

*Neighbours,
Friends and
Families:*

*Understanding
Woman Abuse*

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Neighbours, Friends & Families

Understanding Woman Abuse

What is Woman Abuse?

Woman abuse refers to violence by a woman's current or former spouse, intimate partner, or dating partner. It clearly acknowledges women are often the victims of abuse and men are most often the perpetrators of abuse. While abuse most often occurs within an intimate heterosexual relationship, it also occurs within gay and lesbian relationships. Woman abuse may involve physical or sexual assault, emotional abuse and/or control of finances and access to family, friends and community. Woman abuse hurts, damages, humiliates, isolates, intimidates, traps and sometimes kills.

Why the term Woman Abuse?

Why use the term "woman abuse" rather than "domestic violence", "family violence", "intimate partner violence" or the many other terms that are often used interchangeably to describe the abusive situations that women experience? Abuse is a more inclusive term than 'violence'. Using the term "woman abuse" acknowledges that women's experience of violence is rooted in the social economic and political inequality of women. (See Social Context of Woman Abuse section). Using the term 'woman abuse' captures a wide spectrum of behaviours, including physical and sexual violence, and does not exclude the existence of other seriously abusive acts including control, intimidation, threats, and isolation. Abuse survivors relate that the non-physical forms of abuse can often be just as devastating as physical abuse.

The term 'woman abuse' acknowledges that women experience abuse at the hands of intimate partners in far greater numbers than men in our society. Women also experience more severe physical injury and trauma, emotional, social and economic impact as a result of the violence than men do. Statistics on the experiences of men indicate that their experiences are less severe and the impacts less devastating.

Women of different races, poor and older women, disabled and deaf women, lesbians, immigrant and refugee women, and geographically isolated women can be more vulnerable to abuse and they experience more barriers to seeking and receiving supportive services.

What does Woman Abuse Look Like?

Woman abuse can affect the physical, emotional, spiritual, sexual, and financial wellbeing of women. The impact on each of these areas will be different for every woman. You may not see any signs of abuse (i.e. physical injuries or marks), but that doesn't mean the warning signs aren't present.

Physical abuse

Physical abuse is the most commonly understood form of violence. It includes hitting, choking, pushing, punching, slapping, kicking, hair pulling, stabbing, or mutilation. All forms of physical violence are crimes under the *Criminal Code of Canada*.

The effects of physical abuse can include:

- Death
- Permanent disability (blindness, deafness, epilepsy, loss of mobility)
- Broken bones
- Head or spinal injuries
- Reproductive or gynecological problems
- Harm to unborn baby or birth defects
- Infertility
- Broken teeth, cuts, headaches, concussion
- Bruises, pain, trauma
- Isolation (hiding the injuries)

Emotional or Psychological Abuse

Emotional abuse (also referred to as psychological or verbal abuse) includes insults, humiliation, yelling, put-downs, threats, harming pets or damaging property.

The effects of emotional abuse can include:

- Feeling 'crazy' or insane
- Living in constant fear
- Feeling worthless/ useless
- Low self-esteem
- Feeling depressed
- Feeling out of control
- Mental illness
- Anxiety and worry
- Withdrawal from family and friends
- Eating and sleeping problems
- Post traumatic stress disorder
- Loss of energy, apathy
- Loss of community and culture
- Self-blame and self-harm

Spiritual Abuse

Spiritual abuse includes preventing the expression of spiritual or religious beliefs, preventing her from attending a place of worship, and putting down or making fun of religious beliefs, traditions or cultures.

The effects of spiritual abuse can include:

- Loss of sense of self
- Feelings of hopelessness and isolation
- Loss of culture
- Loss of connection to one's faith community

Understanding Woman Abuse

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse includes sexual exploitation, unwanted sexual touching, rape, and other sexual activities considered by the victim to be degrading, humiliating, painful, and carried out without consent, without the ability to consent, or against a person's will, obtained by force, or threat of force, or intimidation.

The effects of sexual abuse can include:

- Feelings of shame, guilt, or embarrassment
- Suicidal thoughts/tendencies
- Poor body image
- Low self-esteem
- Feeling depressed
- Inability to have healthy sexual relationships
- Reproductive and gynecological problems
- Sexual promiscuity
- Eating and sleeping disorders
- Unwanted pregnancy
- Loss of energy, apathy
- Post traumatic stress disorder
- Self-blame and self-harm

Social Context of Woman Abuse

Woman abuse exists as a result of complex, multifaceted factors, which include, but are not limited to:

1. Gender role stereotypes

Traditional stereotypes (about men and women) limit the choices we make in our daily lives. Gender role stereotypes often compel men to be tough and controlling, and women to be passive and obedient. Historically, men have held the majority of decision making power in society; while there have been some changes over the last 30 years regarding the gender roles of men and women, male-dominated power and control still exists within our society. Some examples include: women's under representation in political parties; women still shoulder the main responsibility for child care and unpaid work inside the home; women earn less income compared to men (70 cents for every dollar earned by their male counterpart) and fewer women occupy senior positions in business than men.

