



DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Victim Support

MAURITIUS

We help people affected by crime




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UNDERSTANDING CRIME PREVENTION

Une personne avertie en vaut Deux

Victims' Rights

“Victim Support Mauritius exists to advance the interests of people affected by crime and encourage the development mechanisms of support services throughout Mauritius and Rodrigues, whilst motivated towards a crime free society.”

“Suspects are innocent until proven guilty by a court of justice whereas victims are guilty until proven victim by the same court of justice.”

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History

- To fully understand the roots of domestic violence in our society, it is helpful to review some historical points. Unfortunately, the abuse of women has been a part of many cultures for many generations.
- British common law once allowed a man to “chastise” his wife with “any reasonable instrument.”
- In the United States, throughout the 1800s, state laws and cultural practices continued to support a man's right to discipline his wife. In fact, it wasn't until 1895 that a woman could even divorce her husband on grounds of abuse.
- In 1994, the Violence Against Women Act was adopted. This act encouraged research into domestic abuse and generated the legal and financial support for law enforcement and social services to protect battered women.

Domestic Violence Introduction

- Domestic violence is a well-known and often-used term. Although it may describe various violent relationships, such as child abuse, elder abuse, or abuse within a same-sex relationship, it is most commonly applied to an intimate relationship between a man and a woman in which one partner (usually male) uses a pattern of assault and intimidating acts to assert power and control over the other partner (usually female).
- Only recently recognized as a major woman's health issue, domestic violence has a long, dark past and is firmly entrenched in many societies.
- Although domestic violence usually includes violent attacks, it is not limited to physical acts of violence, but may include psychological, economic, and sexual abuse as well as attempts to isolate the partner.

What Is Domestic Violence?

- Domestic violence is most often a relationship between a man and a woman in which the male partner seeks to assert power and control over the female partner. Recently, more same-sex partners are now affected and, rarely, women abuse men. The abuser may use many different types of abuse to assert this power, and the overall framework in which the abuse occurs may follow a pattern called the cycle of violence.

TYPE OF ABUSES

- Physical abuse (domestic violence)
- Verbal or nonverbal abuse (psychological abuse, mental abuse, emotional abuse)
- Sexual abuse
- Stalking or cyberstalking
- Economic abuse or financial abuse
- Spiritual abuse

Physical abuse includes:

- Pushing, throwing, kicking
- Slapping, grabbing, hitting, punching, beating, tripping, battering, bruising, choking, shaking
- Pinching, biting
- Holding, restraining, confinement
- Breaking bones
- Assault with a weapon such as a knife or gun
- Burning
- Murder

What is emotional abuse or verbal abuse of a spouse?

- Mental, psychological, or emotional abuse can be verbal or nonverbal. Verbal or nonverbal abuse of a spouse or intimate partner consists of more subtle actions or behaviors than physical abuse. While physical abuse might seem worse, the scars of verbal and emotional abuse are deep. Studies show that verbal or nonverbal abuse can be much more emotionally damaging than physical abuse.

What is sexual abuse or sexual exploitation of a spouse?

Sexual abuse includes:

- sexual assault: forcing someone to participate in unwanted, unsafe, or degrading sexual activity
- sexual harassment: ridiculing another person to try to limit their sexuality or reproductive choices
- sexual exploitation (such as forcing someone to look at pornography, or forcing someone to participate in pornographic film-making)
- Marital rape, sodomy, incest etc.

What is stalking?

- Stalking is harassment of or threatening another person, especially in a way that haunts the person physically or emotionally in a repetitive and devious manner. Stalking of an intimate partner can take place *during* the relationship, with intense monitoring of the partner's activities. Or stalking can take place *after* a partner or spouse has left the relationship. The stalker may be trying to get their partner back, or they may wish to harm their partner as punishment for their departure. Regardless of the fine details, the victim fears for their safety.
- Stalking can take place at or near the victim's home, near or in their workplace, on the way to the store or another destination, or on the Internet (cyberstalking). Stalking can be on the phone, in person, or online. Stalkers may never show their face, or they may be everywhere, in person.

What is cyberstalking?

- Cyberstalking is the use of telecommunication technologies such as the Internet, mobile or email to stalk another person. Cyberstalking may be an additional form of stalking, or it may be the only method the abuser employs. Cyberstalking is deliberate, persistent, and personal.

