majority of those who admit being violent do not claim to have had violent parents.

Nonetheless, some intergenerational transmission occurs. Men who were the sons of violent fathers were significantly more likely than the sons of non-violent fathers to report being violent themselves, or to being victims of violence, or both (Table 5). Of the men who had violent fathers, 9.8% were violent themselves. By contrast the rate of physical domestic violence was only 2.5% among men with non-violent fathers. In the case of women, the findings were more complex, perhaps resulting from modeling. Women with violent mothers were somewhat more likely to be violent themselves, and women were more likely to be victims of violence if they had violent fathers.

Thus the data provide evidence of weak intergenerational transmission of domestic violence, and thus modest support for 'family systems theory'.

We noted earlier that marriages in which the partners both hit each other appear to be more common than marriages with one violent and one non-violent partner. Respondents' reports of their parents' marriages tend in the same direction, although less strongly. 85.8% reported no violence, while 5.4% reported that their parents assaulted each other, 5.9% reported that the father assaulted the mother without being struck back, while the remaining 2.9% said that the mother was the only violent partner.

## DISCUSSION

### To sum up:

Men were just as likely to report being physically assaulted by their partners as women. Further, women and men were about equally likely to admit being violent themselves.

Men and women report experiencing about the same levels of pain and need for medical attention resulting from domestic violence.

Violence runs in couples. In over 50% of partnerships in which violence occurred both partners struck each other.

People who had violent parents were significantly more likely than others to be violent to their own partners and to be victims of violence themselves. On the other hand, a huge majority of people whose parents were violent do not assault their own partners. Moreover, the vast majority of those who are violent did not have violent parents.

The first two results run counter to conventional wisdom and to the hypotheses with which we began the paper. However, some degree of confirmation or at least plausibility derives from the fact that men's and women's reports on rates of domestic violence more or less agree. If the women are to be believed (as they have been by previous investigators), then so are the men. Further, the results relating to women being as violent as men are in line with some recent American research.

Of course it takes more than one survey to overturn received wisdom. It is fair to ask researchers how much confidence they have in their own findings. We are reasonably confident about the first and third results; that female and male partners assault each other about equally often and that violence runs in couples. Nor do we have reason to doubt that the offspring of violent parents are unlikely to be violent themselves, albeit at greater risk of being violent than are the children of non-violent parents. We have much less confidence in the second result, finding it hard to credit that women injure men as seriously as men injure women. We hope that our measures of the severity of injury and pain were a reasonable first attempt. Nevertheless, in future work it will be important to compare subjective assessments of severity to more reliable and objective measures.

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"mess", *Sunday Life*, 6/7). A  
 reason is the mentality  
 depicted in *The Hangover*  
 the enticing depiction of  
 fictional adolescence - a care  
 existence with next to no  
 responsibilities. This is a distinct  
 generational change. My father-  
 law began work at 16, was  
 married at 20 and had three chil-  
 dren by the age of 27.

Now, to put it crudely, many  
 younger men are happy to "drink  
 the milk without buying the  
 cow", often while still video  
 gaming and living with their par-  
 ents. Our modern world indeed  
 desperately needs young males  
 to be willing to step up and do the  
 grinding and daily domestic  
 stuff of life: get married, hold  
 down a worthwhile job, have and  
 nurture children and contribute  
 to their respective communities.  
 This is not necessarily sexy, but  
 it is serious.

Peter Waterhouse,  
 Craigieburn

### Childhood baggage

I really enjoyed Jane Caro's arti-  
 cle. Mothers or sons should stop  
 carrying their school bags for  
 them. I am constantly amazed  
 that young girls of five and six  
 proudly walk along the street,  
 school bag on back, and along  
 comes mum carrying her son's  
 bag while he swings both arms. It  
 starts long before here, unfortu-  
 nately, but is a sad indication of  
 what is to come.

Stephan Grey, Newport

### Less us v them

"Men-fashing" has become  
 fashionable as dysfunctional  
 men are dispensed to infamy but  
 only represent a tiny percentage

approach of Jane Caro in part  
 widens the gulf and adds to the  
 problems of hopelessness, des-  
 pair, sadness, and high suicide  
 rates among males, particularly  
 the over 60s. To write that men  
 are "emotionally infantilised" or  
 that they won't take responsibil-  
 ity for their own emotions or  
 even behaviour can only be con-  
 ceived as emotive journalism as  
 it has only an element of truth  
 and applies to both genders.

