

*Neighbours,
Friends and
Families:*

*Community Action
Kit to Prevent
Woman Abuse*



Neighbours, Friends & Families

Neighbours, Friends and Families

Neighbours, Friends and Families is a campaign to raise awareness of the signs of woman abuse so people who are close to an at-risk woman or an abusive man can help.

The Neighbours, Friends and Families campaign is a partnership between the Ontario government, Ontario Women's Directorate and the Expert Panel on Neighbours, Friends and Families, through the Centre for Research and Education on Violence Against Women and Children.

Everyone in the community has a role to play in helping to prevent woman abuse. Thank you for joining with us in working with local communities across Ontario.

Most Ontarian's feel a personal responsibility for reducing woman abuse ... and recognizing it is the first step. Take the warning signs seriously. Visit www.neighboursfriendsandfamilies.on.ca for further information or call the Assaulted Women's Helpline at **1-866-863-0511** or in an emergency, the police.



CREDITS:

The Neighbours, Friends and Families: Community Action Kit to Prevent Woman Abuse is based on an adapted version of the Neighbour to Neighbour kit created by the London Coordinating Committee to End Woman Abuse. The original version of the kit was written and conceived by the Family Violence Prevention Fund.

If you would like further information about the work of the Family Violence Prevention Fund go to:

www.endabuse.org or contact them at

The Family Violence Prevention Fund

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Disponible en français

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Neighbours, Friends & Families

A Real Life Perspective

It is important to recognize the warning signs and risk factors that can lead to violence against women.

My reasons for getting the public to recognize the warning signs of violence against women are very personal ones, but if you really think about them they apply to any women living in an abusive situation.

I am not a text book professional in this area but what I can bring to you is the real life story of two friends, one who was brutally murdered by her husband and one who remains behind trying to deliver a meaningful message to others of this senseless death.

On October 27, 2005 my best friend Sandra Schott was abducted from her house in the middle of the night and murdered by a man who professed to love her deeply. Ed was physically and emotionally abusive. He controlled who became friends with Sandra and when Sandra saw those friends. He stalked Sandra and just days before he murdered her, Ed had threatened to kill her. These things were warning signs that this relationship could possibly end in tragedy. Unfortunately those of us around Sandra lacked the knowledge to realize this.

There are 3 children, who should have their mother here to tuck them into bed each night, rather than have her watching over them from above as their grandmother does it. These children should still be getting daily hugs from their mother, rather than just memories of those hugs and happy times.

I should still be spending summer afternoons with her; not weeping beside her grave.

Members of the community should have had more time to get to know the wonderful, loving person that Sandra was.

Sandra's murder is further proof that failure to recognize these signs and know how to properly deal with them can result in the loss of a beautiful life.

I urge you to become actively involved and become aware of the warning signs. It is our responsibility to help keep each other safe. You may think that the abused woman who is your neighbour down the street is not your problem or concern. Please remember that she is someone's daughter, mother, sister or best friend. She deserves to kiss her kids goodnight, enjoy time with her friends and the community should be allowed the time to get to know her as a wonderful thoughtful person.

The Neighbours, Friends and Families campaign is a very valuable tool that has been implemented with Ontario Government funding, to educate the general public. Its purpose is to make each and everyone of us aware of the warning signs and risk factors that can lead to violence against women. Unfortunately it is too late for Sandra to benefit from this campaign, but it not too late for the rest of us.

Rather than letting Sandra's death, and the many other women in the province who are murdered or abused by their partner, be just another statistic, let's view it as an awakening. Let's turn the tragedy into a call to action. We, as a responsible society, need to work together and help keep each other safe.

Become involved.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Deb Ashbee', with a stylized, looping flourish.

Deb Ashbee
Best friend of Sandra Schott who was killed
by her estranged husband October 27, 2005.

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Safety Planning for Women Who are Abused

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Safety Cards

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Warning Signs to Identify and Help Women at Risk of Abuse

Booklets

Understanding Woman Abuse

Raising Awareness with the Media

Additional Materials

Book and Video List

PSAS description

Poster

Bookmark



Section I: Purpose and Logistics of the Neighbours, Friends and Families Campaign



Neighbours, Friends & Families

“We want to change public attitudes so that everybody, whether a friend, a neighbour or a family doctor will look at this issue differently and respond.”

Dr. Peter Jaffe

Academic Director

Centre for Education and Research on Violence Against Women and Children

Member of the Domestic Violence Death Review Committee

Member of the Expert Panel for Neighbours, Friends and Families Campaign

“Bringing an end to woman abuse will require vast changes among individuals, communities, institutions, and systems. The Neighbours, Friends and Families Campaign is about communities taking action to build a society in which violence against women is unacceptable in our homes, in our families, and in our network of friends.”

Wendy Komiotis

Executive Director, Metropolitan Action Committee on Violence Against Women and Children (METRAC)

Member of the Expert Panel for Neighbours, Friends and Families Campaign

Overview of Neighbours, Friends and Families

The purpose of the Neighbours, Friends and Families campaign is to provide communities with information and strategies to help prevent woman abuse, through:

- Recognizing the warning signs of woman abuse
- Supporting women and other members of the community who are affected by woman abuse
- Locating supportive resources in the community

The Neighbours, Friends and Families campaign is based on principles of community organization which recognize that communities have the assets, strengths, natural leaders and untapped talent to greatly impact change, growth and restoration in their communities.

This campaign:

- incorporates a variety of awareness raising and educational activities
- is available in other languages, in addition to French
- includes a culturally distinct campaign for Aboriginal communities
- provides handouts and promotional materials such as Public Service Announcements (PSAs), posters, bookmarks, and logos
- includes a kit for community organizations to use in launching local campaigns
- includes some suggestions for working inclusively
- provides additional information at www.neighboursfriendsandfamilies.on.ca

As a community leader, you are encouraged to use and adapt the Neighbours, Friends and Families campaign materials in your local community. The main focus of working with your community is to recognize that those who are the closest to abused women and abusive men are in a unique position to provide support. Community members often report that they knew about or suspected a family member or friend was experiencing abuse, but didn't know how to best assist her, or how to help him make changes in his abusive behaviour.

As you plan a strategy for your community, let these questions guide the activities of your campaign:

1. Are my community services ready to provide supports to neighbours, friends and families, i.e., have you talked to local service providers and determined their willingness to work with you on this program?
2. How can the relationship between service providers and community members be enhanced by the activities of this campaign?
3. What prevention and educational activities would best suit the needs and resources of the local community?
4. What services are available for abusive men in order to make referrals?
5. How can the community's knowledge about the warning signs of woman abuse be broadened and increased?
6. How can the community have a better understanding of safety planning and the safety concerns of women?

Defining your Community

The term 'community' is often considered to be a specific region or area with people who live close to one another forming the basis of a community. While organizing community members who live in the same area is certainly a likely beginning point for organizing a Neighbours, Friends and Families campaign, a local neighbourhood is not the only way to locate members of a 'community'. People consider themselves part of different kinds of communities including: geographic, cultural, faith, athletic, etc.

Consideration of the group's participation should be based on the willingness of members to work together to help prevent woman abuse in a way that is most meaningful to the group. Keep this in mind as you begin to think about how to form a Neighbours, Friends and Families campaign in your area.

The materials and suggestions in this kit will not meet the needs of all communities, as the needs that exist in diverse communities cannot be captured in a single tool or campaign strategy. Therefore, the campaign materials can be adapted to meet the needs of specific communities.



How to use this Kit

This campaign was developed to provide accurate information and strategies directly to communities, to help them better understand how to respond effectively to a woman who is abused and how to approach her partner about his abusive behaviour.

The contents of this kit are meant to guide your work as community facilitators or leaders in starting a Neighbours, Friends and Families campaign with members of your local community. The first step is to bring together a group of people who have a mutual interest in learning about the warning signs of woman abuse and working as a community to prevent woman abuse.

Format of this Kit

The kit contains three main sections:

1. Raising Awareness
2. Educational Activities
3. Handouts and Promotional Materials

Raising Awareness

This section provides you with information about the nature and definition of woman abuse, strategies to use when speaking to families and friends about woman abuse, troubleshooting-tips for addressing difficult questions about woman abuse and some appropriate responses to challenges presented by the Neighbours, Friends and Families material.

Educational Activities

The educational activities proposed in this campaign include working with the media, coordinating video and book discussion nights, viewing and coordinating dissemination of the Public Service Announcements (PSAs), and working to implement a local Neighbours, Friends and Families campaign.

Evaluating the Neighbours, Friends and Families Campaign

Evaluation forms are available on the website at www.neighboursfriendsandfamilies.ca

Handouts and Promotional Materials

This kit contains a number of handouts and promotional materials for you to distribute at community meetings and other similar events.

Your role as a community leader is very important. The following section provides you with information on how to start a Neighbours, Friends and Families campaign.