2. The socialization of girls and boys

The messages we receive as children stay with us as we become adults. Some kids grow up learning that men are supposed to be tough and controlling and women are supposed to be passive and obedient. These kinds of stereotypes are harmful because they teach a child that being male is more desirable and more valued than being female. When family, friends and others in the community expose children to gender stereotypes and sexist attitudes, children learn to act in ways that support gender inequalities.

3. Violence in the media

Media plays a considerable role in supporting gendered stereotypes for both men and women. When media messages portray harmful myths, restrictive roles for women and men, or sexist attitudes it normalizes women as powerless and supports woman abuse. This in turn serves as a model for what is considered acceptable behaviour in society.

4. Attitudes and behaviours leading to woman abuse

Societal attitudes and behaviours that privilege being male over being female still exist. For instance, male sports are better supported and better funded than female sports, the selection of male fetuses over female fetuses still exists as a practice, women's leadership roles are restricted in some faith organizations, family property is sometimes unequally allocated in estate division, e.g. farm being inherited by the male offspring, on reserves Aboriginal men maintain the property rights of the matrimonial home, when a family separates. Values that place more importance on men than women result in societal attitudes that condone woman abuse. These attitudes make it more acceptable to disrespect or harm women because they are viewed as less important and powerful than men.

Each of the factors described above contributes to inequality between women and men in our society and an uneven sharing of power.

Q: But women are equal now...aren't they?

A: Even though laws and social policies have changed in an effort to mitigate inequality between women and men, gender stereotyping persists generation after generation because of the messages we give children about how we value women and men. These messages are relayed through song lyrics, advertisements, movies, television, video games, and through the influential words of other adults around them.

Young boys and men often have more opportunities, power and privilege in academics, athletics, employment, the criminal justice system, and their intimate relationships. Some believe they are superior to women on all levels (i.e. intellectually, socially, financially, and parentally) and therefore have the right, or that their role justifies the use of abusive, dominating behaviour to gain and maintain their positions of authority and prestige. Oppression is sustained by the privilege associated with a preferred gender, race, religion, class, sexual orientation, age and physical ability.

In order to end woman abuse, all women must become equal to men and be valued and respected equally in society.

Understanding Woman Abuse

Q: Women are just as abusive as men, right?

A: While some men do experience violence within an intimate relationship, the vast majority of victims are women.

According to the Statistics Canada's 2006 *Family Violence in Canada: A Statistical Profile*:

- In 2004, there were nearly 28,000 incidents of spousal violence reported to the police: 84% of victims were female; 16% of victims were male. Women were more likely than men to report being targets of 10 or more violent spousal episodes (pg 11).
- Over a 10 year period, police reports showed males were much more likely than females to be the perpetrators of spousal violence incidents coming to the attention of police and more likely to repeatedly abuse their spouse (pg 13):
 - One time incidents - 86% male vs. 15% female
 - Repeated abuse incidents - 94% male vs. 6% female
 - Chronic abuse incidents - 97% male vs. 3% female
- Women were twice as likely to be injured as a result of spousal violence (pg 21).

Overall, women are more likely to be victims of more severe forms of violence than are men. *The Family Violence in Canada, A Statistical Profile, 2005*, Statistics Canada showed that women and men experienced very different types of spousal violence and that the impact of the violence is more serious for women than men (pg 13). For instance, the data showed that:

- Female victims of spousal violence were more than twice as likely to be injured as male victims.
- Women were three times more likely to fear for their life, and twice as likely to be the targets of more than 10 violent episodes.
- Women were three times more likely to take time off from their everyday activities because of the violence; and
- Women were sexually assaulted in intimate relationships, whereas men were not.
- Women who experienced violence during a relationship stated that the violence increased in severity or frequency after separation, whereas men did not experience this.

These data support the notion that spousal violence against women is often an issue of power and control; when the woman leaves the relationship, the man's control over his partner is threatened and as a result the violence escalates against the woman (pg 16).

The same report showed that for men the most serious violence they experienced was being slapped (34%) and being kicked, bit, hit or hit with something (34%).

A copy of these reports is available online at:

<http://www.statcan.ca/english/freepub/85-224-XIE/free.htm> (2005)

<http://www.statcan.ca/english/freepub/85-224-XIE/85-224-XIE2006000.pdf> (2006)

The Domestic Violence Death Review Committee Annual Report to the Chief Coroner, 2005 reported that, of the 100 cases they examined between 2002 to 2005, females were victims in 93% of the cases and males were victims in 7% of these cases. Males perpetrated the violence in 94% of cases, versus 6% for females. They state that "domestic violence fatalities are not gender-neutral events."

Q: How do women use violence?

A: Violence against anyone is unacceptable and should not be condoned whether it is instigated by men or women. An exception is when violence is used to protect one's self, one's children or pets. Furthermore, being with a partner who is dominating and controlling creates trauma for the victim or victims. Abused women may become aggressive and angry in response to the trauma they endure and this is a warning sign (for more signs see "Warning Signs of Abuse").