How likely it is that stalking will turn into violence?

- Stalking can end in violence whether or not the stalker threatens violence. And stalking can turn into violence even if the stalker has no history of violence.
- Women stalkers are just as likely to become violent as are male stalkers.
- Those around the stalking victim are also in danger of being hurt. For instance, a parent, spouse, or bodyguard who makes the stalking victim unattainable may be hurt or killed as the stalker pursues the stalking victim.

What is economic or financial abuse of a spouse?

- Economic or financial abuse includes:
- withholding economic resources such as money or credit cards
- stealing from or defrauding a partner of money or assets
- exploiting the intimate partner's resources for personal gain
- withholding physical resources such as food, clothes, necessary medications, or shelter from a partner
- preventing the spouse or intimate partner from working or choosing an occupation

What is spiritual abuse of a spouse?

Spiritual abuse includes:

- using the spouse's or intimate partner's religious or spiritual beliefs to manipulate them
- preventing the partner from practicing their religious or spiritual beliefs
- ridiculing the other person's religious or spiritual beliefs
- forcing the children to be reared in a faith that the partner has not agreed to

What are the causes of domestic abuse or domestic violence?

- A strong predictor of domestic violence in adulthood is domestic violence in the household in which the person was reared. For instance, a child's exposure to their father's abuse of their mother is the strongest risk factor for transmitting domestic violence from one generation to the next. This cycle of domestic violence is difficult to break because parents have presented violence as the norm.
- Individuals living with domestic violence in their households have learned that violence and mistreatment are the way to vent anger. Someone resorts to physical violence because
 - They have solved their problems in the past with violence,
 - They have effectively exerted control and power over others through violence, and
 - No one has stopped them from being violent in the past.

How does society perpetuate domestic abuse?

- Society contributes to domestic violence by not taking it seriously enough and by treating it as expected, normal, or deserved. Specifically, society perpetuates domestic abuse in the following ways.
- Police may not treat domestic abuse as a crime, but, rather, as a “domestic dispute”
- Courts may not award severe consequences, such as imprisonment or economic sanctions
- A community usually doesn’t banish domestic abusers
- Clergy or counselors may have the attitude that the relationship needs to be improved and that the relationship can work, given more time and effort
- People may have the attitude that the abuse is the fault of the victim, or that the abuse is a normal part of marriage or domestic partnerships
- Gender-role socialization and stereotypes ignore abusive behaviour by men

Who abuses their spouse or intimate partner?

- Domestic abuse knows no age or ethnic boundaries.
- Domestic abuse can occur during a relationship or after a relationship has ended.
- Most psychological, medical, and legal experts agree that the vast majority of physical abusers are men. However, women can also be the perpetrators of domestic violence.
- The majority of stalkers are also men stalking women. But stalkers can also be women stalking men, men stalking men, or women stalking women.

What are the results of domestic violence or abuse?

- The results of domestic violence or abuse can be very long-lasting. People who are abused by a spouse or intimate partner may develop:
 - sleeping problems
 - depression
 - anxiety attacks
 - low self-esteem
 - lack of trust in others
 - feelings of abandonment
 - anger
 - sensitivity to rejection
 - diminished mental and physical health

What is the effect of domestic violence on children?

- Children who witness domestic violence may develop serious emotional, behavioural, developmental, or academic problems. As children, they may become violent themselves, or withdraw. Some act out at home or school; others try to be the perfect child. Children from violent homes may become depressed and have low self-esteem.
- As they develop, children and teens who grow up with domestic violence in the household are
 - more likely to use violence at school or in the community in response to perceived threats
 - more likely to attempt suicide
 - more likely to use drugs
 - more likely to commit crimes, especially sexual assault
 - more likely to use violence to enhance their reputation and self-esteem
 - more likely to become abusers in their own relationships later in life

Take this quiz to assess your relationship

Has your partner ever...

- Destroyed your property (photos, jewelry, furniture)?
- Used or threatened use of a weapon?
- Called you stupid, crazy, worthless, etc.?
- Accused you of infidelity?
- Prevented you from seeing or talking to friends or relatives?
- Told you that violence is your fault or is caused by your actions?
- Threaten suicide?
- Forced you to perform any sexual act against your will?