Organizing your Campaign

Preparing yourself as the Community Leader

As the community leader or facilitator, you are responsible for helping to sustain the momentum of the Neighbours, Friends and Families campaign. As you begin to think about your role and how you might start to begin implementing this campaign, your first steps should be thinking about the “big picture.”

First Steps: The Big Picture

It is important for you to acknowledge the inherent strengths and potential limitations of your community as you think about starting a Neighbours, Friends and Families campaign. Begin to form a mental picture of how your community might implement the campaign by:

- Identifying the specific needs of your community (e.g. have there been any recent occurrences of woman abuse within your community). Think about the importance and relevance of this project to your community.
- Determining what activities are best suited to your community's interest, expertise and available resources (i.e. public forum, video night, contacting the appropriate media, etc.)



- Contacting other local service providers such as the local women's shelter to gauge their interest in working with you to implement this campaign and to request their local service brochures for distribution.
- Investigating how you can make your campaign efforts known in the community - in existing community newsletters, annual meetings of community organizations (e.g. women's shelter/Aboriginal shelter/Indian friendship center/advocacy programs/ Partner Assault Response Program, etc.).
- Recognizing the diversity in your community; the cultural and linguistic needs and how you might promote the various campaign resources (e.g. Aboriginal campaign materials, Francophone campaign materials, brochures and safety cards in other languages).

Once you've given some thought to how a Neighbours, Friends and Families campaign might look in your community, you're ready to go to the next step. Bringing community members together as a group to share information about woman abuse, learning about prevention strategies and warning signs, and developing ways to respond to those warning signs are a vital component of the Neighbours, Friends and Families campaign. The suggested format for this component is a community meeting.

The Next Step: Preparing for Community Meetings

Regardless of the format of your community meeting, keep the following goals in mind:

- To bring neighbours, friends and families members together in a supportive environment.
- To get to know one another.
- To learn about woman abuse and what communities can do to prevent it.
- To create an environment in which women and men can share ideas about helping to prevent woman abuse.
- To build a support system so when woman abuse touches someone in the community, either directly or indirectly, the tools, resources, and supports are available to cope effectively with the situation.

Community Meeting Format

The following format can be used for holding a community meeting:

1. Invite – invite community members to the meeting
2. Inform – provide information about woman abuse
3. Act – create a plan of action to coordinate an educational activity or event
4. Repeat – highlight the focus of the next meeting

Invite

You should reach out to community members and invite them to participate in the Neighbours, Friends and Families campaign. Some tips for this include:

- Make this process as inclusive as possible. Groups such as teachers, local business owners, nurses, seniors, police officers, youth and women's advocates have different experiences and knowledge about woman abuse that can assist you in your campaign.
- Reach out to members of your community who are familiar with the issues.
- Consider the desired size of your community group. It is sometimes helpful when first forming a new community group to start with a small group and then expand it. Alternatively, some groups may be very large and may allow subcommittees to be formed to focus on ideas and activities.

Keeping a process like this inclusive is very important.

Network: Identify existing community groups who may be interested in working to help prevent woman abuse. For example, try to obtain information about other groups working on the issue of violence prevention (i.e. Neighbourhood Watch, Block Parents, school councils, Public Health, Rotary Club, etc.). Consider inviting members from these groups to join you for an organizing meeting to start a Neighbours, Friends and Families campaign.

Know the players: Identify other service providers that can offer information and strategies on helping to prevent woman abuse. Scan your local phone book for contact information.



When contacting other service providers, be prepared to explain the purpose of Neighbours, Friends and Families and what you are asking them to do (i.e. gauge their interest in joining the group, speak at a forum, provide resource information, etc.)

Suggested contacts include:

- Local women's shelter staff
- Police services and/or First Nations police staff
- Sexual Assault/Rape Crisis Centre staff
- Public health staff
- Children's Aid Society, or your local child protection service staff
- Native Child and Family Services, or the aboriginal children's unit of the local child protection service
- Partner Assault Response program staff
- Local and/or Regional Domestic Violence/Woman Abuse Coordinating Committees
- Indian Friendship Centre staff
- Aboriginal shelter staff
- University/Community College researchers and faculty specializing in woman abuse
- Victim/Witness Assistance Program staff
- Victim Crisis Assistance and Referral Service staff

Encourage Participation: Outline specifically the positive impact that participating in Neighbours, Friends, and Families can have for 1) the community and 2) victims of woman abuse. The aim is to improve safety for women and children while holding abusers accountable.

Inform

You are encouraged to create a series of meeting topics and corresponding activities that best meet the style, expertise and needs of the community. Use the information in the Awareness Raising section to create a list of topics or questions you would like the group to discuss. This portion of the meeting gives you with the opportunity to provide accurate information and allows community members to ask questions.

Suggested meeting topics include:

- What is woman abuse?
- What are the different types of woman abuse?
- What are the warning signs of woman abuse?
- What is a safety plan?
- Does exposure to woman abuse affect children?
- How can neighbours, friends and families help?

Act

Another important part of the community meeting is planning an activity to allow community members to work together to prevent woman abuse.

For example, if the topic of the meeting is a discussion of different forms of woman abuse, a corresponding activity might be viewing a video that depicts various forms of violence followed by a facilitated discussion. A number of specific activities and supporting materials are included in the Educational Activities section of the kit.

Repeat

The conclusion of the meeting is an opportunity for you to discuss topics for upcoming meetings. You should also consider making decisions with participants about:

- An ongoing meeting schedule and location
- Length of meetings
- Group rules, such as using inclusive language and being respectful of all points of view and opinions
- Decision making process (e.g. consensus, majority vote)



Community Meeting Tips

You may encounter some challenges as people come together with different ideas, suggestions and expectations about what a Neighbours, Friends and Families campaign should accomplish in their community. Some of these challenges may be avoided by keeping some of these “Do’s” and “Don’ts” in mind:

- **DO** suggest a general theme for each meeting
- **DO** have a clear beginning and end point for each meeting – and discuss how much time should be spent on agenda items
- **DO** respect all members of the group by using inclusive language and being respectful of all points of view and opinions
- **DO** make sure all members are heard
- **DON’T** accept shaming, blaming or disrespectful words or actions – decide as a group how to manage these situations should they arise
- **DON’T** feel required to act as a therapist or counselor. The group should always offer support and encouragement to its members, but should provide information and referral for formal support when necessary.
- **DON’T** be afraid to say you don’t know. Offer to obtain information and report back to the group.

Suggestions for Working Inclusively

Establishing a Neighbours, Friends and Families campaign in your community will mean bringing together people with a variety of cultural, linguistic, social, religious, and economic experiences. Included as part of this campaign are some suggestions for how to work and provide support, in inclusive ways. This may mean, for instance, adapting strategies or approaches mentioned in this kit when working with specific communities or in developing your presentations when describing woman abuse.

Please review the “Suggestions for Working Inclusively” for more information. Available on the website at www.neighboursfriendsandfamilies.ca



Campaign Key Messages

- 1** Neighbours, Friends and Families have a crucial role to play in preventing woman abuse.
- 2** You can learn about the warning signs of woman abuse and you can learn how to help.
- 3** Neighbours, Friends and Families Campaign provides the tools to help. Read the brochures and safety cards.
- 4** Communities working together can make a difference in abused women's and children's lives.
- 5** Talking to abusive men is critical to ending woman abuse.
- 6** Abusive behaviour won't go away on its own. There are services to help men who abuse.



Section II: Raising Awareness



Neighbours, Friends & Families

“Unless we figure out how to engage everybody; it will be very difficult to end woman abuse.”

Tim Kelly

Executive Director, Changing Wags

Chair of the Expert Panel for the Neighbours, Friends and Families Campaign

“We always hear that ‘he’s a good father, a good provider’ so he must be a good man. However, good fathers or good men don’t beat the crap out of children’s mothers. You can’t be a good father and abuse your children’s mother. We know children who witness violence against their mothers are as traumatized as if they were abused directly. This is one of the messages we need to give to Neighbours, Friends and Families.”

Debbie Ball

Executive Director, Faye Peterson Transition House

Member of the Expert Panel for the Neighbours, Friends and Families Campaign

Learning about Woman Abuse

There is extensive research and information on woman abuse, rooted in numerous theories of violence. There are many different ways people think about the causes, impact and characteristics of woman abuse. Therefore, providing communities with a consistent context and definition of woman abuse will lay the foundation for non-blaming prevention work. As a community leader, you are encouraged to use the material in this section in two ways:

1. To expand your own knowledge about woman abuse
2. To inform community members by presenting this material during community meetings and forums.

Ideally, community leaders will review the material in this section and incorporate the information into a community meeting. This section includes:

- Defining Woman Abuse
- Social Context of Woman Abuse
- Warning Signs of Woman Abuse
- Safety Planning

Defining Woman Abuse

The Neighbours, Friends and Families campaign recognizes the importance of ensuring women's voices and experiences are present and heard.