Research literature and women's advocates generally acknowledge that women's use of violence can be motivated by numerous circumstances including (but not limited to):

- Self-protection and/or protection of loved ones, such as children and pets (the most common reason for the use of violence)
- A reaction to being abused, dominated and controlled where she is not the dominate aggressor,
- The need to get away from the abuser, during separation or during an attack (this can also be a form of self-protection)
- The desire to control and dominate her partner (research shows that this is in five percent of cases^{1,2,3})

Most Ontarian's feel a personal responsibility for reducing woman abuse...and recognizing it is the first step. Take the warning signs seriously. Visit www.neighboursfriendsandfamilies.on.ca for further information or call the Assaulted Women's Helpline at 1-866-863-0511 or in an emergency the police.

1 Belknap and Melton's "In Brief: Are Heterosexual Men Also Victims of Intimate Partner Abuse?" Washington DC: Applies Research Forum, National Electronic Network on Violence Against Women, National Resource Center on Domestic Violence.

2 Miller and Meloy's "Women's Use of Force", Violence Against Women, Volume 12, Number 1, January 2006, pp.89-115.

3 Johnson and Leone's "The Differential Effects of Intimate Terrorism and Situational Couple Violence: Findings from the National Violence Against Women Survey." Journal of Family Issues, 26(3), 2005, pp. 322-349.

WARNING SIGNS OF ABUSE

1

He puts her down

2

He does all the talking and dominates the conversation

3

He checks up on her all the time, even at work

4

He tries to keep her away from you

5

She is apologetic and makes excuses for his behaviour or she becomes aggressive and angry

6

She is nervous talking when he's there

7

She seems to be sick more often and misses work

8

She tries to cover her bruises

9

She makes excuses at the last minute about why she can't meet you or she tries to avoid you on the street

10

She seems sad, lonely, withdrawn and is afraid

11

She uses more drugs or alcohol to cope



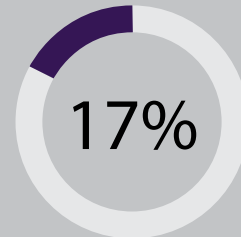
Make It Our Business

Domestic Violence

Is there a risk of death?

230

The number of domestic homicides in Ontario between 2002 and 2007 [1]

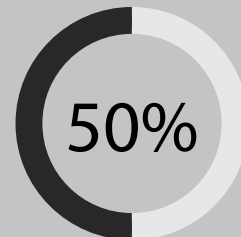


The number of domestic homicides that make up the number of solved homicides in Canada

47% of all family homicides [2]



Victims are most vulnerable and at risk for death when they have left or plan to leave the abuser [3]



The approximate number of women who did not recognize risk factors before they were killed or almost killed [4]

How Can I Leave an Abusive Relationship?

- Know the risk
- Don't let on about your plan or intentions to leave your abuser
 - Build a support network
 - Have a safety plan
- Create safety around the children
- Get a protection order, if necessary

Sources:

[1] Ontario Domestic Violence Death Review Committee. (2008). Annual report to the Chief Coroner. Toronto, ON: Office of the Chief Coroner.

[2] O'Grady, L. (2008). Family Violence in Canada: A Statistical Profile 2008. Ottawa: Statistics Canada

[3] Brownridge, D. (2006). Violence against women post-separation. Aggression and Violent Behavior, 11, 514-530.

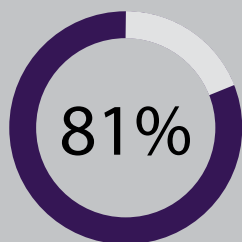
[4] Campbell, J.C. (2004). Helping women understand their risk in situations of intimate partner violence. Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 19, 1464-1477.



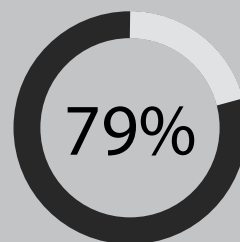
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Domestic Violence

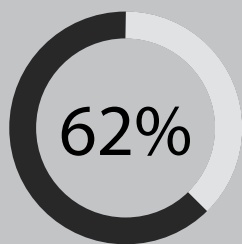
Common risk factors for domestic homicide



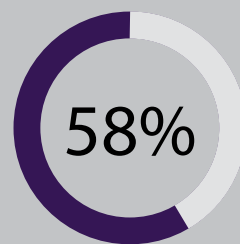
Couple was either separated or in the process of separating



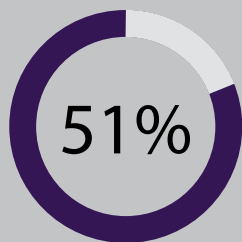
There was a prior history of domestic violence



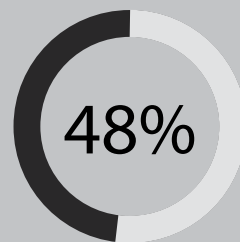
Obsessive behaviour displayed by perpetrator



Perpetrator depressed in the opinions of professionals (e.g., physician, counsellor) and/or non-professionals (e.g., family, friends, etc)



There is an escalation of violence



Perpetrator has made prior threats to kill victim

Did you know?...