Feminist Kathleen Parker  
 writes in *Save the Males: Why  
 Men Matter Why Women Should  
 Care* that the feminist movement  
 has gone far beyond its goal of  
 helping women achieve equality  
 to demonise men's masculinity.  
 Being more conciliatory and less  
 judgmental are the attitudes of  
 those emotionally mature people  
 of both sexes who are "over" this  
 us versus them continuum.

Tony Nicholl, Mount Eliza

### Force of duty

Every day, every time, I hear of a  
 dangerous incident involving  
 police I worry about my son and  
 wait anxiously to hear that he is  
 not the one that has copped it.  
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## Why are so many MEN becoming victims of domestic violence? It's one of Britain's last remaining taboos, but abuse against men in the home is on the rise

- More married men suffer abuse from their spouse than married women
- These days, women move more in men's worlds
- They earn and compete with as much aggression as their male colleagues
- Women are also fast catching up with men in the alcohol stakes

By ANTONIA HOYLE FOR THE MAIL ON SUNDAY

PUBLISHED: 10:49 EST, 5 December 2013 | UPDATED: 10:49 EST, 5 December 2013

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View comments

Michelle Mills was as impeccably groomed as she was well mannered. Her nails were neatly manicured; her blonde hair sleek. Her gentle nature and diminutive, 4ft 11 in stature seemed perfectly suited to her career as a children's nursery worker.

But Michelle's pleasant demeanour masked an altogether more disturbing personality. Behind closed doors she was a volatile character, prone to irrational behaviour and violent outbursts, as her boyfriend Edward Miller would discover.



© Paul Tonge

Picture perfect: Michelle Mills (pictured with boyfriend Edward Miller) was impeccably groomed and had a pleasant demeanour

Michelle subjected Edward to an onslaught of abuse. He was scratched, punched and screamed at until one morning Michelle, brandishing a kitchen knife, stabbed him to death in the living room of their picturesque cottage in the pretty village of Scalford, Leicestershire.

The attack was so ferocious that that the knife blade broke away from the handle. In April, Michelle was convicted of murder and sentenced to life in prison.

'Eddie was a kind man who would never hurt anyone,' says his mother Sara Wrestle, blinking back tears. 'I still can't believe he's gone. I want other men who are suffering at the hands of an abusive wife or girlfriend to seek help, so that nobody else loses their life like my son did.'

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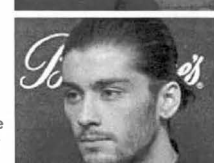
The smile that says she's won! Perrie Edwards lets everyone know the engagement is still on as she flashes huge diamond ring



'If you want the sex to be good, that's the vodka!' Cate Blanchett shows she has flirty side in the unedited version of THAT f-bomb Cinderella interview



'I never wanted to be famous!' In previously unreleased interview Zayn Malik discusses pressures of fame and his desire to take a more low-key job as producer or songwriter



'I'd get off stage and eat a pizza': Ed Sheeran says he has lost over 20kg thanks to cutting down on binge eating and drinking beer Keeps himself in check.



Troublingly, in a society where the roles of men and women are becoming increasingly blurred, female-on-male domestic violence is on the rise.

The latest findings from the British Crime Survey reveal that 17 men were killed by their partners in England and Wales last year.

Forty per cent of reported domestic abuse victims were male (although this includes assaults by male relatives and partners).

Incredibly, if these figures are to be believed, more married men suffered abuse at the hands of their spouse than married women (23 per cent of married men were recorded to have complained about domestic abuse compared with 1.8 per cent of married women).

Of course, it is easy to blame women's increased violence on their emancipation: they move more in men's worlds, earning and competing with as much aggression and vigour as their male colleagues.

They're drinking more, too: figures from the Office of National Statistics show that women are fast catching men up in the alcohol stakes. The proportion of women consuming more than the recommended limit of 14 units a week has grown by a fifth in a decade.