If you answered yes to two or more of these questions, you may ---be in danger of becoming, or have already become, a victim of domestic violence. You may want to believe that your partner really isn't to blame and that your problems will go away on their own, but this isn't true.

Domestic Violence Signs and Symptoms

- Domestic violence may lead to both physical and psychological signs and symptoms in the woman. Women may have obvious physical signs of traumatic injury, but they may also complain of non injury signs and symptoms, such as chronic abdominal pain, that may seem unrelated to an abusive relationship. Family and friends, even coworkers, may see the following signs and symptoms. You may recognize some of them if you are a survivor of domestic violence. These are also signs that doctors look for in assessing potential victims of domestic abuse.

In my workplace, what are the warning signs that a person is a victim of domestic violence?

- Domestic violence often plays out in the workplace. For instance, a husband, wife, girlfriend, or boyfriend might make threatening phone calls to their intimate partner or ex-partner. Or the worker may show injuries from physical abuse at home.
- If you witness a cluster of the following warning signs in the workplace, you can reasonably suspect domestic abuse:
 - Bruises and other signs of impact on the skin, with the excuse of “accidents”
 - Depression, crying
 - Frequent and sudden absences
 - Frequent lateness
 - Frequent, harassing phone calls to the person while they are at work

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Risk Factors For Domestic Violence

- A number of studies have looked into identifying women most at risk for domestic violence. The most common feature is an imbalance of power and control. However, neither women who experience domestic violence nor the partners who abuse them fall into distinct categories. They can be of any age, ethnicity, income level, or level of education. Following are examples of situations that are common among women who experience domestic violence. It is important to understand that any woman can be abused.

Women at risk

- Planning to leave or has recently left an abusive relationship
- Previously in an abusive relationship
- Poverty or poor living situations
- Unemployed
- Physical or mental disability
- Recently separated or divorced
- Isolated socially from family and friends
- Abused as a child
- Pregnancy, especially if unplanned
- Younger than 30 years
- Stalked by partner

A Personalized Safety Plan

- If an acute episode of domestic violence occurs in the home, first assess your immediate safety.
- The question of when to obtain immediate assistance from the local law enforcement agency must be based on your belief that there is risk of bodily injury or death.
- If you believe that you or others in the home are in immediate danger, call 999 – 208 0034/5 or 670 4815
- If possible you should attempt to do this without the abuser's knowledge, because this could lead to an escalation of the violence.
- If you are currently in an abusive relationship, make plans to ensure both you and your children's safety in the event of recurrent or escalating violence.

Safety plan if abuser currently lives with you

- If possible, avoid arguments in small rooms, rooms without easily accessible exits, or in rooms with access to weapons (such as the kitchen).
- Avoid the use of alcohol and other mind-altering substances because they may impair the your ability to protect yourself and your children.
- Plan which doors and windows may provide quick exit routes if immediate escape is necessary. Also, plan a meeting place outside of the home.
- If possible, tell a reliable friend or neighbor to notify law enforcement if they hear anything suspicious coming from your home or over the telephone.

Safety plan if abuser does not live in your home

- Change door and window locks.
- If possible, install safety devices (extra locks, window bars, outdoor lights, motion detectors, security system).
- Change phone number
- Inform neighbours or a closed one
- Inform nearest police station

Cycle of violence

- Cycle of violence: Violent events may occur in a variety of patterns—the woman may experience ongoing, nonstop abuse, or the abuse may stop and start. One pattern of abuse often seen in a violent relationship begins with a tension-building phase, followed by the actual abusive act, and then a calm, making-up phase often called the honeymoon phase.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

- **Phase 1: Tension Building**

This phase is composed of many minor incidents of abuse, including jealousy, tantrums, controlling behaviors, verbal abuse, threats of violence, etc., that gradually increase in severity.