Abuse comes in many forms: physical, sexual, emotional/verbal, financial



67% of Canadians know at least one woman who has experienced physical or sexual abuse



Every 6 days, a woman in Canada is killed by her intimate partner



80% of police-reported victims are women



Aboriginal women are killed at a rate of six times higher than non-Indigenous women



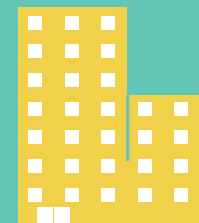
The rate of domestic violence is likely much higher: 70% is not reported



DV rates often increase following natural disasters i.e. 2016 Fort McMurray wildfires, 2013 Calgary flood, 2009 & 2011 Manitoba floods



Girls are 1.5 times more likely to experience abuse in the home than boys



DV often carries over into the workplace, threatening women's ability to maintain economic independence.

Angus Reid Omnibus Survey, Canadian Women's Foundation, 2012. Available at: <http://www.canadianwomen.org/sixtysevenpercent>

Homicide in Canada, 2014, Statistics Canada, Table 6. In 2014, 67 women were killed by their intimate partners; this number divided by 365 days in the year comes out to 5.4. Available: <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/85-002-x/2015001/article/14244/tbl/tbl06-eng.htm>

Homicide in Canada, 2014, Statistics Canada, p.14. Available at: <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/85-002-x/2015001/article/14244-eng.pdf>

The Hidden Disaster: Domestic Violence in the Aftermath of Natural Disaster, Deborah Parkinson and Claire Zara, 2013. Available at: <https://ajem.infoservices.com.au/items/AJEM-28-02-09>

Homicide in Canada, 2014, Statistics Canada. Available at: <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/85-002-x/2015001/article/14244-eng.htm#a9>

Domestic Violence at Work, Canadian Labour Congress, 2015. Available: <http://canadianlabour.ca/issues-research/domestic-violence-work/report>



Make It Our Business

SEE IT – NAME IT – CHECK IT

It is difficult to have a conversation when we know or suspect someone may be experiencing abuse. “See it, Name it, Check it” provides a framework for these difficult conversations.

SEE-IT:

- See warning signs or risk factors of abuse
- See the Make It Our Business website www.makeitourbusiness.com/warning-signs/warning-signs-for-the-workplace for a list of warning signs and risk factors

NAME-IT:

- Start with naming it to yourself "it looks like abuse"
- Don't ignore or deny the possibility that it may be abuse
- Name it to the person you are concerned about. i.e.: "I'm concerned about you. You have been wearing sunglasses all week, and you are working late every day."
- Don't gossip!

CHECK-IT

- Check the situation; is it dangerous? If so, call 911
- Check yourself; don't judge, don't jump to conclusions, don't try to fix it – ask questions
- Check with a with the internal resources in your workplace – a Human Resources Manager, your union steward, your health and safety expert, your supervisor
- Check with community experts, your local women's shelter, or the Domestic Violence Coordinator of your local police service



Make It Our Business

Domestic violence is not a private matter:
We all have a role to play

WARNING SIGNS FOR THE WORKPLACE

RECOGNIZE that a colleague may be involved in an abusive relationship. See the indications of abuse. Here are some warning signs to look for:

- Change in job performance: poor concentration, errors, slowness, inconsistent work quality.
- An unusual number of phone calls/text messages, strong reactions to those calls/text messages, and/or a reluctance to converse or respond to phone/text messages.
- Co-workers receive insensitive or insulting messages intended for the colleague experiencing abuse.
- Disruptive personal visits to workplace by present or former partner or spouse.
- Questions about whereabouts, company and activities from a spouse or former spouse.
- Absenteeism or lateness for work.
- Requests for special accommodations such as requests to leave early or to change schedules.
- Reluctance to leave work.
- Obvious injuries such as bruises, black eyes, broken bones, hearing loss — these are often attributed to “falls,” “being clumsy,” or “accidents.”
- Clothing that is inappropriate for the season, such as long sleeves and turtlenecks — also wearing sunglasses and unusually heavy makeup.
- Minimization or denial of harassment or injuries.
- Isolation; unusually quiet and keeping away from others.
- Emotional distress or flatness, tearfulness, depression, or suicidal thoughts.
- Signs of anxiety and fear.
- Sensitivity about home life or hints of trouble at home — comments may include references to bad moods, anger, temper, and alcohol or drug abuse.
- Fear of job loss.
- Lack of access to money.

What are the warning signs of abusive behaviour?

