



How can we make people safe?

The first step is for a victim to understand what is happening to them is not acceptable and they feel they can tell someone. Telling someone is the hardest step. We have to create a world in which it is okay to ask for help and that is down to all of us to be approachable.

There are many support services that can help and work with the victim and their children to make them safer. Telling someone to leave and that you would not put up with it, could make it worse. So listen, understand it's domestic abuse and encourage the person to speak to a local service. To find your local services use the link below to direct you to your nearest service:

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/housingandcommunity/safety/domesticabuse/&lang=en>

Useful Telephone Numbers

Victim Supportline

0845 30 30 900

Information and support for anyone affected by crime. Can also put you in touch with your local Victim Support branch. Open 9am to 9pm weekdays, 9am to 7pm weekends, 9am to 5pm bank holidays.

National Domestic Violence Helpline

0808 2000 247

A 24-hour freephone service for female victims in partnership by Refuge and Women's Aid.

Broken Rainbow National Helpline

020 8539 9507

Provides services to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people experiencing domestic violence. Open 9am to 1pm and 2pm to 5pm weekdays.

Wales Domestic Abuse Helpline

0808 80 10 800

Freephone service run by Welsh Women's Aid. Open 8am to 2pm and 8pm to 2am daily.

Reflections

- * When David became a part of King Saul's household, he became a victim of domestic violence. The account of David and King Saul in 1 Samuel 18-26 is a textbook on the classic dynamics of domestic violence relationships. It also discusses safety planning, and leaving an abusive relationship.
- * Victims are encouraged to seek safety (Proverbs 22:3 and 27:12; 1 Samuel 20; Luke 4:28-29; Acts 9:23-25; Matthew 18:15-17) Perpetrators are directed to stop abusing and to be held accountable for their actions (Matthew 5:21-22; Ephesians 4:31; Matthew 18:15-17; Luke 17:3).
- * Alan Ayckbourn's play "If I were you" features Chrissie, a young married woman who suffers abuse at the hand of her husband Dean. It begins after the birth of their first child, and is characterised by bruises on her arm etc. and the usual excuses. The writer takes a dim view of husbands and implies that if men were more like women the world would be a happier place.
- * Charlotte Bronte, in a letter to her friend Helen Nussey (1832) bemoaned the fact that men always reinvent women in the image that they want for them. She wrote, "If men could only see us as we really are, they may be a little surprised".

Faith in Families

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"They think it's easy to leave - it's not"



Image: Nutdanai Apikhomboonwaroot

Abused women look like Jesusa Fox, who currently lives in a Salvation Army halfway house. A devout Catholic from the Philippines married to an ex-Marine, she was able to escape from her husband only by making the unendurable decision to leave her two sons behind. Her husband has threatened to kill her if she fights for custody; nevertheless, she is determined to get the boys back. Abused women look like Judy North, a teacher from Nebraska who remained with her abusive husband for ten years, until the night she finally stood up to him ...and woke up in the emergency room. And abused women look like Andrea Hartley, a pediatrician in her late forties who considers herself extremely fortunate. Although the man she married when she was thirty proved to be extremely violent, the emotional support of her family, friends, and medical colleagues enabled her to leave him only four months later.

(Case stories from 'Surviving Domestic Violence: Voices of Women Who Broke Free' - Pub. Agreka Tm Lc, 2004)

What is Domestic Violence?

Domestic violence is the systematic use of power and behaviours to control another person in an intimate or family setting. It includes many behaviours.

- ❖ Physical violence can range from slaps, kicks and blows to serious physical assault or murder.
- ❖ Emotional, psychological or mental abuse, including intimidation and humiliation.
- ❖ Sexual violence where the partner uses force, threatening or intimidating behaviour to make you perform sexual acts.
- ❖ Isolation is a form of domestic abuse. Relationships may be strictly controlled, so the woman is only permitted to meet or talk with friends or family when monitored or watched.
- ❖ Harassment and stalking, for example persistent letters, text messages or telephone calls.
- ❖ Threats of violence against children or pets are a common method of control, in order to force compliance.
- ❖ Economic or financial abuse includes total control of the family finances; withholding money for food, clothes, and household expenditure; denying access to the bank account or cheque book and having to account for every penny spent.

Men are also victims of domestic violence says campaign group Parity¹

Data from Home Office statistical bulletins and the British Crime Survey show that men made up about 40% of domestic violence victims each year between 2004-05 and 2008-09, the last year for which figures are available. In 2006-07 men made up 43.4% of all those who had suffered partner abuse in the previous year, which rose to 45.5% in 2007-08 but fell to 37.7% in 2008-09. The number of women prosecuted for domestic violence rose from 1,575 in 2004-05 to 4,266 in 2008-09.