- **Phase 2: Violent Incident**

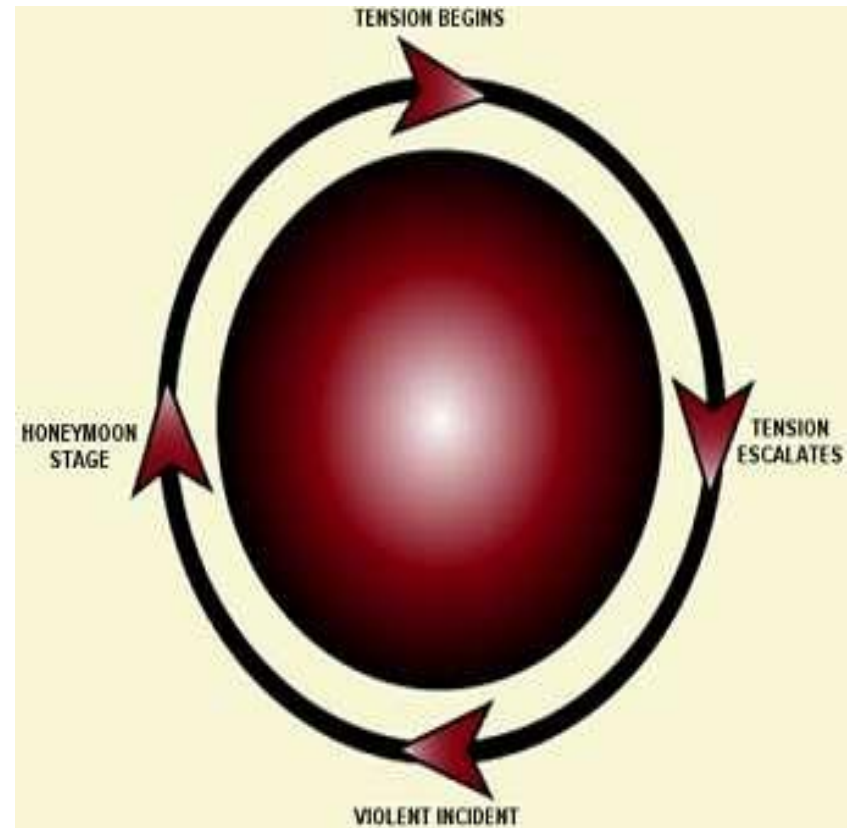
This phase is characterized by explosive and uncontrollable rage.

- **Phase 3: Honeymoon Stage**

This phase is characterized as calm with the batterer exhibiting kind, loving behavior towards his partner. He knows he has overreacted; he is very sorry; and, he wishes to redeem himself. Since the tension is gone, he asks for forgiveness.

- **Resolutions**

There is a way out. Since violence is a learned behavior, it can be unlearned. Counseling can teach the batterer appropriate responses to anger and frustration. Treatment can make possible a peaceful and loving family life for the batterer as well as for the abused woman and the children.



PHYSICAL ABUSE

- **Intimidation**

Putting a victim in fear by using looks, actions, gestures, loud voice, smashing things, destroying property.

- **Isolation**

Controlling what a victim does, who the victim sees and talks to, where the victim goes.

- **Emotional Abuse**

Putting a victim down or making a victim feel badly about themselves; name-calling; making victims think they are crazy.

- **Economic Abuse**

Trying to keep a victim from getting or keeping a job; making the victim ask the abuser for money; giving the victim an allowance.

- **Sexual Abuse**

Making a victim do sexual things against their will; physically attacking the sexual parts of the body; treating the victim as a sex object.

- **Using Children**

Making a victim feel guilty about the children; using the children to give messages; using visitation as a way to harass victim.

- **Threats**

Making and/or carrying out threats to do something to hurt victim emotionally; threatening to take the children, commit suicide, or report victim to welfare.

- **Using Male Privilege**

Rigid sexual roles; women as subservient, males as "Master of the Castle."



NON - VIOLENCE

- **Economic Partnership**

When partners make money decisions together.
Making sure both partners benefit from financial arrangements.

- **Negotiation and Fairness**

When partners seek mutually satisfying resolutions to conflict, accept changes, and are willing to compromise.

- **Non-Threatening Behavior**

Talking and acting so that she feels comfortable expressing herself and doing things.

- **Respect**

Making sure to listen to your partner, without being judgmental, being emotionally supportive and valuing your partner's opinion.

- **Trust and Support**

Supporting your partner's goals in life, respecting their right to their own feelings, friends, activities and opinions.