Someone who is behaving abusively at home may be “invisible” as an abuser at work. Perhaps they are an excellent worker, manager, professional and do not reveal overtly violent behaviour in the work environment. Or they may display signs of an abusive temperament:

- Is absent or late related to conflict at home
- Calls or contacts their partner repeatedly during work
- Bullies others at work
- Blames others for problems, especially their partner
- Denies problems
- Can't take criticism and often acts defensively when challenged
- Acts like they are superior and of more value than others in their home
- Controls their partner or ex-partner's activities

Common risk factors for lethal violence

The Domestic Violence Death Review Committee (DVDRC) is a multi-disciplinary advisory committee of experts that was established in the province of Ontario in 2003 to assist the Office of the Chief Coroner with the investigation and review of deaths involving domestic violence with a view to making recommendations aimed at preventing deaths in similar circumstances and reducing domestic violence in general. The DVDRC has identified the following as the top risk factors for domestic homicide cases it has reviewed. In 80% of cases seven or more risk factors were identified.

- 74%** History of domestic violence
- 72%** Actual or pending separation
- 56%** Obsessive behaviour displayed by perpetrator
- 56%** Perpetrator depressed
- 51%** Prior threats/attempts to commit suicide
- 47%** Escalation of violence
- 45%** Victim had intuitive sense of fear
- 43%** Prior threats to kill victim
- 40%** Perpetrator unemployed
- 40%** Prior attempts to isolate victim



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PRIMARY, SECONDARY AND VICTIM-FOCUSED DOMESTIC VIOLENCE RISK FACTORS

Primary risk factors refer to violence or intimidation that is recent or escalating. They indicate that the perpetrator is already engaged in violence or is thinking about it. Primary risk factors encompass the following:

- Violent thoughts (images, fantasies, urges)
- Violent threats (may be vague such as If I can't have her nobody can; or explicit such as I'm going to kill her)
- Violent acts (actual or attempted physical or sexual harm)
- A pattern of fear inducing behaviour such as stalking or ongoing intimidation

Secondary risk factors are circumstances or conditions related to the individual or the relationship that may contribute to increased risk and violent or abusive behaviour.

Victim-focused risk factors are related to the victim/survivor's vulnerability and include her innate sense of danger and the complex network of needs, problems and social circumstances she faces. These factors can contribute to elevated risk for victims who already experience vulnerabilities. Although the factor "extreme fear of perpetrator," does not meet the criteria of a primary risk factor, is particularly important to pay attention to and should carry the same weight as a primary risk factor.

Primary Risk Factors (escalating or recent)	Secondary Risk Factors	Victim Focused Risk Factors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - History of domestic violence - Physical violence including hitting, punching, slapping, choking - Sexual violence including forced sexual acts and/or assaults during sex - Threats to kill victim - Threats or assault with a weapon - Threats or attempts to commit suicide by perpetrator - Threats to harm children - Hostage-taking and/or forcible confinement - Destruction or deprivation of victim's property - Violence against family pets - Assault on victim while pregnant - Violence outside of the family by perpetrator - Stalking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Actual or pending separation - Perpetrator was abused and/or witnessed domestic violence as a child - Perpetrator fails to comply with authority - Child custody or access disputes - Perpetrator unemployed or underemployed - Excessive alcohol and/or drug use by perpetrator - Perpetrator depressed in the opinion of family/friend or professionally diagnosed - Perpetrator experiences other mental health or psychiatric problems - New partner in victim's life - Access to or possession of any firearms - Sexual jealousy (perpetrator) - Sexist attitudes (perpetrator) - Significant perpetrator life changes - Suicidal behaviour in family of origin - Controls most or all of victim's daily activities - Attempts to isolate victim 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Extreme fear of perpetrator - Inconsistent attitude or behaviour (i.e. ambivalence) - Inadequate support or resources - Unsafe living situation - Health problems - Mental health issues - Addictions (alcohol/drug abuse) - Disability - Language and/or cultural barriers (e.g., new immigrant or isolated cultural community) - Economic dependence - Living in rural or remote locations - Fear or distrust of legal authorities - Lack of awareness or distrust of mainstream services - Pregnancy

Some risk factors may be dynamic in nature meaning that they can change over time (eg., perpetrator's mental health, substance abuse, employment). Changes in dynamic risk factors can elevate or decrease the level of risk.



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Neighbours, Friends and Families

How You can Identify and Help Women at Risk of Abuse

Are you concerned about someone you think is being abused, but don't know what to do? This brochure describes the warning signs and the steps you can take to help.

Neighbours, Friends and Families is a campaign to raise awareness of the signs of woman abuse so that people who are close to an at-risk woman or an abusive man can help.

Everyone in the community has a role to play in helping to prevent woman abuse. You can reach out to organizations in your community that support abused women and those that can help abusers.

This campaign is a partnership between the Ontario government, Ontario Women's Directorate and the Expert Panel on Neighbours, Friends and Families, through the Centre for Research and Education on Violence Against Women and Children.



Neighbours, Friends & Families

Warning Signs of Abuse

You may suspect abuse is happening to a neighbour, friend or family member, but do not know what to do or how to talk about it. You may worry about making the situation worse, or be concerned about what to do. By understanding the warning signs and risk factors of woman abuse, you can help.