'Domestic abuse against men is one of Britain's last remaining taboos, but every year our helpline is seeing at least a 25 per cent increase in the number of men seeking help,' says Mark Brooks, chairman of Mankind, a charity for male victims.

Eddie was 18 and had just graduated from a business studies course at college when he met Michelle, then 29, through mutual friends.

'She was Eddie's first serious girlfriend and his eyes lit up when he spoke of her,' says Sara.

Sara, 48, invited Michelle over for dinner. 'She was well mannered and friendly. Eddie seemed so happy the age gap didn't bother me.'

Yet there were perhaps already troubling signs. Michelle had a young son and daughter who were living with their different fathers and with whom she had only sporadic contact. She also had a predilection for alcohol.

'When she'd drunk too much she would find fault with even the smallest things Eddie did,' says Sara. 'If she didn't think he was being attentive enough towards her she'd snap at him. If he was tired she'd accuse him of being grumpy. I didn't feel it was my place to intervene.'



Sara Wrestle, Edward's mum: 'When [Michelle] drank too much she would find fault with even the smallest things Eddie did'

Sara, a former hospitality manager who became a full-time mother after Eddie was born, did her best to befriend Michelle.

But in October 2011 Eddie - who was a strapping 6ft tall and 14 stone - came home with scratches and bruises on his face after spending the night at Michelle's three-bedroom home in Melton Mowbray.

'I was horrified,' says Sara. 'Eddie admitted Michelle, drunk, had lashed out at him. He wouldn't say what the argument was about and insisted he could handle himself.' As the months passed, Michelle became ever more controlling.



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Surprise twist: But, in a fit of rage, Michelle stabbed Edward to death, here pictured aged 18 - the year he first met Michelle

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### Domestic violence against men: Know the signs

**Domestic violence against men isn't always easy to identify, but it can be a serious threat. Know how to recognize if you're being abused — and how to get help.**

By Mayo Clinic Staff

Women aren't the only victims of domestic violence. Understand the signs of domestic violence against men, and know how to get help.

#### Recognize domestic violence against men

Domestic violence — also known as intimate partner violence — occurs between people in an intimate relationship. Domestic violence against men can take many forms, including emotional, sexual and physical abuse and threats of abuse. It can happen in heterosexual or same-sex relationships.

It might not be easy to recognize domestic violence against men. Early in the relationship, your partner might seem attentive, generous and protective in ways that later turn out to be controlling and frightening. Initially, the abuse might appear as isolated incidents. Your partner might apologize and promise not to abuse you again.

In other relationships, domestic violence against men might include both partners slapping or shoving each other when they get angry — and neither partner seeing himself or herself as being abused or controlled. This type of violence, however, can still devastate a relationship, causing both physical and emotional damage.

You might be experiencing domestic violence if your partner:

- Calls you names, insults you or puts you down
- Prevents you from going to work or school
- Stops you from seeing family members or friends
- Tries to control how you spend money, where you go or what you wear
- Acts jealous or possessive or constantly accuses you of being unfaithful
- Gets angry when drinking alcohol or using drugs
- Threatens you with violence or a weapon
- Hits, kicks, shoves, slaps, chokes or otherwise hurts you, your children or your pets

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- Forces you to have sex or engage in sexual acts against your will
- Blames you for his or her violent behavior or tells you that you deserve it

If you're gay, bisexual or transgender, you might also be experiencing domestic violence if you're in a relationship with someone who:

- Threatens to tell friends, family, colleagues or community members your sexual orientation or gender identity
- Tells you that authorities won't help a gay, bisexual or transgender person
- Tells you that leaving the relationship means you're admitting that gay, bisexual or transgender relationships are deviant
- Justifies abuse by telling you that you're not "really" gay, bisexual or transgender
- Says that men are naturally violent

### Children and abuse

Domestic violence affects children, even if they're just witnesses. If you have children, remember that exposure to domestic violence puts them at risk of developmental problems, psychiatric disorders, problems at school, aggressive behavior and low self-esteem. You might worry that seeking help could further endanger you and your children, or that it might break up your family. Fathers might fear that abusive partners will try to take their children away from them. However, getting help is the best way to protect your children — and yourself.

