

"Fear plays amazing tricks with the mind. Slowly, imperceptibly, part of my mind began to believe that the things this man said about me were true."
Denise Newton, (1994), *Women & Survival*.

STATISTICS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Intimate partner violence has severe, wide ranging and persistent effects on women's physical and mental health (VicHealth 2004)

- Domestic violence is the leading contributor to illness, disability and death for women in Victoria aged between 15 and 44. (VicHealth 2004)

- Women who have experienced domestic violence have a greater risk of health problems including stress, depression and phobias (WHO 2000)

- The severe emotional effects of family violence result in an increased risk of suicide, sleeping disorders and alcohol and substance abuse (Benson and Fox 2002)

- More than a quarter of children and young people in Australia have witnessed acts of violence against their mother or stepmother (Indermaur, D. 2001)

Domestic Violence is an issue that concerns the whole community. The effects of domestic violence are far reaching; the costs are high; not only in financial, health or emotional terms, but in lives that



NQDVRs

- ◆ Information and referral
- ◆ AARDVARC program for children
- ◆ Resources
- ◆ Court Support
- ◆ Choosing Safety Upgrades program
- ◆ Men's Behaviour Change Program
- ◆ SAFE Dads Program
- ◆ Community education & Training

TOWNSVILLE OFFICE

PO Box 6061, Townsville QLD 4810
Phone: 07 4721 2888 Fax: 07 4721 1794
nqdvrs @nqdvrs.org.au
1st Floor, Metway Arcade, 390 Flinders Street,
Townsville

MOUNT ISA OFFICE

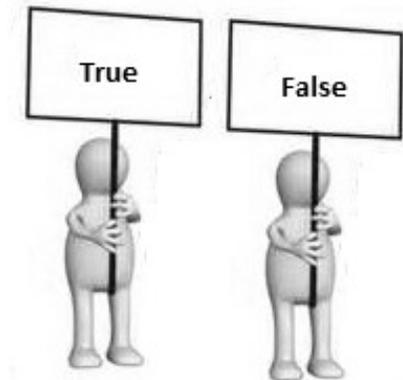
Po Box 502, Mt Isa QLD 4825
Phone: 07 4743 0946 Fax: 07 4743 7999
minqdvrs@nqdvrs.org.au
The Old Court House Building, Isa Street

<http://www.nqdvrs.org.au>

Against Violence #2



Myths and Facts About Domestic Violence



"...it feels like violence is shamed into silence."

(Woman caller - SA Domestic Violence Phone
-In University of South Australia,
September 1998)

NQDVRs
Funded by



POWER AND CONTROL

Most women who experience domestic violence live in fear of their partner.

Domestic violence is about power & control. In a domestic violence situation, one partner feels threatened or frightened to argue back or give their opinion because they feel their partner will physically hurt or abuse them in some way. The balance of power is not equal in such a relationship. Domestic violence is an abuse of power and acts to control the other person.

Myth: Domestic Violence is not a big problem.

Fact: According to The National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022, One in three Australian women have experienced physical violence since the age of 15. Almost one in five have experienced sexual violence. In the study Cost of Domestic Violence (1991) it was estimated that 100 000 women each year are likely to report or disclose domestic violence. Although this number is high, there are many women that do not report their experience of abuse.

Myth: If a woman doesn't like it she can always leave.

Fact: Women who experience domestic violence face a range of barriers to leaving the relationship. The most common group of domestic violence victims are those who have dependent children & no independent financial status. These women face a future of reduced income and difficulty finding accommodation. Also, the violence does not necessarily stop after women leave, sometimes it can get worse. Research on homicide victims shows that women who attempt to end their relationship are more at risk of being killed by the abusive person in the first 18 months of

ending their relationship

Myth: Domestic violence only happens in low socioeconomic classes.

Fact: In a phone-in survey conducted by the University of South Australia in September 1998, callers ranged across a wide age group, from 17 years to 70 years, and came from a broad range of social backgrounds. A significant number of the women were well educated or had well-paid jobs. Their male partners were also from diverse backgrounds and many were financially well off and had good social standing in the community. Callers came from both homes that spoke only English and where a language other than English was used.

Myth: Alcohol causes domestic violence.

Fact: Violence does occur without alcohol. Many people get drunk without becoming violent. Alcohol is an excuse for violence, not a cause. Remember that the person who uses alcohol is responsible for their drinking and their abusive behaviour. Attitudes and values determine use of violence in the family or not. In 50% of cases of violent behaviour, neither party had been drinking.

Myth: Women who are victims of domestic violence deserve it. They must provoke him/"push his buttons".

Fact: There is no excuse for violence and in any case, many women report being hit from behind, and with no warning. If he feels his "buttons are pushed", he can choose to walk away.

Myth: Men and women are equally violent in relationships.

Fact: Gender and Intimate Partner Violence Australian February 2013 /Domestic & Family Violence Clearinghouse mentions, In Queensland, women comprised 89.5% of victims of assault by

a partner or ex-partner in the year 2010-11. In that same year, women represented 92.3% of victims of a sexual offence by a partner or ex-partner. While men do experience violence in their relationships, women are still much more likely to be victims of domestic. Men are more likely to be subjected to violence from another male in a public setting, unlike women who are more likely to be subjected to violence from someone they know and in the home.

Myth: Violent men have a mental illness and cannot control themselves.

Fact: Violence and abuse are used to control and disempower others. Many men who perpetrate domestic violence are not violent elsewhere. Men who abuse their partners and children find excuses to justify their use of violence and these excuses are often condoned by the attitudes of extended family members and the community. Violence and abuse is never justified and being violent is a choice.



YOU ARE NOT TO
BLAME!

Everybody is responsible for their own behaviour. If he is violent, then he is the only one who can change it.

IT IS NOT YOUR
FAULT!

Community attitudes to domestic violence



Consider this: Society does not condone or accept drunken driving as an excuse for damage caused while driving under the influence of alcohol. "Breaking the Silence", 1997