

Domestic Violence

End It Now!

Pr Les Ackie

World's Biggest Human Rights Issue



Kofi Annan
Former UN Secretary
General

“Abuse against women is the most widespread of all abuses in the world.”

World's Biggest Human Rights Issue

“Violence against women is the most universal and unpunished crime of all”

Not a Minute More: Ending Violence Against Women



Definition of Domestic Violence



Domestic violence takes place when one person in an intimate relationship with another uses violent or intimidating behavior to control, (often systematically) causing physical, emotional or spiritual harm

Types of Domestic Violence

- Physical Battering
 - Slapping, hitting, choking, punching, kicking, and using objects as weapons
- Sexual Abuse
 - Any sexual act to which an adult does not freely give consent
- Emotional Abuse
 - Threats, insults, isolation, extreme jealousy, degradation, manipulation, symbolic violence, brainwashing
- Property Violence
 - Threatened or actual destruction of property

Types of Domestic Violence

- Spiritual Abuse
 - The abuser will attack the victim's beliefs, their faith, or their source of strength to maintain absolute control
- Psychological Abuse
 - 'Violence' for the purposes of section 177(1) of the Housing Act 1996 should include locking someone in the house, depriving them of food or the money to buy food.
- Stalking
 - Most stalkers are former partners or friends of their victims. Obscene or threatening phone calls or letters were the most common types of stalking behaviour experienced

Who are the Victims?

- Domestic violence occurs between people who are dating, married, separated, and divorced
- Victims cross all socio-economic, religious, racial, ethnic, age groups
- Women represent 89% of adult victims
- 11% of victims are men
- Lifetime risk for women is about 25%
- Children who witness domestic violence may experience a wide range of emotional and social problems

UK Statistics

- On average, **2 women a week** are killed by a current or former male partner. This constitutes around one-third of all female homicide victims
- Domestic violence accounts for between **16-25%** of all recorded violent crimes
- One incident is reported to the police every minute.
- 54% of UK rapes are committed by a woman's current or former partner.

Who are the Battersers?

Battersers cross all socio-economic, religious, racial, ethnic, and age groups

Common Characteristics of Battersers

- Sense of entitlement
- Controlling
- Manipulative
- Frequently charming
- Uninvolved parent
- Contempt for others
- Jealousy
- Possessiveness
- Minimizing and denial
- Violence is a man's right
- Traditional beliefs about the gender roles

Characteristics of Battersers



Cobra

Men who are cool and calculated as they inflict pain and punishment on their victims



Pit Bull

Men whose emotions quickly explode, who are insecure and have an unhealthy dependence on the women they abuse

Domestic Violence

- Domestic Violence Is NOT Caused By:
 - Illness
 - Genetics or gender
 - Alcohol or other drugs
 - Anger
 - Stress
 - Victim's behavior
 - Relationship problems

Domestic Violence is a Choice

What Makes Batterers So Powerful?

- Isolation of victim
- Societal denial
- Use of religious issues
- Use of cultural issues
- Threats of retaliation



Dynamics of Domestic Violence

Power And Control

The Dynamics of Domestic Violence

- Phases – build-up, explosion, honeymoon

Cycle of Violence



The Dynamics of Domestic Violence

Violence tends to continue and often becomes more frequent and severe

A Hidden Crime

- They may be **ashamed** of what has happened
- They may feel they were to some extent to **blame**
- They may **love their spouse** and not want him to be criticised or punished for what he did
- They may think it was a **one-off event** and won't happen again
- They may be **frightened** that if they tell anyone about it, their partner will find out and they will be in danger of further and perhaps more severe violence from him.

A Hidden Crime

On average, 35 assaults happen before the police are called.

(Jaffe 1982)*

Why Do Victims Stay?

Fear of Separation Violence

- 73% of battered women seek emergency medical services after separation (Stark, 1981)
- Women are most likely to be killed when attempting to report abuse or leave the abuser (Sonkin, 1985)
- Approximately one-half of males who kill their wives, do so after separation (Hart, 1992)

Fear of Separation Violence

"Everyone seems to think that what you need to do is to just leave the relationship and then everything will be fine."

That's the myth. The reality is that the violence escalates if you try to get away.

"I knew that not only did I have to leave, I had to DISAPPEAR."

Low Self-esteem

- **Roles the Culture Forces on Women** (guilt, economic)
- **Personal History** (My father beat my mum – it just goes along with being in a relationship)
- **Religious Convictions** – victims are susceptible to spiritual abuse

Low Self-esteem

"I thought that I was worthless, that I couldn't do anything right."

I thought I was ugly, just a horrible individual ... no one would ever love me and I myself was incapable of love."



Stacy Allison
First American Woman to
summit Mount Everest

Love & Hope

"I don't really know why I kept going back... He begged me to, swore he'd never do it again."

"And, I wanted to hear it. I was overweight, I felt unloved..."



Leaving is a Process



"I think I left 12 times before I finally stayed gone. When I look back on it now, I realize I was practicing. It was a process... it took time, I had to learn how to leave and I had to learn how to stay gone."

Isolation & Lack of Resources



"After years of violence, I was completely bewildered. I didn't know how to get away!"

There has to be a place to go to, its not just a matter of leaving from someone. And, for many victims of domestic violence that place either doesn't exist or they don't know that it exists.



Leaving is a Process

□ SURVIVORS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE DO LEAVE!