### Break the cycle

If you're in an abusive situation, you might recognize this pattern:

- Your abuser threatens violence.
- Your abuser strikes you.
- Your abuser apologizes, promises to change and offers gifts.
- The cycle repeats itself.

Typically the violence becomes more frequent and severe over time.

Domestic violence can leave you depressed and anxious. You might be more likely to abuse alcohol or drugs or engage in unprotected sex. Because men are traditionally thought to be physically stronger than women, you might be less likely to report domestic violence in your heterosexual relationship due to embarrassment. You might also worry that the significance of the abuse will be minimized because you're a man. Similarly, a man being abused by another man might be reluctant to talk about the problem because of how it reflects on his masculinity or because it exposes his sexual orientation.

If you seek help, you also might confront a shortage of resources for male victims of domestic violence. Health care providers and other contacts might not think to ask if your injuries were caused by domestic violence, making it harder to open up about abuse. You might fear that if you talk to someone about the abuse, you'll be accused of wrongdoing yourself. Remember, though, if you're being abused, you aren't to blame — and help is available.

Start by telling someone about the abuse, whether it's a friend, relative, health care provider or other close contact. At first, you might find it hard to talk about the abuse. However, you'll also likely feel relief and receive much-needed support.

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# The Bulletin



## TERROR AT HOME

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OPINION

### READERS DISCUSSION: Nagging - is it domestic violence?

22nd Mar 2015 6:00 AM



Claudia Baxter

A LETTER to the Editor published in The Bulletin this week questioned what was classified as domestic violence and the difference between men and women's behaviours.

"There was a domestic violence day at the Rockhampton Library before Christmas where you could talk one-on-one with specialists.

I asked the lady if verbal abuse was a form of domestic violence, and why nagging wasn't classed as domestic violence."

The Bulletin asked readers via Facebook: Do you think the terms of domestic violence is one-sided?

**Sharron Payne** - Wow! That is seriously ridiculous! If nagging is domestic violence then every household in the world is in this category! Nagging is sometimes the only way to get somebody to do that thing you've been asking them to do for ages! If you start classing nagging as domestic violence you suddenly take away the severity of domestic violence!

**Polly Reed** - Verbal abuse and nagging are NOT the same thing. Verbal abuse can be just as damaging in different ways to physical abuse.

**Trish Kelly** - I think the Morning Bulletin has been irresponsible in publishing this ridiculous letter. It's extremely insulting to those in domestic violence situations. I'm not saying that women can't be the perpetrators of verbal or physical violence against their partners, but the situation this writer is describing is entirely out of the realm of domestic violence, especially when he's associating this behaviour with PMT. Ridiculous

**Debbie Bryant** - I think domestic violence can take many forms. Men are not always the perpetrators sometimes they are the victims. I have personally seen this. My father was a victim of domestic violence and he and we children hid it. We were ashamed and he was ashamed. The consequences of verbal, emotional and psychological violence last a life time. The victim is not the only one to suffer the children in these situations carry these scars for the rest of their lives. I know this because I carry the scars and with the help of a wonderful therapist I faced my past and now I feel nothing but sorrow for my mother. She was

a very unhappy woman to behave like she did. I have forgiven her. But please remember that women are also capable of domestic violence. I suspect that it goes unreported because the men are ashamed.

**Leigh McMaster** - If nagging is all that u worry about then u have it easy. Try b in someones shoes that has serious dv problems.

Courtney Lowry - I feel like the two thoughts don't add up. What is your definition of nagging? To me it's repetitively asking someone to complete an activity. "For the seventh time today, take the bin out." Nagging? Yes. DV case? No.

If you start to throw in some blue words to this nagging, then it would definitely fall in to the DV scale, but it would also leave behind the simple definition of nagging.

Also, men nag too, so if nagging isn't counted as a DV case, both sexes are "benefitting" for lack of a better word.

**Briony Miller** - Nagging can be a form of emotional abuse

Read more here:



**The Morning Bulletin**  
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Profile

There was a domestic violence day at the Rockhampton Library before Christmas where you could talk one-on-one with specialists.