If you recognize some of these warning signs, it may be time to take action:

He puts her down
He does all the talking and dominates the conversation
He checks up on her all the time, even at work
He tries to suggest he is the victim and acts depressed
He tries to keep her away from you
He acts as if he owns her
He lies to make himself look good or exaggerates his good qualities
He acts like he is superior and of more value than others in his home

She is apologetic and makes excuses for his behaviour or she becomes aggressive and angry
She is nervous talking when he's there
She seems to be sick more often and misses work
She tries to cover her bruises
She makes excuses at the last minute about why she can't meet you or she tries to avoid you on the street
She seems sad, lonely, withdrawn and is afraid
She uses more drugs or alcohol to cope

(While most abuse occurs in intimate heterosexual relationships, it can occur in gay and lesbian relationships as well. The suggestions in this brochure are equally applicable.)

Signs of High Risk

The danger may be greater if:

He has access to her and her children
He has access to weapons
He has a history of abuse with her or others
He has threatened to harm or kill her if she leaves him: He says "If I can't have you, no one will."
He threatens to harm her children, her pets or her property
He has threatened to kill himself
He has hit her, choked her
He is going through major life changes (e.g. job, separation, depression)
He is convinced she is seeing someone else

She has just separated or is planning to leave
She fears for her life and for her children's safety **or** she cannot see her risk
She is in a custody battle, or has children from a previous relationship
She is involved in another relationship

Ways to Support Her

He blames her for ruining his life
He doesn't seek support
He watches her actions, listens to her telephone conversations, reads her emails and follows her
He has trouble keeping a job
He takes drugs or drinks every day
He has no respect for the law

She has unexplained injuries
She has no access to a phone
She faces other obstacles (e.g. she does not speak English, is not yet a legal resident of Canada, lives in a remote area)
She has no friends or family

Statistics indicate that women who are under 25 years of age, women with a disability, Aboriginal women and women living common-law are at higher risk of abuse. (Statistics Canada: Family Violence in Canada. A Statistical Profile 2005)

Here are some of the ways you can help when you recognize the warning signs of abuse:

- Talk to her about what you see and assure her that you are concerned. Tell her you believe her and that it is not her fault.
- Encourage her not to confront her partner if she is planning to leave. Her safety must be protected.
- Offer to provide childcare while she seeks help.
- Offer your home as a safe haven to her, her children and pets. If she accepts your offer, do not let her partner in.
- Encourage her to pack a small bag with important items and keep it stored at your home in case she needs it.
- Know that you or she can call the Assaulted Women's Helpline, your local shelter, or, in an emergency, the police.

If she denies the abuse:

- Assure her she can talk to you any time.
- Don't become angry or frustrated with her decisions. It is important to understand that she may be afraid or not ready to take the next steps.
- Try to understand why she might be having difficulty getting help. She may feel ashamed.
- Offer to go with her if she needs additional information or support.
- If she has children, let her know gently that you are concerned about her and her children's safety and emotional well-being. She may be more willing to recognize her situation if she recognizes her children may also be in danger.

Here are some concerns you may have about whether you should help:

Points of Concern	Points to Consider
You feel it's none of your business	It could be a matter of life or death. Violence is everyone's business
You don't know what to say	Saying you care and are concerned is a good start
You might make things worse	Doing nothing could make things worse
It's not serious enough to involve the police	Police are trained to respond and utilize other resources
You are afraid his violence will turn to you or your family	Speak to her alone. Let the police know if you receive threats

Information

Points of Concern

Points to Consider

You think she doesn't really want to leave because she keeps coming back

She may not have had the support she needed

You are afraid she will become angry with you

Maybe, but she will know you care

You feel that both partners are your friends

One friend is being abused and lives in fear

You believe that if she wanted help, she would ask for help

She may be too afraid and ashamed to ask for help

You think it is a private matter

It isn't when someone is being hurt

Always keep yourself safe. Don't get in the middle of an assault. Call the police in an emergency. Everyone can work to prevent woman abuse.

The Assaulted Women's Helpline at **1-866-863-0511** offers a 24-hour telephone and TTY **1-866-863-7868** crisis line for abused women in Ontario. The service is anonymous and confidential and is provided in up to 154 languages.

Helpline staff can support you in helping the abused woman or abusive man. They will discuss the warning signs of abuse you have seen and give you practical advice on ways to help.

For more information about the services of the Assaulted Women's Helpline visit: www.awhl.org
In an emergency, call your local police service.

Most Ontarians feel a personal responsibility for reducing woman abuse. Recognizing it is the first step. Take the warning signs seriously. For further information visit:
www.neighboursfriendsandfamilies.on.ca

**To talk to someone who can help
in Nova Scotia call:
1-855-225-0220**

**To find a transition house in
Nova Scotia and for more
resources visit www.thans.ca.**

March 2008

Disponible en français

Neighbours, Friends and Families

Safety Planning for Women Who are Abused

Are you experiencing abuse by your partner, but aren't sure how to protect yourself or how to leave?