- **Honesty and Accountability**

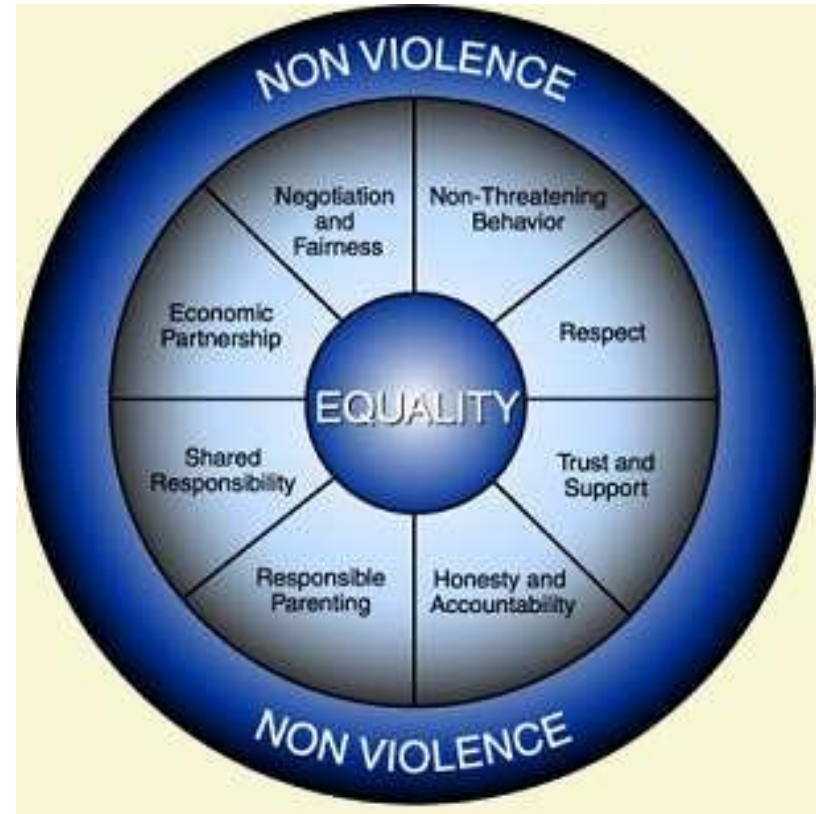
Accountability and responsibility for yourself, acknowledge past use of violence, admitting being wrong, communicating openly and truthfully.

- **Responsible Parenting**

Sharing parental responsibilities, being a positive, non-violent role model for the children.

- **Shared Responsibility**

Mutually agreeing on a fair distribution of work, making family decisions together.



Victims' Rights Proposal 2004

- Advertise a Victims Charter in Police station, courts etc.
- Victims Compensations Scheme
- Victims / Witness Security Requirements throughout court process
- Free Legal Assistance for some Victims of crime
- Bereaved Family Financial Assistance
- Offenders Family Financial Assistance
- Free/guided court visit for victim/witness
- Reward to public crime discloser
- Camera process for victims of sexual abuse
- Camera in specific risky zones
- Victim support scheme in all courts
- Police Officers Rights

Victims' Rights Proposal 2004 cont....

- Rights on information about criminal investigation, prosecution and imprisonment
- Review the bail proceedings
- Review the issues of Protection orders
- Amend false and malicious allegation act
- Review imprisonment mode for juvenile offenders
- Segregation of offenders
- Juvenile courts
- Family courts
- Cosy desk for Victims of crime in all Police Stations
- Regular S.W.O.T Analysis for Police officers as well as Prison officers
- Auxiliary Police – Prospective recruits (aspirant)



We need your comments and proposals to help the society.

Your comments will be piled up after all Lectures.

We maintain confidentiality from your points of view

If you want to have a copy of our presentations. Please mail us or.....

Victim Support Operation hours

Mon – Fri 10hr00 – 18hr00

Saturdays – 12hr00 – 15hr00



THANK YOU FOR YOUR KIND ATTENTION.

**Presented by Raj Moothoosamy
President / Founder**

Contact Details

Supportline (230) 670-4815

Fax (230) 670-5224

E-mail victimsupport@intnet.mu

r_moo@yahoo.com

Seat Address: Pope-Hennessy Street

Terre-Coupée Curepipe

Postal Address: P.o. Box 211 Curepipe

Republic of Mauritius