I asked the lady if verbal abuse was a form of domestic violence, and why nagging wasn't classed as domestic violence. <http://ow.ly/Kw5cy>

Do you think the terms of domestic violence is one-sided?



**LETTER TO EDITOR: Why isn't nagging seen as form of DV?**

DOMESTIC violence is a big issue at the moment but I think it is a one-sided look at the problem.

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## **Correlates of suicide in men**

### **Diagnosis of major depression**

There is a demonstrable correlation between major depression and suicide. Some depressed men can experience avoidant, numbing and escape behaviours which can lead to aggression, violence and suicide. Gender differences appear not so much in the experience of depression, but in its expression (Brownhill et al., 2003 & 2005; Rutz & Rihmer, 2009).

### **Relationship breakdown**

Suicide risk has been shown to be high among separated males, especially younger males aged 15-24 years (Cantor et al., 1995; Wyder, Ward & De Leo, 2009). Kolves, Ide and De Leo (2011) studied the suicidal behaviour of men who had experienced the breakdown of a marriage or de facto relationship and showed that both trait shame (pervasive, long-term feelings) and state shame (feelings related to an event) predicted suicidal behaviour. Harwood, Hawton, Hope and Jacoby (2000) observed an increase in suicide risk due to poorer social support among elderly widowed or divorced males.

### **Previous suicide attempts**

A suicide attempt is a strong predictor for suicidal behaviour (Skogman, Alsen & Ojehagen, 2004; Beghi & Rosenbaum, 2010), with suicide risk among people who self-harm being up to 200 times higher than in the general population across the lifespan (Owens et al., 2002). Being bereaved by suicide also carries an increased risk.

### **Alcohol use**

Males are more likely than females to have been diagnosed with a substance use disorder (Schneider, 2009), particularly an alcohol-related disorder (Kim et al., 2003). A wide range of alcohol-positive cases have been found for suicide (10-69%) and non-fatal suicide attempts (10-73%) (Cherpitel et al., 2004). Alcohol has the effect of disinhibiting and triggering impulsive behaviour and exacerbates feelings of hopelessness and depression. It also impairs judgment, reality testing and problem-solving, which explains its common association with suicide. Alcohol abuse and especially increased usage are common warning signs in suicidal men.

### **Financial factors**

Based on studies of the effects of unemployment, Gunnell, Platt and Hawton (2009) speculate that financial crises will lead to elevated levels of suicide, particularly among men. However, an Australian study by Berk, Dodd and Henry (2006) suggests that this effect may be limited to males up to the age of 34. Employment and financial security are factors to consider for male wellbeing.

### **Rural location**

Men living in rural and remote locations experience a higher rate of suicide than their metropolitan counterparts. Page et al. (2007) revealed that male suicides in rural areas increased from 19.2 per 100,000 during 1979-1983 to 23.8 during 1999-2003. Some of the factors implicated in this increased risk are greater access to firearms, lack of services, social isolation, traditional male stereotypes, problematic alcohol use, climatic variability and economic fluctuations.

### Indigenous heritage

According to 2010 ABS data, the age-standardised death rate for suicide was 2.5 times higher for Aboriginal and Torres Strait males compared to non-Indigenous males. A recent publication on Queensland Indigenous suicide attests to a 2.3 times higher rate for Indigenous males (De Leo et al., 2011), with 74 per cent between the ages of 15 and 34 years (38% for equivalent non-Indigenous data). Suicides among Indigenous men aged 15 to 24 years were four times higher than their non-Indigenous counterparts. Suicide has only been prevalent in Indigenous cultures in Australia since the 1960s and is considered to be connected with the general disenfranchisement and marginalisation of Indigenous people (Hunter & Milroy, 2006; Tatz, 2001). Indigenous males are at high risk of suicide contagion (Elliott-Farrelly, 2004; Hanssens, 2007).

### Treatment and prevention

Psychologists should routinely ask about suicidal thoughts and behaviour, whatever the reason a man is seeking assistance. Research demonstrates that there are no iatrogenic effects to asking about suicide (Gould et al., 2005; Rudd et al., 2006; Mathias et al., 2012). Initial client history forms should include questions about previous suicidal behaviour and exposure to other's suicidal behaviour (especially significant people) and trauma, and these should be followed up through verbal inquiry.