The person who gave you this brochure is concerned about your safety and may have noticed some possible warning signs of abuse. They want you to know they support you and that, although you cannot control your partner's violence, you may be able to increase your own safety and that of your children.

This brochure describes the actions you can take to protect your safety and the safety of your children, and describes how you can develop a plan to leave.

Neighbours, Friends and Families is a campaign to raise awareness of the signs of woman abuse so that people who are at risk have access to the support they need.

Everyone in the community has a role to play in helping to prevent woman abuse. You can reach out to organizations in your community to support you.

This campaign is a partnership between the Ontario government, Ontario Women's Directorate and the Expert Panel on Neighbours, Friends and Families, through the Centre for Research and Education on Violence Against Women and Children.



Neighbours, Friends & Families

Developing a Safety Plan

Safety planning is a top priority, whether you choose to remain in the home or leave. Making a safety plan involves identifying actions to increase your safety and that of your children.

Below are some suggestions that might be helpful to you. Take one action at a time and start with the one that is easiest and safest for you.

Protecting yourself while living with an abuser:

- Tell someone you trust about the abuse.
- Think about your partner's past use and level of force. This will help you predict what type of danger you and your children are facing and when to leave.
- Tell your children that abuse is never right, even when someone they love is being abusive. Tell them the abuse isn't your fault or their fault; they did not cause it, and neither did you. Teach them it is important to keep safe when there is abuse.
- Plan where to go in an emergency. Teach your children how to get help. Tell them not to get between you and your partner if there is violence. Plan a code word to signal they should get help or leave.
- Don't run to a place where the children are, as your partner may hurt them as well.
- Create a plan to get out of your home safely and practise it with your children.
- Ask your neighbours, friends and family to call the police if they hear sounds of abuse and to look after your children in an emergency.
- If an argument is developing, move to a space where you can get outside easily. Don't go to a room where there is access to potential weapons (e.g. kitchen, workshop, bathroom).
- If you are being hurt, protect your face with your arms around each side of your head, with your fingers locked together. Don't wear scarves or long jewellery.
- Park your car by backing it into the driveway and keep it fuelled.
- Hide your keys, cell phone and some money near your escape route.
- Have a list of phone numbers to call for help. Call the police if it is an emergency. Your local shelter or police may be able to equip you with a panic button/cell phone.
- Make sure all weapons and ammunition are hidden or removed from your home.

Getting Ready to Leave

When you are planning to leave, here are some suggestions:

- Contact the police or a local women's shelter. Let the staff know that you intend to leave an abusive situation and ask for support in safety planning. Ask for an officer who specializes in woman abuse cases (information shared with the police may result in charges being laid against the abuser).
- If you are injured, go to a doctor or an emergency room and report what happened to you. Ask them to document your visit.
- Gather important documents: identification, bank cards, financial papers related to family assets, last Canada Income Tax Return, keys, medication, pictures of the abuser and your children, passports, health cards, personal address/telephone book, cell phone, and legal documents (e.g. immigration papers, house deed/lease, restraining orders/peace bonds).

Getting Ready to Leave

- If you can't keep these things stored in your home for fear your partner will find them, consider making copies and leave them with someone you trust. Your local women's shelter will also keep them for you.
- Consult a lawyer. Keep any evidence of physical abuse (such as photos). Keep a journal of all violent incidents, noting dates, events, threats and any witnesses.
- Put together pictures, jewellery and objects of sentimental value, as well as toys and comforts for your children.
- Arrange with someone to care for your pets temporarily, until you get settled. A shelter may help with this.
- Remember to clear your phone of the last number you called to avoid his utilizing redial.

Leaving the Abuser

Here are some suggestions for your personal safety when you leave:

- Request a police escort or ask a friend, neighbour or family member to accompany you when you leave.
- Contact your local women's shelter. It may be a safer temporary spot than going to a place your partner knows.
- Do not tell your partner you are leaving. Leave quickly.
- Have a back-up plan if your partner finds out where you are going.

After Leaving

Here are some actions you should take after you or your partner has left the relationship:

- Visit the closest police station and ask to speak to an officer who specializes in woman abuse cases.
- Consider applying for a restraining order or peace bond that may help keep your partner away from you and your children. Keep it with you at all times.
- Provide police with a copy of any legal orders you have.
- Consult a lawyer or legal aid clinic about actions to protect yourself or your children. Let your lawyer know if there are any Criminal Court proceedings.
- Consider changing any service provider that you share with your ex-partner.
- Obtain an unlisted telephone number, get caller ID and block your number when calling out.
- Make sure your children's school or day care centre is aware of the situation and has copies of all relevant documents.

- Carry a photo of the abuser and your children with you.
- Ask your neighbours to look after your children in an emergency and to call the police if they see the abuser.
- Take extra precautions at work, at home and in the community. Consider telling your supervisor at work about your situation.
- Think about places and patterns that your ex-partner will know about and try to change them. For example, consider using a different grocery store or place of worship.
- If you feel unsafe walking alone, ask a neighbour, friend or family member to accompany you.
- Do not return to your home unless accompanied by the police. Never confront the abuser.