- They leave when they are ready
- They leave when it is safe to do so
- We can support their process by providing an institutional response affirming battered women and their decision making ability

Acknowledge the Problem

'Probably the most important contribution to ending abuse and protecting the health of its victims is to identify and acknowledge the abuse'

Council on Ethical and Judicial Affairs, American Medical Association

How Can the Church Help?



We can't break the cycle of domestic violence by keeping it a secret

Break the Silence



Silence, lack of skills, and unwillingness to recognize the suffering of congregants create dead ends for those who need help

Barriers to Effective Victim Support

- Lack of education
- Lack of time
- Lack of effective interventions
- Powerlessness
- Fear of offending the victim
- Privacy concerns
- Personal history of abuse

How Can the Church Help?

- Educate the church about the realities of domestic violence in society and in the church
- Demystify biblical passages often used to justify abuse

Ephesians 5:25-31

Entire submission is to be made only to the Lord Jesus Christ . . . When husbands require the complete subjection of their wives . . . they place their wives in a position contrary to the scripture.

The Adventist Home, 119

Ephesians 5:25-31

Neither the husband nor the wife should attempt to exercise over the other an arbitrary control.

The Adventist Home, 118

Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.

Ephesians 5:21

Ephesians 5:25-31

Husbands, love your wives, and do not be harsh with them.
Colossians 3:19

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her . . . so husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself . . .

How Can the Church Help?

- Educate the church about the realities of domestic violence in society and in the church
- Demystify biblical passages often used to justify abuse
- Teach awareness about domestic violence during pre-marital counselling
- Educate young people about making safe choices in relationships
- Make resources readily available
- Provide access to professional counseling

What Role Should the Church Play?



The goal of nonviolence cannot be achieved through traditional marital or couples therapy

How Can the Church Help?

- Preach on the issue of family violence
- Run seminars about family violence
- Educate on emotional intelligence, setting boundaries, conflict resolution and anger management
- Provide up to date information about domestic abuse on church website
- Train church leaders in domestic violence crisis prevention and intervention
- Utilize church premises for domestic violence support groups

Safety Planning

1. Affirm

- "I believe you"
- "Nobody deserves to be hurt like that"
- "I'm glad you told me"
- "You are not alone"
- "It's not your fault"
- "You have good reason to be afraid"
- "You have the right to protect yourself"

2. Assess

- What support does she need in order to implement her safety plan?
- How can you and/or your congregation assist her - financially, emotionally and with practical steps?

Safety Planning

Do you have an escape route?

- Doors, stairs, first floor windows, basement exits

Do you have a safe place to go to?

- Home of relative/friend with unconditional support, hotel, shelter

Do you have a survival kit?

(hide safely or leave with trusted person)

Safety Planning

1. Always be in touch with someone: a friend, relative, or a neighbour
2. Have some savings money, credit cards, identification documents, a mobile phone at hand and make a phone list to keep in your wallet
3. Keep enough cash with you to pay for bus fare, motel, pay phone, etc.
4. Have an extra key to the house and car; Stash clothing and food for yourself and children with friends or communicate secretly with close friends or confidential signal system with a neighbour
5. Remove potential weapons and be ready to evade the "torture scene"
6. Avoid wearing scarves, necklaces, etc, which can be used to choke you
7. Watch for signs of potential violence eruption – always try staying on a safe side and prevent any kind of violence-eruption situation and confrontation when the situation is tense

3. Address safety issues related to her contact with you and with the church

- How will she tell her spouse about her time spent with you?
- What will she do if her spouse is at the church when she is there?
- What if he becomes abusive at the church?
- If the survivor wants you to talk with the abuser, explore how this will impact her safety.
- How will it impact her safety if you or others start to hold him accountable?

4. Refer

- Certain aspects of safety planning can be addressed by clergy, but certain aspects must be left to expert domestic violence advocates
- If you are familiar with local domestic violence programs, give her a local hotline number and let her know about the services they provide.

5. Explain

- Explain that what she has experienced is abusive behaviour
- Abusive behaviour is about power and control. That is why the survivor cannot change the abuser's behaviour. His first commitment is to power and control over her
- A controlling partner will always find something "wrong." The reasons her partner "explodes" are not the same as the reasons she believes he explodes

5. Explain

- Changing herself or correcting what he has said were her mistakes will not stop the abuse
- Her partner needs to demonstrate that he is in control. His abusive behaviour is his way of showing his power over her
- She can't change him and she can't win. That is the point of power and control. And that is why her safety must be the primary concern

5. Explain

What Could Women Do?

- Couldn't predict
- Couldn't prevent it
- Couldn't stop an episode
- Couldn't affect the course

(Jacobson & Gottman, 1998)

How Can the Church Help the Perpetrator?



Batterers will not change their behaviour until someone holds them accountable

How Can the Church Help the Perpetrator?

Domestic violence is a crime!

The legal system often holds one of the keys to accountability

How Can the Church Help the Perpetrator?

- Provide access to professional counseling
- Present God as forgiving and urge confession of sins to God
- Encourage the perpetrator to join a support group



We Can Make A
Difference!!!

“Speak up for those
who cannot speak for
themselves; for the
rights of all who are
destitute.”

Proverbs 31:8

women's aid
until women & children are safe
www.womensaid.org.uk

0808 2000 247



01823 334244

Cornerstone
Counselling Service

020 7723 8050

Remember to cover your tracks