When first coming together to talk about issues of woman abuse, it may be helpful to present a definition or starting point to begin talking about what woman abuse is. As you begin to talk about this definition and how it relates to the experiences of your community, you may adjust or expand on this definition.

1. In 2004, there were nearly 28,000 incidents of spousal violence reported to the police: 84% of victims were female; 16% of the victims were men. [Family Violence in Canada: A Statistical Profile 2006, Statistics Canada]
2. The Domestic Violence Death Review Committee 2005 report showed that of all the cases they examined from 2002 to 2005, the perpetrator of the violence was male in 94%, versus 6% female.
3. Children in approximately 461,000 households saw or heard spousal violence; 70% of children who witnessed the violence saw or heard assaults against their mother. [General Social Survey, 1999 Statistics Canada]

What is Woman Abuse?

Woman abuse refers to violence by a woman's current or former spouse, intimate or dating partner. It clearly acknowledges women are often the victims of abuse and men are most often the perpetrators of abuse. While abuse most often occurs within an intimate heterosexual relationship, it also occurs within gay and lesbian relationships. Woman abuse may involve physical or sexual assault, emotional abuse and/or control of finances and access to family, friends and community. Woman abuse hurts, damages, humiliates, isolates, intimidates, traps and sometimes kills.

Why the term Woman Abuse?

Why use the term “woman abuse” rather than “domestic violence”, “family violence”, “intimate partner violence” or the many other terms that are often used interchangeably to describe the abusive situations that women experience? Abuse is a more inclusive term than ‘violence’. Using the term “woman abuse” acknowledges that women's experience of violence is rooted in the social economic and political inequality of women (see Social Context of Woman Abuse section). Using the term ‘woman abuse’ captures a wide spectrum of behaviours, including physical and sexual violence, but does not dilute the existence of other seriously abusive acts including control, intimidation, threats, and isolation. Abuse survivors relate that the non-physical forms of abuse can often be just as devastating as physical abuse.

The term ‘woman abuse’ acknowledges that women experience abuse at the hands of intimate partners in far greater numbers than men in our society. Overall women also experience more severe physical injury and trauma, emotional, social and economic impact as a result of the violence than men. Statistics and the experiences of men also indicate that their lives are not plagued by such abuses at the same rates, or in the same numbers.

Women of different races, poor and older women, disabled and deaf women, lesbians, immigrant and refugee women, and geographically isolated women can be impacted differently and experience more barriers to seeking and receiving supportive services.



What Does Woman Abuse Look Like?

Woman abuse can affect the physical, emotional, spiritual, sexual, and financial wellbeing of women. The impact will be different for every woman. You may not see any signs of abuse (i.e. physical injuries or marks), but that doesn't mean the warning signs aren't present.

Physical abuse:

Physical abuse is the most commonly understood form of violence. It includes hitting, choking, pushing, punching, slapping, kicking, hair pulling, stabbing, or mutilation. All forms of physical violence are crimes under the Criminal Code of Canada.

The effects of physical abuse can include:

- Death
- Permanent disability (blindness, deafness, epilepsy, loss of mobility)
- Broken bones
- Head or spinal injuries
- Reproductive or gynecological problems
- Harm to unborn baby or birth defects
- Infertility
- Treatment for broken teeth, cuts, headaches, concussion
- Bruises, pain, trauma
- Isolation (hiding the injuries)

Emotional or Psychological Abuse

Emotional abuse (also referred to as psychological or verbal abuse) includes insults, humiliation, yelling, put-downs, threats, harming pets or damaging property.

The effects of emotional abuse can include:

- Feeling 'crazy' or insane
- Living in constant fear
- Feeling worthless/ useless
- Low self-esteem
- Feeling depressed
- Feeling out of control
- Mental illness
- Anxiety and worry
- Withdrawal from family and friends

- Eating and sleeping problems
- Post traumatic stress disorder
- Loss of energy, apathy
- Loss of community and culture
- Self-blame and self-harm

Spiritual Abuse

Spiritual violence prevents a woman from expressing spiritual or religious beliefs, preventing her from attending a place of worship, and putting her down or making fun of her religious beliefs, traditions or cultures.

The effects of spiritual abuse can include:

- Loss of sense of self
- Feeling of hopelessness and isolation
- Loss of culture
- Loss of connection to faith community

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse includes sexual exploitation, unwanted sexual touching, rape, and other sexual activities considered by the victim to be degrading, humiliating, painful, and committed without consent or the ability to consent, against a person's will, obtained by force, or threat of force or intimidation.

The effects of sexual abuse can include:

- Feelings of shame, guilt, or embarrassment
- Suicidal thoughts/tendencies
- Poor body image
- Low self-esteem
- Feeling depressed
- Inability to have healthy sexual relationships
- Reproductive and gynecological problems
- Sexual promiscuity
- Eating and sleeping disorders
- Unwanted pregnancy
- Loss of energy, apathy
- Post traumatic stress disorder
- Self-blame and self-harm



Social Context of Woman Abuse

As community leaders, issues of inequality, social status and privilege may emerge when talking with communities about woman abuse:

- In what ways are men and women equal? In what ways are they unequal?
- How do we value women?
- How do we value men?

Woman abuse exists as a result of complex, multifaceted factors which include, but are not limited to:

1. Gender role stereotypes

Traditional stereotypes (about men and women) limit the choices we make in our daily lives. Gender role stereotypes often compel men to be tough and controlling, and women to be passive and obedient. Historically, men have held the majority of decision making power in society; while there have been some changes over the last 30 years regarding the gender roles of men and women, male-dominated power and control still exists within our society. Some examples include: women's under representation in political parties; women still shoulder the main responsibility for child care and unpaid work inside the home; women earn less income compared to men (70 cents for every dollar earned by their male counterpart) and fewer women occupy senior positions in business than men.

2. The socialization of girls and boys

The messages we receive as children stay with us as we become adults. Some kids grow up learning that men are supposed to be tough and controlling and women are supposed to be passive and obedient. These kinds of stereotypes are harmful because they teach a child that being male is more desirable and more valued than being female. When family, friends and others in the community expose children to gender stereotypes and sexist attitudes, children learn to act in ways that support gender inequalities.

3. Violence in the media

Media plays a considerable role in supporting gendered stereotypes for both men and women. When media messages portray harmful myths or sexist attitudes about women and men, it normalizes women as powerless and supports woman abuse. This in turn serves as a model for what is considered acceptable behaviour in society.

4. Attitudes and behaviours leading to woman abuse

Societal attitudes and behaviours that privilege being male over being female still exist. For instance, male sports are better supported and better funded than female sports, the selection of male fetuses over female fetuses still exist as a practice, women's leadership roles are restricted in some faith organizations, family property is sometimes unequally allocated in estate division, e.g. farm being inherited by the male offspring, on reserves Aboriginal men maintain the property rights of the matrimonial home, when a family separates. Values that place more importance on men than women result in societal attitudes that condone woman abuse. These attitudes make it more acceptable to disrespect or harm women because they are viewed as less important and powerful than men.

Each of the factors described above contribute to inequality between women and men in our society and an uneven sharing of power.

How does learning about the social context inform our prevention efforts?

Questions about inequality, oppression and privilege inform how we think about women in a broad context and impact how communities will approach preventing woman abuse. What is most important in answering these questions is to reject rigid gender role stereotypes. Any thoughts or actions which demean, disrespect, or sustain the inequality of women contribute to a societal attitude that condones woman abuse and minimizes the seriousness of the problem. Community prevention efforts need to recognize the social context of woman abuse and to engage all members – women and men – to end women abuse.



Warning Signs of Abuse

Increasing the community's knowledge and recognition of the warning signs of abuse is one of the key objectives of the Neighbours, Friends and Families campaign. Through research, 15 warning signs and 23 risk factors have been identified to help those around the victim and abuser understand what they are seeing and be able to intervene. Community leaders are encouraged to weave this information into as many community meetings and educational activities as possible.

Warning signs information has been provided in the Awareness Raising section, as well as in the form of a brochure and safety card for distribution at community meetings and at local offices/public settings in your community (e.g. hair salons, community health centres, guidance and school offices, public libraries, community centres, restaurants, faith communities, service clubs, women's services, and doctor's offices).

You should carefully review these warning signs and consider how they can be shared effectively with community members.

Warning signs he may be abusive:

- He puts her down
- He does all the talking and dominates the conversation
- He checks up on her all the time, even at work
- He tries to suggest he is the victim and acts depressed
- He tries to keep her away from you
- He acts as if he owns her
- He lies to make himself look good or exaggerates his good qualities
- He acts like he is superior and of more value than others in his home

Warning signs she may be experiencing abuse:

- She may be apologetic and makes excuses for his behaviour or becomes aggressive and angry
- She is nervous about talking when he's there
- She seems to be sick more often and misses work
- She tries to cover her bruises
- She makes excuses at the last minute about why she can't meet you or she tries to avoid you on the street
- She seems sad, lonely, withdrawn and is afraid
- She uses more drugs or alcohol to cope

Indicators for Risk of Future Harm: The danger may be greater if...