Many men respond well to psychological treatments that encourage problem solving and enhance their ability to develop coping strategies and gain control over their emotions and circumstances (Emslie et al., 2006). Strong social connectedness is a protective factor worth cultivating and supporting in men. Given the increased suicide risk related to relationship breakdown, men in transition need to be supported to reach out and maintain social and family connections (Denney et al., 2009). The importance of employment and financial security cannot be understated in the lives of men. Consideration and support of these protective factors will mitigate risk for suicide and enhance wellbeing, as will frank discussion about minimising alcohol use at times of extreme stress.

The authors recommend using the 'Safety Planning' methods and tools developed by Stanley and Brown (2008; 2012) when working with suicidal men. Continuity of care is of utmost importance for suicidal clients (Knesper 2010); if referring on, consider providing follow-up call/s and/or caring postcards (Motto & Bostrom, 2001) to support a smooth transition and continued uptake of care.

Schaub and Williams (2007) propose that suicide prevention programs for men should draw on men's skills and strengths, rather than on perceived failings or shortcomings. It is also valuable to introduce suicide prevention programs that target the family and friends of suicidal men who do not seek help themselves (Mishara et al., 2005).

There is an emerging focus on employment status and industry impact on suicide rates and the benefits of using a workplace setting approach to men's suicide prevention. EAP providers should consider offering lunchtime presentations to all staff on topics such as stress and anger management, depression, relationship skills, conflict resolution and healthy lifestyle. Such a universal approach can build resilience and increase the likelihood of help-seeking during a crisis. Examples of successful suicide prevention programs based in a workplace setting include *Mates in Construction* (Gullestrup, Lequertier & Martin, 2011) and *Working Minds* (<http://workingminds.org/>).

Office 365 Outlook



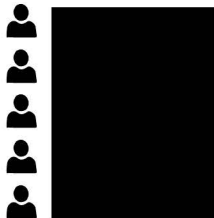
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To:  hsletters@heraldsun.com.au;

Cc: [Redacted]

The status quo MUST change. All men are being held culpable for the dreadful misdeeds of a minority. We are **not**.

Please consider that those who are violent mostly comprise dysfunctional or disaffected individuals. In Britain at this time there is a major publicity campaign demonstrating that 40% of domestic violence is female to male.

As Domestic Violence is thrust more and more into the limelight and with the commission imminent it is necessary to consider these facts.

Dysfunctional pertains to those with mental health problems. Disaffected are those whose behavior has become irrational on account of events or health. Readers will have noticed that it is often quoted that a high percentage of domestic violence is not reported. This invalidates the statistics which police claim to be irrefutable they can only rely on the statistics reported.

Australian government, 2011, ( DHS) report that the following are categorized as domestic violence. physical, verbal, emotional, sexual or psychological abuse, controlling money, stalking, neglect in a relationship, harm to an animal or property, restricting spiritual or cultural participation.

Men do not go to police for fear of not being believed and internalize the impost of insidious DV. and have to endure the difficulties associated with fallacious intervention orders

This radical change in their lives quite often leads to **hopelessness**. There are nine types of hopelessness. ( psych.central. world of psychology 2009) alienation, forsakenness, uninspired, powerlessness, oppression, limitedness, doom, captivity, helplessness.

Quite obviously this can apply to either gender and leads to despair, sadness, depression, anxiety, reclusiveness ( fear of the world) and others.

At this point it is prudent to mention the national catastrophe that is suicide. As if one woman a week dying by partner violence is bad enough. Six men a day die by suicide ( Male health Victoria quote that statistic). That is at least 50% greater than the road toll and barely addressed. It can be demonstrated more women attempt suicide.

It should also be mentioned that suicide is only a permanent solution to a temporary problem.

In the "conservative woman" a UK magazine Martin Seager writes "No one weeps for men. Even when they kill themselves."

Some people say that gender inequality is the fundamental basic to domestic violence but it should also be argued that males are socialized to be aggressive at an early age and that has been the case since time immemorial. Impossible almost to reverse but no real man hits a woman.