¹ Denis Campbell, *The Observer*, Sunday 5 September 2010

Some facts about domestic violence

- ☑ Every 6 to 26 seconds an incidence of domestic violence occurs in the U.K.
- ☑ Only 40% of actual domestic violence incidents are reported to the police.
- ☑ The police receive a call for assistance for domestic violence every minute of every day in the U.K., an estimated 1,300 calls a day and over 570,000 per year.
- ☑ When a father hits a mother, the children are likely to be in the same or next room in 90% of cases.
- ☑ Even when the children are not in the same room over half can still describe the nature of the assault (because they have witnessed violence previously).
- ☑ In approximately 50% of cases when a father hits a mother one of the children intervenes to try and stop the violence.
- ☑ In approximately 50% of cases when a father hits a mother it is likely that he will also hit the children.
- ☑ In Wales 5000 children have to leave their homes each year because their father hit their mother.
- ☑ Every year approximately 100 children in Britain experience their father murdering their mother.
- ☑ Two or three women die from domestic violence in Britain every two weeks, killed by a current or former partner.
- ☑ 25% of all murders are domestic.
- ☑ 43% of all murders of women are a relative.
- ☑ When children's names are placed on the Child Protection Register by a Local Authority Social Services Department approximately 30% of their mothers will be the victims of domestic violence.
- ☑ It is estimated that as many as 150,000 children and young people are affected by domestic abuse in Wales at any one time.
- ☑ 70% of domestic abuse victims are women.
- ☑ On average a woman is assaulted 35 times before seeking help.
- ☑ One in ten women are severely beaten by their partner at some point in life and one in four women in the U.K. experiences some form of domestic violence in her life.
- ☑ 25% of attacks occur while a woman is pregnant.
- ☑ 41% of all female homicide victims are killed by a partner or former partner.
- ☑ The most dangerous time for a woman and her children is when she attempts to leave home.



Image: Carlos Porto

“It’s only a game”

The reporting of domestic abuse increases around major sporting events. In 2009, South Wales Police recorded 66 incidents of domestic abuse between 5pm on Saturday 7th to 3am on Sunday 8th February; the following weekend, when Wales played England at rugby in Cardiff, the offences rose by 79 per cent to 118 incidents¹.

Increased levels of alcohol consumption around the time of sporting events are thought to exacerbate problems. For example, South Wales Police’s Swansea Borough Command Unit reported that domestic abuse incidents recorded in June 2006 during the football World Cup were 37 per cent higher than the numbers recorded the same month in 2005². The report indicated that levels of alcohol consumption, together with the emotionally charged nature of matches, increased the prevalence of incidents.

Similarly, a study in Cardiff conducted between May 1995 and April 2002 of people requiring emergency medical treatment for assault at the time of international football and rugby matches found that assault-related injury attendances (though not necessarily domestic abuse) were significantly higher on those weekends when matches were played compared to weekends where there were no matches.

Recently the Welsh Rugby Union and Wales police forces have taken the initiative and run a ‘white ribbon’ campaign during Six Nations tournaments highlighting domestic abuse issues.

¹ Alford, A. (2010) Police highlight rise in domestic abuse at Six Nations time

² Braaf, R and Gilbert, R (2007) Domestic violence incident peaks: Seasonal factors, calendar events and sporting matches

Globally, women are still suffering

In 1993, the UN made its famous Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, defining violence as including physical, sexual, and psychological acts against women, whether these occurred in families or the general community. Seventeen years on, that eradication has not happened.

The percentage of women from different parts of the world who report the most common type of violence, intimate-partner violence, ranges from 15 per cent to as much as 75 per cent. And there is evidence of an escalation of violence against women in many forms, worldwide.

All too often, this violence is condoned or even perpetrated by the state. It can be institutionalised in cultural processes. Child marriage and female genital mutilation harm girls in Africa. Female infanticide or sex-selective abortion destroy life in Asia. It can be ignored, or the victim herself can be blamed, as in many cases of violence by the military, or domestic abuse.

In unstable situations and armed conflict, the incidence escalates sharply. Rape is used as a weapon of war. Femicide terrorises populations. Girls are trafficked as sexual slaves. The powerless-ness of women caught up in this fear and injustice has outcomes beyond the violence itself. Displacement, poor physical and mental health, loss of livelihood, and family rejection are all common experiences. It does not take a theologian to see that all of this is contrary to the vision of humanity in the Christian faith. Anybody familiar with the Gospels will know it is horribly wrong. The dignity of both women and men, the need to protect the vulnerable, the warnings against the wrong use of power, are woven through the teachings of Jesus. But our Churches are curiously silent on the topic, as if we have more lofty concerns. It is usually left to badly funded pressure-groups and victims’ associations to try to sort the issue out for themselves.

(from an article by Elaine Storkey in "The Church Times", 18th June, 2010

Recognising the signs if it is happening next door ... or to you

- * Abusers are often charming, well respected members of the community. Domestic violence occurs across all communities.
- * It happens in affluent households and lower income ones; in religious homes and secular ones; with young couples and those in their senior years.
- * A person who is confident in their work and social life can come to believe they are useless if their partner consistently tells them they are stupid, isolates them from their friends and family and blames them when they lose their temper.
- * If your friend, neighbour or relative tells you they are experiencing domestic violence, do listen to them and offer support and information about JWA and contacts listed overleaf.
- * If they have had to leave a violent relationship, you can help by standing by them and keeping them company, and

telling them that there are people and organisations there to help them.

- * Domestic Violence is physical, emotional, verbal, sexual or financial abuse which takes place within a relationship and forms a pattern of controlling behaviour.

If ...

- You feel isolated
- Your partner finds fault with your friends and family
- Your partner is jealous and obsessive
- Your partner holds the cheque books and credit cards
- You appear confident and self-assured at work and with family, but are nervous to express an opinion when your partner is around
- Your partner ever threatens you with violence
- You feel you are being bullied, criticised or undermined
- You are becoming afraid of your partner

... you may need to seek help