- He has access to her and her children
- He has access to weapons
- He has a history of abuse with her or others
- He has threatened to harm or kill her if she leaves him: He says "If I can't have you, no one will."
- He threatens to harm her children, her pets or her property
- He has threatened to kill himself
- He has hit her, choked her
- He is going through major life changes (e.g. job, separation, depression)
- He is convinced she is seeing someone else
- He doesn't seek support
- He blames her for ruining his life
- He watches her actions, listens to her telephone conversations, sees her emails and follows her
- He has trouble keeping a job
- He takes drugs or drinks every day
- He has no respect for the law
- She has just separated or is planning to leave
- She fears for her life and for her children's safety or she cannot see her risk
- She is in a custody battle, or has children from a previous relationship
- She is involved in another relationship
- She has unexplained injuries
- She has no access to a phone
- She faces other obstacles (e.g. she does not speak English, is not yet a legal resident of Canada, lives in a remote area)
- She has no friends or family

Statistics indicate that women who are under 25 years of age, women with a disability, Aboriginal women and women living common-law are at higher risk of abuse. (Statistics Canada: *Family Violence in Canada. A Statistical Profile 2005*)

Safety Planning

The term "safety planning" is often used as an umbrella term to capture a variety of tools and strategies to increase the safety of women who experience abuse. In practice, safety planning involves providing information, access to resources and supportive assistance to a woman so she can develop a plan of action to prepare herself and her children for being safe in advance of potentially dangerous situations.



You should familiarize yourself with the brochure “Safety Planning for Women Who Are Abused” and the safety card “Safety Planning Tips for Women Who Are Abused”. These materials can be distributed at community meetings and at local offices/public settings in your community (e.g. hair salons, community health centres, guidance and school offices, service providers, community centres, restaurants, faith communities, service clubs, women’s services, and doctor’s offices). The brochure and safety card is available in other languages. See www.neighboursfriendsandfamilies.ca.

Helping your Community Support Women: Strategies for Facilitators in Preventing Violence

About the strategies

Part of raising awareness about the issue of woman abuse includes providing recommendations about how to respond to the warning signs. Providing appropriate strategies and teaching community members how to approach neighbours, friends and family members is an important part of a Neighbours, Friends and Families campaign.

Below are four strategies written in a Question & Answer format. You can pose these questions to the group, engage in a brief discussion, and fill in knowledge gaps with the information provided in the strategy when necessary.

The four strategies are:

1. How to talk to women who are abused or at risk of abuse
2. How to talk to men who are abusive
3. How to recognize children who have been exposed to woman abuse
4. How to talk to a co-worker who may be abused

Each strategy includes:

1. Handouts and/or promotional materials that complement a particular strategy
2. Demonstrated outcome of teaching a particular strategy

Talking about these topics during a community meeting will likely demand the full time allotted for the meeting.

How to talk to women who are abused or at risk of abuse

Corresponding Handouts and Promotional Materials:

- Brochures
 - Safety Planning for Women Who are Abused
 - How You Can Identify and Help Women at Risk of Abuse
- Booklet
 - Understanding Woman Abuse
- Safety Cards
 - Safety Planning Tips for Women Who Are Abused
 - Warning Signs to Identify and Help Women At Risk Of Abuse
- Poster
- Bookmark

Outcomes for this strategy:

- Increased knowledge of warning signs
- Ability to identify local service providers and resources

Q: *How do you reach out to someone who may be experiencing abuse?*

A: Many people hesitate to speak with women they think are being abused because they don’t know what to say or how to say it. Keep in mind that any woman can be abused.

You may hesitate to get involved because you think woman abuse is a personal matter and what goes on behind closed doors isn’t your business, or that the woman would talk about the abuse if it were really a problem. But many women find that hard to do, especially if they have asked for help in the past and were blamed for the violence instead. Most abused women who are offered help deeply appreciate it, even if they don’t say so. For many women, it takes a lot of time, planning, help and courage to escape the abuse. In the meantime, it is important for women to know that help is available from people who know and care about them and their situation. Knowing there are people offering help can make it possible for women to take action.

Remember, you don’t have to be an expert and your role is not to be a counselor. There are professionals in your community who provide expert services and advice.



What you can do is be supportive, and let her know there are services she can contact and people who can help. If you know someone who is being abused by her partner, there are many things you can do that will make a real difference. For advice, call the Assaulted Women's Helpline at 1-866-863-0511 (1-866-863-7868 TTY).

Q: *How do you know if something is wrong?*

A: Perhaps your friend often has unexplained injuries, or the explanations she offers don't add up. Perhaps her child is frequently upset and withdrawn, and won't say why. She often cancels plans at the last minute, or seems afraid of making her partner angry. Remember, woman abuse is a gender-based crime where the man in the relationship exercises physical/emotional/financial and/or other forms of controlling behaviour. Woman abuse can happen in all kinds of relationships: between people who are married, living together or dating, between people who have separated or divorced, or between people in a same-sex relationship. See the full list of warning signs and risk factors in the "How You Can Identify and Help Women at Risk of Abuse" brochure.

Q: *What should you do?*

A: Here are some of the ways you can help when you recognize the warning signs of abuse

- Talk to her about what you see and assure her that you are concerned. Tell her you believe her and that it is not her fault.
- Encourage her not to confront her partner if she is planning to leave. Her safety must be protected.
- Offer to provide childcare while she seeks help.
- Offer your home as a safe haven to her, her children and pets. If she accepts your offer, do not let her partner in.
- Encourage her to pack a small bag with important items and keep it stored at your home in case she needs it.
- Know that you or she can call for help at the Assaulted Women's Helpline, your local shelter or, in an emergency, the police.
- Give her written materials about ways she can protect herself. The enclosed brochure "How You Can Identify and Help Women at Risk of Abuse" may be helpful.

- If you want to get further advice about a situation, contact a local women's shelter or support program. They can help. They may suggest you get more involved as a trained volunteer to help other women in your community.

Q: *What if she denies the abuse?*

A: Sometimes women aren't yet ready, comfortable or feel unsafe sharing information about abuse. If she denies abuse:

- Assure her she can talk to you any time.
- Don't become angry or frustrated with her decisions. It is important to understand that she may be afraid or not ready to take next actions.
- Try to understand why she might be having difficulty getting help. She may feel ashamed.
- Offer to go with her if she needs additional information or support.
- If she has children, let her know gently that you are concerned about her and her children's safety and emotional well being. She may be more willing to recognize her situation if she recognizes her children may also be in danger.

Q: *What do you do if she decides to remain in the relationship?*

A: Remember, it is not your role to encourage an abused woman to leave her home. Sometimes it can feel frustrating when a friend or co-worker returns to an abusive partner. It is important to understand that there are many reasons for this decision. Ending any relationship takes time; it can be even harder with abusive relationships. In many cases, the victim fears for her life. She may want her children to grow up with both parents. She may feel guilty, believing the abuser's excuses that the abuse is her fault. Sometimes her self-esteem is so damaged by the abuse that she may believe she can't make it on her own; she may just want the violence to end, not the relationship. She may, for economic reasons, feel she needs to stay: she may be concerned that she will not be able to provide for herself or her children on her own. He may threaten not to pay child support.

Whatever the reasons for her decision to stay in the relationship, there are many ways you can help.



Here's how:

- Encourage her to keep a record of what is happening to her; include evidence of threats made verbally or in writing. Keep this record in a safe place away from the home.
- Identify resources to help her take care of herself and provide emotional support.
- Suggest she tell her doctor or nurse about the violence and that she ask him or her to document the abuse in her medical records and take photographs of her injuries. These records may be helpful to her if she decides to take legal action in the future.
- Encourage her to call the Assaulted Women's Helpline to get help on developing a safety plan, including information about legal remedies available to her. If she reveals that she is being stalked by her abuser, encourage her to call the local police service or offer to help her make the call. Stalking is against the law.

Many women stay in a relationship because of the children. It is important to encourage her to include her children in her safety plan. Discuss the safety issues of the child remaining in the home. Be aware that this can be a sensitive and shameful topic for women.

Q: *What should you do if she decides to leave?*

A: If she decides to leave her relationship, she may need help finding a place to live, money, a place to store her belongings, or help locating an abused women's program.

Decide if you feel comfortable helping out in any of these ways. The most important thing you can do is help her develop a safety plan, which may include keeping her money and important documents in a safe place and making a plan to leave. Abused women's programs and shelters can help.