The domestic violence people are hell bent on punishing males and having all men be held as potentially culpable. This creates further conflict and expands the difficult problem. There should be collaboration and women, especially the over sixties who have the emotional maturity and compassion to

## THE SYMPOSIUM TOPICS

WHY DOES SEX MATTER  
SO MUCH TO MEN?

---

HAVE YOU DONE YOUR  
BEST WORK YET?

---

WORK, LIFE BALANCE

---

WORKING THROUGH A  
MAN'S LATER LIFETIME.

All men, women welcome  
addressing these critical issues.



## THE SPEAKERS

### MS BETTINA ARNDT.

Relationship journalist.  
Keynote speaker.

"Why does sex matter so much to men?"

### MR. G.C. (CHARLIE) LAST,

FRACS. Prominent local endovascular surgeon,  
Frankston & Mornington  
"Work, Life Balance"

### DR RODNEY SYME.

FRCS. Urology. Melbourne University,  
Austin Hospital.

"Working through a man's later lifetime"

### MR GARETH ANDREWS.

CEO and founder of the Life Again Foundation.  
"Have you done your best work yet"

## THE CHAIRMAN

### MR. ROB KOCH

"Better Men Australia"



**Bettina Arndt**, a clinical psychologist, is known as one of Australia's first sex therapists. She's spent most of her career talking and writing about sex and relationships in newspapers and on TV and radio, as well as communicating her experience to other professionals.



**Gareth Andrews**, former VFL player for Geelong and Richmond, jointly founded the VFL Players Association and was its President. Commerce Degree at Melb. University. In 2011, he established LifeAgain, with the aim of inspiring and connecting men in times of change.



**Rob Koch** is a Men's Health & Parenting Educator with Monash Health and the founder of Male Health Victoria. He heads up a team of men's workers through his organisation Better Men



**Rodney Syme**, urological surgeon, Austin Hospital. He chaired the Vic. Section of the Urological Society of Australia, and the Urology Study Group, Cancer Council of Vic. He is the 10 year President of Dying With Dignity Victoria.



## MEN'S LIFE QUALITY

- How good would it be if we eliminated us versus them continuum and men and women worked together with emotional maturity to enhance their lives?
- It can be demonstrated that hopelessness, despair and depression pervades an unreasonable percentage of men's lives especially older men. Activity is the antidote, how can reclusive men enhance their lives in this way? Do they want to?
- Domestic violence is an awful conundrum in all it's eight forms. All men must not be held culpable for the dysfunctional minority or those under untold duress.
- Men suicide at the rate of 6 per day. If six whales were washed up on the beach there would be an enormous outcry.
- It is imperative that we address the psychological needs of men and boys to improve the psychological well being of all people.
- Prostate cancer has the highest incidence and mortality and is least funded even though treatment modes have improved.
- In Victoria the government has no male health policy unlike federal policy and other states.



## CONVENOR



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E-Mail: amnicholl@gmail.com

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bsb 633-006  
account 1529 522 71

## Registration and Payment

Contact via Email or Phone to register your attendance

Payment can be made by cheque or money order to A M Nicholl or by bank transfer. Both registration and payment latest November 12th as facility only has limited availability and requires prior payment. Refunds will be facilitated if necessary



A certificate of attendance will be provided.

Such is my commitment that I implemented and funded this myself (\$3500).

# MEN

## "ALL MEN MATTER"

A SYMPOSIUM ABOUT SEXUALITY,  
LIFE'S JOYS AND DIFFICULTIES, AND  
MANAGING LATER LIFE

## WHY

To enhance the quality of life of men in times of change.

## WHEN

Saturday morning November 22nd  
8:40 - Lunch Time.

## WHERE

Mt Eliza Business School.  
An elite academic facility at Moondah Beach.  
70 Konyung Road, Mount Eliza. 3930

## COST

\$80 per person.  
Includes morning tea and lunch.  
A non-profit exercise, any surplus will be donated to Male Health Victoria.

## WHY SHOULD I COME?

This symposium can improve the quality of your life.

Mt Eliza

ALLIED EDUCATION