The Assaulted Women's Helpline at **1-866-863-0511** offers a 24-hour telephone and TTY **1-866-863-7868** crisis line for abused women in Ontario. The service is anonymous and confidential and the toll-free number won't show up on your phone bill. Services can be provided in up to 154 languages.

Helpline staff can support you in doing additional safety planning, finding space for you in a local women's shelter, or connecting you with other services in your community.

For more information about the services of the Assaulted Women's Helpline visit: **www.awhl.org**
If you are concerned about your immediate safety, call the police.

*Most Ontarians feel a personal responsibility for reducing woman abuse...and recognizing it is the first step. Take the warning signs seriously. For further information visit: **www.neighboursfriendsandfamilies.on.ca***

To talk to someone who can help in Nova Scotia, call: 1-855-225-0220.

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June 2006

Disponible en français



Western
Education

Centre for Research & Education
on Violence Against Women & Children

Recognize and respond to domestic violence in your workplace



Make It Our Business

Domestic Violence is not a private matter.
We all have a role to play.



Western
Education

Centre for Research & Education
on Violence Against Women & Children



Problems at home can come to work



Make It Our Business

Domestic Violence is not a private matter.
We all have a role to play.

HEY, HOW
WAS YOUR
WEEKEND?

CAN YOU SEE
MY BRUISES?

TRY NOT
TO CRY.

I'M SO
TIRED.

DO YOU ALREADY
KNOW WHAT'S
GOING ON?

FINE. YOURS?

CAN
WORK
BE SAFE,
WHEN
HOME ISN'T?

Unions work to keep people safe on the job,
and this includes ensuring that victims of domestic
violence are safe and supported at work.

Learn more at www.domesticviolenceatwork.ca



Canadian Labour Congress
Congrès du travail du Canada

Everyone deserves to feel safe and supported at work.

Domestic violence doesn't just happen at home—it follows people to work, with over 53% reporting having experienced abusive calls or text messages, stalking, or calls to employers or co-workers. Over 80% said the violence affected their work performance. It can leave victims distracted, tired or unwell, which puts jobs at risk and compromises workplace safety.

One in three Canadian workers has experienced domestic violence, and just as many believe they have co-workers who have.

“I WAS TIRED AND DISTRACTED YET WORK WAS A PLACE WHERE I FELT SAFE”

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IS A UNION CONCERN

HEY, HOW WAS YOUR NIGHT?

LATE AGAIN?

IS EVERYTHING OKAY?

SHE SEEMS SO DISTRACTED.

I WISH I COULD HELP HER.

HEY, HOW WAS YOUR WEEKEND?

CAN YOU SEE MY BRUISES?

I'M SO TIRED.

TRY NOT TO CRY.

DO YOU ALREADY KNOW WHAT'S GOING ON?

FINE. YOURS?

CAN WORK BE SAFE, WHEN HOME ISN'T?

- Build awareness in your workplace about domestic violence
- Be there for workers who need support
- Refer members to services in the workplace and community
- Hold employers accountable for their obligations under health and safety legislation
- Negotiate workplace supports, like paid time off for victims, peer support programs like women's advocates, employee assistance programs and safety planning
- Advocate for better legislation on domestic violence at work and violence against women, improved community supports and services for victims and offenders, affordable housing, child care, and pay equity to support women in leaving violent relationships

WHAT CAN UNIONS DO?

- Recognize the warning signs and understand when a situation might be high risk
 - Break the silence and the stigma. Overcome your hesitation to help
 - Open the door for support and listen without judgement
 - Learn where to get support in your workplace and community
- For more tips and information on domestic violence at work, visit the CLC's resource centre at domesticviolenceatwork.ca

WHAT CAN CO-WORKERS DO?

IT WAS OK, YOURS?

WHAT IS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE?

Domestic violence is a pattern of behaviour used by one person to gain power and control over another person with whom they have or have had an intimate relationship. It can include physical, emotional, sexual, financial, psychological and/ or spiritual abuse as well as stalking or harassment.

It exists in same sex and opposite sex relationships and may be between people who are married, divorced, common law, separated or dating. Domestic violence happens in all cultures and religions, in all ethnic and racial communities, at every age, and in every income group.

Although both men and women experience domestic violence, victims of high-risk cases with the most serious injuries are women. Women with disabilities, racialized women, young women, Indigenous women, LGBTQ women, immigrant women and women in rural communities face greater risk of serious injury or death, and extra barriers to support and healing.

CAN WORK BE SAFE WHEN HOME ISN'T?

The Canadian Labour Congress and Western University's Centre for Research and Education on Violence against Women and Children conducted a groundbreaking Canada-wide survey of workers on the impact of Domestic Violence on Workers and Workplaces.

The results were clear: many workers experience domestic violence, and violence at home can put all workers at risk.

To learn more about the CLC's Domestic Violence at Work initiative, visit domesticviolenceatwork.ca

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