How to talk to men who are abusive

Corresponding Handouts and Promotional Materials:

- Brochure
 - How to Talk to Men Who are Abusive

- Booklet
 - Understanding Woman Abuse
- Safety Card
 - Warning Signs to Identify and Help Women at Risk of Abuse
- Poster
- Bookmark

Outcomes of this strategy:

- Increased knowledge of warning signs
- Increased knowledge of how to talk to abusive men
- Ability to identify local service providers and resources

Q: *How do I have a conversation about his abusive behaviour?*

A: Sometimes people around an abusive man overlook his behaviour and only focus on supporting the abused woman. At other times, people may sympathize with the abusive man, which may inadvertently escalate his abuse. Talking to an abusive man is an important part of preventing woman abuse, but it needs to be done carefully.

Speaking to abusive men may seem difficult and uncomfortable. However, if you know an abusive man and are concerned about the safety of his partner or children, there are ways to create opportunities to talk to him and offer support to his family while being aware of potential risks. (See the "How to Talk to Men Who Are Abusive" brochure for more information.) But remember, abusive behaviour won't go away on its own. It's important to encourage him to seek help for his behaviour.

Before speaking to an abusive man, it is important to consider your personal safety and how this discussion may affect his partner's and children's safety. If you are unsure about the risks, you might consider speaking with a woman's advocate who can help you make the best plan for speaking to the abusive man.

IMPORTANT: Never put yourself in the middle of a violent situation. If you witness a violent incident, call 911 or your local police services.



When you recognize the warning signs of abuse, consider the following tips before you decide to approach him:

- Choose the right time and place to have a full discussion.
- Approach him when he is calm.
- Be direct and clear about what you have seen.
- Tell him that his behaviour is his responsibility. Avoid making judgmental comments about him as a person. Don't validate his attempt to blame others for his behaviour.
- Inform him that his behaviour needs to stop.
- Don't try to force him to change or to seek help.
- Tell him that you are concerned for the safety of his partner and children.
- Never argue with him about his abusive actions. Recognize that confrontational, argumentative approaches may make the situation worse and put her at higher risk.
- Call the police if the woman's safety is in jeopardy.

Q: *If he admits to being abusive, then what?*

A: Ask him how he may have reached the point of using violence and abuse. Tell him you believe he can change if he really wants to, and you will support him in his efforts. When talking with anyone about abuse, remember to talk about the important connection between his thoughts and attitudes about women and men, and how these things can lead to abusive behaviours toward women. If there is ongoing abuse, suggest possible support services (e.g. Partner Assault Response Counselling Program) he may be able to access for help.

It is important to avoid justifying or excusing his abusive behaviour. Never condone or support abuse in any way. Encourage him to take responsibility for his abuse and to stop using controlling behaviours. Also, try to help him think through the benefits and drawbacks of healthy and abusive relationships. Remember, you don't have to be an expert and your role is not to be a counselor. There are professionals in your community who provide expert services and advice. What you can do is be supportive, and let him know there are services he can contact and people who can help. For a list of Partner Assault Response programs, call the Assaulted Women's Helpline at 1-866-863-0511 (1-866-863-7868 TTY).

Q: *What if he denies the abuse and refuses to talk about it?*

A: Minimizing, denying and blaming are well known tactics of abusive men. They are used to deflect responsibility for behaviour that hurts others. Men who are abusive will often minimize and deny that they have done anything wrong, state that it isn't that bad or blame the victim for their actions. When talking to a man who is abusive, you will likely meet with resistance to what you are saying. Being prepared to address his behaviour includes recognizing he will likely deny his abuse as a way of refusing to accept responsibility for his actions.

This doesn't mean that you haven't made a difference. At the very least, he is now aware that other people consider his behaviour to be abusive and unacceptable. Now that you have spoken with him, he may choose to talk to you about the abuse in the future. Teaching people about equality and healthy relationships is not a single act or event. Instead, it is an ongoing effort to share information and ideas with others.

Let him know that he is not alone. Let him know that you are there to support him. Also, try to help him recognize which behaviours are abusive and controlling. Controlling behaviours include any attempts at preventing a partner from doing what she wants to do (e.g., stopping her from getting a job or seeing someone she cares about). Emphasize the benefits of seeking help and finding healthy alternatives for resolving conflicts. Be prepared to help him access support services.

Here are some suggestions you can consider if he is denying his actions:

- Keep your conversation focused on your concerns for his family's safety and well-being and reiterate abuse is never an answer.
- Keep the lines of communication open and look for opportunities to help him find support.



How to recognize children who have been exposed to woman abuse

Corresponding Handouts and Promotional Materials:

- Booklet
 - Understanding Woman Abuse
- Safety Cards
 - Safety Planning Tips for Women Who are Abused
 - Warning Signs to Identify and Help Women at Risk of Abuse
- Poster
- Bookmark

Outcomes of this strategy:

- Increased knowledge about the impact of woman abuse on children
- Ability to identify local service providers and resources

Q: *How do we know if a child is being exposed to woman abuse?*

A: Children may not verbalize their experience about being exposed to woman abuse, but there are warning signs. While children can be very resilient, and there are some children who display few short-term or long-term negative consequences from being exposed, the risk of future harm and child maltreatment increases for children who are exposed to woman abuse.

These warning signs may indicate a child has been exposed to woman abuse:

- physical complaints (headaches, stomach aches)
- tiredness
- constant worry about possible danger and/or safety of loved ones
- sadness and/or withdrawal from others and activities
- low self-esteem and lack of confidence, especially for trying new things (including academic tasks)
- difficulty paying attention in class, concentrating on work and learning new information
- outbursts of anger directed toward other adults, peers or self
- bullying and/or aggression directed toward peers and siblings
- stereotyped beliefs about males as aggressors and females as victims

Older children may display these signs:

- suicidal thoughts and actions
- high risk behaviour including criminal activities, alcohol and substance abuse
- school truancy or leaving home
- dating violence

Q: *What are the potential impacts on the child of being exposed to woman abuse?*

A: Watching, hearing or learning later of a mother being abused by her partner threatens young people's sense of stability and security.

The potential impacts on children and adolescents include:

- increased emotional and behavioural difficulties.
- traumatic stress reactions (e.g., flashbacks, nightmares, intensified startled reactions, constant worry about possible danger).
- increased risk of physical injury or childhood abuse (e.g., physical, emotional).

The perpetrator may use children and adolescents as a control tactic against adult victims. Examples include:

- claiming the children's bad behaviour is the reason for the assaults on their mother;
- threatening violence against children and their pets in front of the victim;
- holding them hostage or abducting them in an effort to punish their mother or to gain compliance;
- talking negatively to them about their mother.

Children and adolescents may experience strong ambivalence toward their violent parent. Affection coexists with feelings of resentment and disappointment.

- Young people may imitate and learn the attitudes and behaviours modeled when woman abuse occurs. They may: use violence and threats to get what they want, learn people do not get in trouble when they hurt others, believe men are in charge and get to control women's lives, and believe that women don't have the right to be treated with respect.



- Exposure to violence may desensitize children and adolescents to aggressive behaviour. When this occurs, aggression becomes part of the “norm” and is less likely to signal concern to them.

Q: *If I am able to speak safely with a mother about her child(ren), what is the most important information to convey?*

A: The most important thing to convey to a mother is your concern for her safety and the safety of her children. Use non-blaming language when you talk to her about the impact that woman abuse may be having on her child(ren).

It may be helpful to work together to develop some ideas for ways to lessen the negative impact on her children. These talking points can be included in the discussion with the mother:

- Emphasize the importance of providing children with the opportunity to safely express their feelings. Explain to her that she could try to provide examples of different feelings (i.e. happy, sad, frustrated, scared, etc.), appropriate ways to express them, and ways to recognize them in others.
- Use non-judgmental terms when referring to her child's behaviour – do not use ‘good’, ‘bad’, ‘not nice’, etc.
- Emphasize the importance of creating a safety plan for her and her children.
- Suggest that children have a chance to be in control of something. The opportunity to make decisions increases their self-esteem and sense of control.
- Encourage the mother not to demonize or criticize the offending parent. This may confuse children and create feelings of disloyalty.

How to talk to a co-worker who may be abused

Corresponding Handouts and/or Promotional Materials:

- Brochure
 - Safety Planning for Women Who are Abused
 - How You Can Identify and Help Women at Risk of Abuse

- Booklet
 - Understanding Woman Abuse
- Safety Cards
 - Safety Planning Tips for Women Who are Abused
 - Warning Signs to Identify and Help Women at Risk of Abuse
- Poster
- Bookmark

Outcomes of this strategy:

- Increased knowledge about how to support co-workers
- Ability to identify local service providers and resources

Woman abuse does not only happen at home. Sometimes it can cross over into the workplace. A friend or colleague with whom you work may be a victim of woman abuse.

Q: *I don't really know my co-worker outside of the office. What are the warning signs that she may be experiencing abuse?*

A: Your co-worker may have unexplained bruises, or explanations that just don't add up. She may be distracted, have trouble concentrating, misses work often or receives repeated, upsetting telephone calls during the day. These signs could indicate she may not be safe at home. For more information on the warning signs, please see the brochure “How You Can Identify and Help Women at Risk of Abuse” or the safety card “Warning Signs to Identify and Help Women at Risk of Abuse”.

