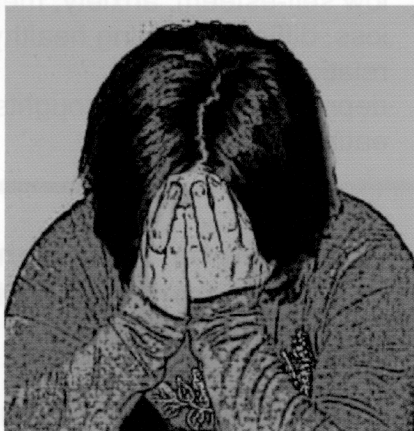


Woman Abuse

It *is* a Health Issue



"51% of Canadian women over the age of 16 have experienced at least one incident of physical or sexual abuse."

(Canadian Panel on Violence Against Women, 1993)

How abuse affects a woman's health

By hurting her body:

- broken bones, bruises, burns, chipped teeth, internal injuries, headaches, sleep problems
- sexually transmitted infections and miscarriages

By hurting her mind:

- low self-esteem, anxiety, memory loss, difficulty forming healthy relationships
- depression, suicidal thoughts, eating disorders

All women have the right to be free from fear and violence.

Woman abuse can cause psychological and physical harm, including death.

Woman abuse is an abuse of power.

Woman abuse is not the woman's fault.

It is against the law.

What Is Woman Abuse?

Woman abuse is when someone tries to use fear and dependency to control a woman. Signs of woman abuse include:

- Physical or sexual assault (hitting, slapping, choking, raping)
- Emotional or psychological abuse (threats, manipulation)
- Verbal abuse (name-calling, put downs, swearing)
- Financial abuse (controlling money)
- Religious or spiritual abuse (using religious beliefs to justify violence)
- Stalking or harassment (for example, following a person in a threatening way)

Woman abuse can happen to any woman. It does not matter about her age, race, culture, sexual orientation or socio-economic status.

This is Also Abuse

Woman abuse is also when a person tries to control a woman by:

- Saying who she can see and talk to
- Not letting her visit her family
- Making all the decisions
- Wanting to know where she is at all times
- Telling her where she can live
- Not letting her follow her career goals
- Harming children or pets
- Using sex for power by pressuring her into sex or withholding sex from her

How the Abuser Acts

Sometimes the abuser:

- Is very jealous and possessive
- Has low self-esteem
- Blames everyone and everything for his problems
- Uses alcohol and drugs as an excuse to avoid taking responsibility for violent behaviour
- Has difficulty communicating with other people

If you are abused, take action

Call for help

If you are in danger: call 911 (emergency)

If you want to talk to someone, call:

The Abused Women's 24-hour Helpline at :

Leave the abuser

- Take your children when leaving; bring a change of clothes and a few toys
- Keep emergency supplies in a safe place - health cards, bank cards, leg papers, spare house keys, emergency money, medication, and birth certificates

Tell someone

- Tell your friends and family of your plans

If you are concerned that someone is being abused

- Talk to her about what you see
- Tell her you are concerned, you believe her and that it is not her fault
- Tell her not to confront her abuser when she is leaving
- Offer to provide childcare while she seeks help
- Encourage her to pack a small bag with important items and keep it stored at your home
- Give her the number of the women's shelter

Women's Shelter in London
1-800-265-1526
Women's Rural Respite
(1-844-1526)

“Violence against women affects us all. It destroys families and communities and weakens the very fabric of our society. This violence knows no bounds – social, economic, racial or geographic. Too often we see it in our communities and even in our own families.”

(The Honourable Josée Verner, Nov. 2007)

“Women experiencing past or present violence are at increased risk of depression, post-traumatic stress disorder and physical health consequences in the antenatal and post-partum period.”

(Trauma Violence and Abuse, July 2007)

Community Referrals

Abu

24 hour support line

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(Y)

24

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St

Sexual Assault/Domestic Violence Treatment Centre

lients

519

AT^LOHSA Native Family Healing Services Inc.

24 hour crisis line

1-800-605-7477

S.O.S. Femmes

Francophone services for abused women

1-800-387-8603

Counselling, advocacy, and safety planning

5

Ch

Group program for men who abuse women

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St

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An Accredited Teaching Health Unit