



Neighbours, Friends and Families (NFF) Campaign Fact Sheet

Domestic Violence Against Women is often called:

- Domestic violence
- Domestic abuse
- Violence against women
- Woman abuse
- Family violence

Why does the NFF campaign use the term “woman abuse”?

The NFF campaign uses the term “woman abuse” to highlight the fact that domestic violence is a gendered issue. Although women can be violent and violence against men does occur, violence perpetrated by men against women is much more common and is often more severe.

Compared to men, women are...:

- 6 times more likely to report being sexually assaulted
- 5 times more likely to report being choked
- 5 times more likely to require medical attention as a result of an assault
- 3 times more likely to be physically injured by an assault
- 2 times more likely to report being beaten
- 2 times more likely to report being threatened with a gun or knife, or having a gun or knife used against them
- Much more likely to fear for their lives or their children as a result of the abuse
- More likely to have sleeping problems, depression, anxiety and low self-esteem as a result of being abused

(Department of Justice Canada. Spousal Abuse: A fact sheet. 1999 General Social Survey (GSS) Conducted by Statistics Canada.)

Definitions of Abuse:

- Acts of violence, intimidation and other behaviour likely to cause harm
- Coercion (forcing someone to do something by using intimidation or threats)
- Attempts by one person to *maintain power and control over the other*
- Abusive behaviour that has a pattern or cycle

The Cycle of Abuse

Phase 1: Tension Builds - the abuser may threaten or physically abuse the victim, and the victim may do whatever is possible to calm him, believing she can prevent a violent incident, even though she usually fails

Phase 2: Violence Occurs - the abuser often hits or sexually abuses the victim

Phase 3: Honeymoon Phase - the abuser apologizes and promises to stop the abuse, usually blaming the victim. Often, the victim believes the apologies and forgives the abuser for the violence. However, the cycle resumes and the violence occurs again.

(Source: National Women's Health Resource Centre)

“These crimes are often committed in a context where there is a pattern of assault and controlling behaviour. This violence may include physical assault, and emotional, psychological and sexual abuse. It can include threats to harm children, other family members, pets and property. The violence is used to intimidate, humiliate or frighten victims, or to make them powerless. Domestic violence may include a single act of abuse. It may also include a number of acts, which may appear minor or trivial when viewed in isolation, but collectively form a pattern that amounts to abuse.” - *Joint Committee on Domestic Violence*

No matter what it is called, violence against women is never okay!