Q: *I have the opportunity to speak to her away from her abuser. How can I offer my support?*

A: Here are some things you can do:

- Let her know it is safe to talk with you about the problems she is facing at home.
- Give her the phone numbers of local shelters and other community services.
- Make sure she knows to save any threatening email or voice mail messages she gets at work. She may be able to use these if she decides to take legal



action in the future. If she already has a restraining order, the messages may serve as evidence in court that the order was violated.

- Offer to screen her calls or emails for her so that she doesn't have to correspond with her abuser.
- Place Safety Cards in the women's washrooms or employee lounges, where they can be taken anonymously. The cards list warning signs indicating that someone may be experiencing abuse or is being abusive. They also contain information on safety planning.
- Check your company's policies: is help to address women abuse available through your Employee Assistance Program? Employer Assistance Programs should have a list of referrals to local services.
- Suggest that she park close to the entrance of the building. Ask her to consider letting the security staff know of the situation if she fears an assault at work.

relationships. Some believe they are superior to women on all levels (i.e. intellectually, socially, financially, and parentally) and therefore have the right, or that their role justifies the use of abusive, dominating behaviour to gain and maintain their positions of authority and prestige. Oppression is sustained by the privilege associated with a preferred gender, race, religion, class, sexual orientation, age and physical ability.

In order to end woman abuse, all women must become equal to men and be valued and respected equally in society.

Strategy to support the discussion:

Each community may have different indicators of equality/inequality. To generate discussion you may ask the audience to think about community-specific factors such as:

- the prominence of girls' sports verses the boys' sports
- the number of women faith leaders
- the number of female leaders in local businesses, school institutions, judiciary, political office, and other decision-making positions,
- the level of financial independence of women verses men (number of women living in poverty, etc.)
- loss of property rights for Aboriginal females on reserve when a family separates.

Then you may want the group to reflect, personally on how they may perpetuate inequality and in turn how they each can promote equality in their lives.

Handling Difficult Issues/Questions

Thirty years ago, woman abuse was still considered a private family problem; it was no one else's business and certainly not an issue to be addressed by the community. Now, it is no longer acceptable to remain uninvolved or to do nothing when a woman is experiencing abuse.

However, there may be myths, doubts, negative comments or disturbing questions raised when you are working in your communities. The following section can help you prepare for some of the resistance and doubts that may be expressed by community members.

Q: *But women are equal now...aren't they?*

A: Even though laws and social policies have changed in an effort to mitigate inequality between women and men, gender stereotyping persists generation after generation because of the messages we give children about how we value women and men. These messages are relayed through song lyrics, advertisements, movies, television, video games, and through the influential words of other adults around them.

Young boys and men often have more opportunities, power and privilege in academics, athletics, employment, the criminal justice system, and their intimate

Q: *Women are just as abusive as men, right?*

A: While some men do experience violence within an intimate relationship, the vast majority of victims are women.

According the Statistics Canada's 2006 *Family Violence in Canada: A Statistical Profile*:

- In 2004, there were nearly 28,000 incidents of spousal violence reported to the police: 84% of victims were female; 16% of victims were male.



Women were more likely than men to report being targets of 10 or more violent spousal episodes (pg 11).

- Over a 10 year period, police reports showed males were much more likely than females to be the perpetrators of spousal violence incidents coming to the attention of police and more likely to repeatedly abuse their spouse (pg 13):
 - One time incidents - 86% male vs. 15% female
 - Repeated abuse incidents - 94% male vs. 6% female
 - Chronic abuse incidents - 97% male vs. 3% female
- Women were twice as likely to be injured as a result of spousal violence (pg 21).

Overall, women are more likely to be victims of more severe forms of violence than are men. *The 2005 Family Violence in Canada, A Statistical Profile*, Statistics Canada showed that women and men experienced very different types of spousal violence and that the impact of the violence is more serious for women than men (pg 13). For instance, the data showed that:

- female victims of spousal violence were more than twice as likely to be injured as male victims.
- women were also three times more likely to fear for their life, and twice as likely to be the targets of more than 10 violent episodes.
- women were three times more likely to take time off from their everyday activities because of the violence; and
- women were sexually assaulted in intimate relationships, whereas men were not.
- Women who experienced violence during a relationship stated that the violence increased in severity or frequency after separation, whereas the men did not experience this.

These data support the notion that spousal violence against women is often an issue of power and control; when the woman leaves the relationship, the man's control over his partner is threatened and as a result the violence escalates against the woman (pg 16).

The same report showed that for men the most serious violence they experienced was being pushed, shoved, or slapped (34%) and being kicked, bit, hit or hit with something (34%).

A copy of these reports is available online at: <http://www.statcan.ca/english/freepub/85-224-XIE/free.htm> (2005)

<http://www.statcan.ca/english/freepub/85-224-XIE/85-224-XIE2006000.pdf> (2006)

The Domestic Violence Death Review Committee Annual Report to the Chief Coroner, 2005 reported that, of the 100 cases they examined between 2002 to 2005, females were victims in 93% of the cases and males were victims in 7% of these cases. Males perpetrated the violence in 94%, versus 6% for females of the cases. They state that “domestic violence fatalities are not gender-neutral events.”

Strategy to support the discussion:

There are many reasons why people ask these questions; sometimes the intention of the question is harmless (i.e. when people haven't yet received adequate and accurate information about woman abuse), and sometimes the intention may be more hostile (i.e. focused on blaming women). Abusive men may have also convinced others that their partner is abusive too. Remember that abusive men will often suggest that they are the victim and this is a warning sign (for more signs see “Warning Signs of Abuse”). Also remember a person's intent is not as important as the impact such discussion has on others.

Try to introduce these ideas into the discussions, while maintaining a respectful, safe atmosphere:

- Woman abuse, as an issue, is very complex and demands a complex set of strategies, responses and solutions to keep woman safe – suggesting that abuse is equally experienced by men and women does not change the need or importance of preventing woman abuse.
- Accepting the idea that men and women experience abuse equally minimizes the experiences of abused women and contradicts statistics.
- Acknowledge that it is most important to have a safe place for women who have experienced abuse and finding a safe space is a priority.
- Request that all members consider the impact of their tone, intentions and demeanor on others in the room.



- Be prepared to provide the “Understanding Woman Abuse” booklet
- Agree to return to the discussion at the next opportunity if unable to reach a reasonable conclusion.

Q: *How do women use violence?*

A: Violence against anyone is unacceptable and should not be condoned whether it is instigated by either men or women. An exception is when violence is used to protect one’s self, one’s children or pets. Furthermore, being with a partner who is dominating and controlling creates trauma for the victim or victims. Abused women can also become aggressive and angry in response to the trauma they endure and this is a warning sign (for more signs see “Warning Signs of Abuse”).

Research literature and women’s advocates generally acknowledge that women’s use of violence can be motivated by numerous circumstances including (but not limited to):

- Self-protection and protecting loved ones, such as children and pets (the most common reason for the use of violence)
- A reaction to being abused, dominated and controlled where she is not the dominate aggressor
- The need to get away from the abuser, during separation or during an attack (this can also be a form of self-protection)
- The desire to control and dominate her partner (research shows that this is in five percent of cases^{1,2,3})

Strategy to support the discussion:

- Indicate that the majority of women who use violence against an intimate partner are themselves victims of woman abuse. Criminal justice and research statistics that indicate women are equally abusive as men can be misleading, when the statistics are not examined closely.
- Ask the group to talk about the dynamics of power, control, and authority. Do women who use violence typically possess power, control and authority?
- Revisit the fact that women who use violence against their partner are typically victims of violence themselves. Ask the group to consider how this changes their perception or idea of women as “abusers”.
- Invite the group to learn more – ask that they come back with more information about myths, misleading statistics, articles and reports about women’s use of violence.

Overcoming Hesitation: Intervening in Woman Abuse

Community leaders may wish to address some of the points of concern listed below at community meetings. When these points are brought up by members of the community, take the opportunity to fully address the concerns and be prepared to share the corresponding booklet “Understanding Woman Abuse”.

1 Belknap and Melton’s “In Brief: Are Heterosexual Men Also Victims of Intimate Partner Abuse?” Washington DC: Applies Research Forum, National Electronic Network on Violence Against Women, National Resource Center on Domestic Violence.

2 Miller and Meloy’s “Women’s Use of Force”, Violence Against Women, Volume 12, Number 1, January 2006, pp.89-115.

3 Johnson and Leone’s “The Differential Effects of Intimate Terrorism and Situational Couple Violence: Findings from the National Violence Against Women Survey.” Journal of Family Issues, 26(3), 2005, pp. 322-349.



Points of Concern**Points to Consider**

You feel it's none of your business

It could be a matter of life or death. Violence in the community is everyone's business

You don't know what to say

Saying you care and are concerned is a good start

You might make things worse

Doing nothing could make things worse

It's not serious enough to involve the police

Police are trained to respond and utilize other resources

You are afraid his violence will turn to you or your family

Speak to her alone. Let the police know if you receive threats

You think she doesn't really want to leave because she keeps coming back

She may not have had the support she needed

You are afraid she will become angry with you

Maybe, but she will know you care

You are afraid he will become angry with you

Maybe, but it gives you the chance to offer your help

You feel that both partners are your friends

One friend is being abused and lives in fear

You believe that if she wanted help, she would ask for help

She may be too afraid and ashamed to ask for help

You believe that if he wanted help or wanted to stop his behaviour he would

He may be too ashamed to ask for help

You think it is a family matter

It isn't when someone is being hurt



Sharing Stories – Some Do's and Don'ts

While there are some common elements in women's experiences of abuse, it is important to know that each woman's experience is different. The group should recognize and respect her unique experience by speaking about the issue of woman abuse in a respectful and thoughtful manner. It may be helpful when coming together as a group to talk about woman abuse to keep these "Do's and Don'ts" in mind.

- **DO** let the group know that this meeting is a safe place for women to share their stories if they choose – do not use questioning language, be disrespectful or minimize her experience.
- **DO** respect a woman's decision to share as much or as little as she likes.
- **DO** ask her if the group can ask questions – find her comfort level in addressing the group.
- **DO** discuss with women who have been abused how their experiences might shape the activities of the group.
- **DO** encourage all members of the group to respect the confidentiality of her story and make a decision as a group about how to share women's experiences of abuse in the community to promote change.
- **DO** be prepared to offer support if sharing her story becomes painful and upsetting.
- **DON'T** blame her. Abuse is never her fault.
- **DON'T** request that she share her story without asking privately first.
- **DON'T** ask her to speak on behalf of all abused women – respect her story as her own and not the 'plight' of all women who experience abuse.
- **DON'T** use jargon when describing abusive men (i.e. wife beaters) – refer to them as abusive men or perpetrators of abuse.
- **DON'T** question the accuracy or truth of a woman's story. Her decision to share her story is what's important.
- **DON'T** pressure or ask her to do anything she isn't ready to do (i.e. go to shelter or contact service providers).



“When community members step forth and really make a choice to end violence against women; that contributes to the healing of the whole community, because then it’s not isolated. That’s what this whole campaign is about. Abuse is not just in the house of the man beating up the woman, especially in the smaller communities, it affects all members.”

Terry Swan

Program Manager, Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centers

Member of the Expert Panel for Neighbours, Friends and Families Campaign

Chair of the Aboriginal Expert Panel for Neighbours, Friends and Families Campaign

Section III: Education Activities



Neighbours, Friends & Families

“Woman abuse is a societal issue and as a society we all have a role to play.”

Alfredo Marroquin

Program Coordinator, SalvAide

Administrative Coordinator for Neighbours, Friends and Families Campaign

“We can point to almost every case [where a woman is killed by her intimate partner] and find that somebody knew something but they didn’t understand the significance of it and they didn’t understand what to do about it.”

Al O’Marra

(former) Chief Counsel, Office of the Chief Coroner and
Chair of the Domestic Violence Death Review Committee

Neighbours, Friend and Families is about more than simply sharing information. This campaign encourages communities to come together to actively prevent woman abuse. Participating in an educational activity or event provides communities with an opportunity to 'do the work'. Working together on an activity, public awareness raising event or other group project brings a sense of accomplishment and enriched understanding of the extent and impact of woman abuse.

The following are suggested activities for your campaign.

Contacting the Media

Establishing contact with the media can have a tremendous impact on the way woman abuse is portrayed in print and on television. Providing the media with accurate and complete information on women abuse could help get that information to more readers and viewers.

Community leaders are encouraged to contact the media in the spirit of providing more information and building ongoing relationships. Working with the media to describe incidents of abuse in a broader way allows the community to learn more about the issue. Also consider, asking reporters to write stories on different aspects of woman abuse and offer to support them in the analysis and statistics.

Here are some suggestions for helping media report on issues of woman abuse:

- Encourage journalists and reporters to highlight the incident or scenario in a broader context, by citing local or national statistics about how common woman abuse is.
- Ask that information about services and how to receive help be provided with all stories and news reports related to woman abuse.
- Request that excuses or justifications for abuse be avoided. For example, a report might say the abuser had been depressed over losing his job, or that he had been drinking heavily before he became violent. Rather than just offering these details, put them in the context of woman abuse by indicating they are risk factors.

- Language is a powerful tool. Ask that warning signs of woman abuse be included in media reports rather than attributing behaviours to "jealousy" or "a crime of passion". Descriptions like "domestic dispute" or "lovers quarrel" downplay the serious and abusive nature of women's experience.

The booklet "Raising Awareness with the Media" offers information about how to engage the journalists, reporters and the local news media and provide them with the tools to participate in preventing woman abuse through the media. Information included in this booklet includes:

1. A general letter encouraging media outlets to provide more information about the warning signs and context of woman abuse
2. Letters to the editor in response to a woman's murder or assault
3. A general news release about woman abuse
4. Sample news releases about the local launch of Neighbours, Friends and Families campaign
5. A notice inviting community members to attend a Neighbours, Friends and Families forum

Community groups should focus on developing partnerships with local media to provide accurate information and cultivate a more informed, aware media presence in the community. If a story released by your local media does not adequately capture the nature and impact of woman abuse, having an established relationship with local media makes addressing the issue much easier.

Adopting a Business

Offer local businesses, such as the hairdresser, local variety store, or laundromat a poster to display in the window. Try to get support from the business to call a woman abuse program or the police if someone is in a dangerous situation.

Return often to make sure the materials are still posted. You can order more materials by visiting www.neighboursfriendsandfamilies.on.ca.



Helping Local Programs

In cities across Canada, dozens of people tirelessly provide support, shelter, and other needed services to abused women and their children. Here are some ways to help support these programs:

- Donate money to local shelters and women's support programs to make sure that abused women will have a safe place to go with their children.
- If you can't afford a donation, or if you want to raise more money, be creative. Throw yourself a birthday party and ask your friends, neighbours and co-workers to donate the amount they would have spent on a gift for you to a local shelter or women's support agency.
- Consider volunteering at the local women's shelter or other support agency. These organizations need volunteers with a wide range of skills to help them with projects and day-to-day programming and administration. They also may need donations of goods and services, including furniture, office equipment and supplies, small gift items for volunteer appreciation, design and printing services, and many other things.

Books and Videos

As a group, you can read one of the books dealing with woman abuse on the enclosed book list (or an appropriate book from another source). Then, when you meet again, you can use the talking points listed below to start a discussion about abuse. Or, read one of the books and consider the discussion points on your own.

You could also watch one of the woman abuse movies, from the enclosed list, available at most video stores. Use the following questions to guide your discussion afterwards. Consider these questions when reading the book/viewing the movie:

- Which characters were affected by woman abuse in this book/video, and how were they affected by it?
- What did you learn about woman abuse from this book/video?
- Was the problem handled well, or did the book/ video include stereotypes about women being abused and the men hurting them?

- In what ways did the other characters in the book/video help women facing woman abuse to stay safe?
- If they didn't reach out to help, why didn't they and how could they have?
- In what ways was violence against women portrayed as socially acceptable in this book/video?
- Was the problem of woman abuse connected to other social problems faced by the characters (i.e. child abuse, alcoholism)?
- How did the book/video make you feel?
- Did it remind you of a situation you have experienced yourself?
- Has that experience affected you? How?

Broadcasting Public Service Announcements (PSAs)

The Neighbours, Friends and Families campaign includes Public Service Announcements. More information can be found online at www.neighboursfriendsandfamilies.on.ca.

Community groups can view the PSAs and then begin working on a strategy to broadcast them in the community. Ask the local television affiliate, college/university broadcasting group, and other visual media organizations to air one or all of the PSAs. **Please note that the PSAs can only be broadcast by television broadcasters on a free-of-charge basis.** The PSAs are available in English and French (additional PSAs are available in an Aboriginal version as well). The PSAs will educate neighbours, friends & family members about how to identify the warning signs of abuse and direct them to take action by calling the Assaulted Women's Helpline or the local police.



Section IV: Handouts and Promotional Materials



Neighbours, Friends & Families

“In most of the tragedies we see, the key people are right there beside the victim; they’re friends, family, co-workers and neighbours.”

Dr. Peter Jaffe

Academic Director

Centre for Education and Research on Violence Against Women and Children

Member of the Domestic Violence Death Review Committee

Member of the Expert Panel for Neighbours, Friends and Families Campaign

“We need family members, we need neighbours, we need friends to get on board to assist us in trying to keep people safe.”

June Dobson

Ontario Provincial Police, Provincial Abuse Coordinator

Member of the Expert Panel for the Neighbours, Friends and Families Campaign

“... a lot of times families where abuse is occurring look good on the outside. The neighbours would rather believe that nothing is happening, when in fact it is. I think the warning signs are important because they help us to think about what we are seeing. This encourages a person to take some action when we notice something that doesn’t feel right.”

Tracey Marshall

Durham Regional Police, Police Risk Assessment Expert

Member of the Expert Panel for the Neighbours, Friends and Families Campaign

Handouts

Information about women abuse can at times be hard to digest or difficult to recall accurately when it is needed. For members of your community group, providing handouts about warning signs and safety planning can help community members become accurately informed and prepared to provide support to women and respond to abusive men. For additional copies of the handouts included in this campaign, see the CD included with this kit or visit our website at: www.neighboursfriendsandfamilies.on.ca

The sample handouts included in this kit are:

- Brochures
 - How You Can Identify and Help Women at Risk of Abuse
 - Safety Planning for Women Who are Abused
 - How to Talk to Men Who are Abusive
- Safety Cards
 - Safety Planning Tips for Women Who Are Abused
 - Warning Signs to Identify and Help Women at Risk of Abuse
- Booklets
 - Understanding Woman Abuse
 - Raising Awareness with the Media
- Additional Materials
 - Book and Video List
 - Suggestions for Working Inclusively
 - Public Service Announcements description
 - Poster
 - Bookmark

Most Ontarian's feel a personal responsibility for reducing woman abuse...and recognizing it is the first step. Take the warning signs seriously. Visit www.neighboursfriendsandfamilies.on.ca for further information or call the Assaulted Women's Helpline at 1-866-863-0511 or in an emergency the police.

Logo

As you prepare your materials for group meetings, public forums and promotional activities, utilize the Neighbours, Friends & Families logo on your printed materials. Your prevention efforts will be recognized as part of the Neighbours, Friends and Families campaign with the common logo used throughout Ontario. To download and electronic version of the logo, please visit:

www.neighboursfriendsandfamilies.on.ca



Neighbours, Friends & Families





*Neighbours,
Friends and
Families:*

*Understanding
Woman Abuse*



Neighbours, Friends & Families



Understanding Woman Abuse

What is Woman Abuse?

Woman abuse refers to violence by a woman's current or former spouse, intimate partner, or dating partner. It clearly acknowledges women are often the victims of abuse and men are most often the perpetrators of abuse. While abuse most often occurs within an intimate heterosexual relationship, it also occurs within gay and lesbian relationships. Woman abuse may involve physical or sexual assault, emotional abuse and/or control of finances and access to family, friends and community. Woman abuse hurts, damages, humiliates, isolates, intimidates, traps and sometimes kills.

Why the term Woman Abuse?

Why use the term "woman abuse" rather than "domestic violence", "family violence", "intimate partner violence" or the many other terms that are often used interchangeably to describe the abusive situations that women experience? Abuse is a more inclusive term than 'violence'. Using the term "woman abuse" acknowledges that women's experience of violence is rooted in the social economic and political inequality of women. (See Social Context of Woman Abuse section). Using the term 'woman abuse' captures a wide spectrum of behaviours, including physical and sexual violence, and does not exclude the existence of other seriously abusive acts including control, intimidation, threats, and isolation. Abuse survivors relate that the non-physical forms of abuse can often be just as devastating as physical abuse.

The term 'woman abuse' acknowledges that women experience abuse at the hands of intimate partners in far greater numbers than men in our society. Women also experience more severe physical injury and trauma, emotional, social and economic impact as a result of the violence than men do. Statistics on the experiences of men indicate that their experiences are less severe and the impacts less devastating.

Women of different races, poor and older women, disabled and deaf women, lesbians, immigrant and refugee women, and geographically isolated women can be more vulnerable to abuse and they experience more barriers to seeking and receiving supportive services.

What does Woman Abuse Look Like?

Woman abuse can affect the physical, emotional, spiritual, sexual, and financial wellbeing of women. The impact on each of these areas will be different for every woman. You may not see any signs of abuse (i.e. physical injuries or marks), but that doesn't mean the warning signs aren't present.

Physical abuse

Physical abuse is the most commonly understood form of violence. It includes hitting, choking, pushing, punching, slapping, kicking, hair pulling, stabbing, or mutilation. All forms of physical violence are crimes under the *Criminal Code of Canada*.

The effects of physical abuse can include:

- Death
- Permanent disability (blindness, deafness, epilepsy, loss of mobility)
- Broken bones
- Head or spinal injuries
- Reproductive or gynecological problems
- Harm to unborn baby or birth defects
- Infertility
- Broken teeth, cuts, headaches, concussion
- Bruises, pain, trauma
- Isolation (hiding the injuries)

Emotional or Psychological Abuse

Emotional abuse (also referred to as psychological or verbal abuse) includes insults, humiliation, yelling, put-downs, threats, harming pets or damaging property.

The effects of emotional abuse can include:

- Feeling 'crazy' or insane
- Living in constant fear
- Feeling worthless/ useless
- Low self-esteem
- Feeling depressed
- Feeling out of control
- Mental illness
- Anxiety and worry
- Withdrawal from family and friends
- Eating and sleeping problems
- Post traumatic stress disorder
- Loss of energy, apathy
- Loss of community and culture
- Self-blame and self-harm

Spiritual Abuse

Spiritual abuse includes preventing the expression of spiritual or religious beliefs, preventing her from attending a place of worship, and putting down or making fun of religious beliefs, traditions or cultures.

The effects of spiritual abuse can include:

- Loss of sense of self
- Feelings of hopelessness and isolation
- Loss of culture
- Loss of connection to one's faith community



Understanding Woman Abuse

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse includes sexual exploitation, unwanted sexual touching, rape, and other sexual activities considered by the victim to be degrading, humiliating, painful, and carried out without consent, without the ability to consent, or against a person's will, obtained by force, or threat of force, or intimidation.

The effects of sexual abuse can include:

- Feelings of shame, guilt, or embarrassment
- Suicidal thoughts/tendencies
- Poor body image
- Low self-esteem
- Feeling depressed
- Inability to have healthy sexual relationships
- Reproductive and gynecological problems
- Sexual promiscuity
- Eating and sleeping disorders
- Unwanted pregnancy
- Loss of energy, apathy
- Post traumatic stress disorder
- Self-blame and self-harm

Social Context of Woman Abuse

Woman abuse exists as a result of complex, multifaceted factors, which include, but are not limited to:

1. Gender role stereotypes

Traditional stereotypes (about men and women) limit the choices we make in our daily lives. Gender role stereotypes often compel men to be tough and controlling, and women to be passive and obedient. Historically, men have held the majority of decision making power in society; while there have been some changes over the last 30 years regarding the gender roles of men and women, male-dominated power and control still exists within our society. Some examples include: women's under representation in political parties; women still shoulder the main responsibility for child care and unpaid work inside the home; women earn less income compared to men (70 cents for every dollar earned by their male counterpart) and fewer women occupy senior positions in business than men.

2. The socialization of girls and boys

The messages we receive as children stay with us as we become adults. Some kids grow up learning that men are supposed to be tough and controlling and women are supposed to be passive and obedient. These kinds of stereotypes are harmful because they teach a child that being male is more desirable and more valued than being female. When family, friends and others in the community expose children to gender stereotypes and sexist attitudes, children learn to act in ways that support gender inequalities.

3. Violence in the media

Media plays a considerable role in supporting gendered stereotypes for both men and women. When media messages portray harmful myths, restrictive roles for women and men, or sexist attitudes it normalizes women as powerless and supports woman abuse. This in turn serves as a model for what is considered acceptable behaviour in society.

4. Attitudes and behaviours leading to woman abuse

Societal attitudes and behaviours that privilege being male over being female still exist. For instance, male sports are better supported and better funded than female sports, the selection of male fetuses over female fetuses still exists as a practice, women's leadership roles are restricted in some faith organizations, family property is sometimes unequally allocated in estate division, e.g. farm being inherited by the male offspring, on reserves Aboriginal men maintain the property rights of the matrimonial home, when a family separates. Values that place more importance on men than women result in societal attitudes that condone woman abuse. These attitudes make it more acceptable to disrespect or harm women because they are viewed as less important and powerful than men.

Each of the factors described above contributes to inequality between women and men in our society and an uneven sharing of power.

Q: But women are equal now...aren't they?

A: Even though laws and social policies have changed in an effort to mitigate inequality between women and men, gender stereotyping persists generation after generation because of the messages we give children about how we value women and men. These messages are relayed through song lyrics, advertisements, movies, television, video games, and through the influential words of other adults around them.

Young boys and men often have more opportunities, power and privilege in academics, athletics, employment, the criminal justice system, and their intimate relationships. Some believe they are superior to women on all levels (i.e. intellectually, socially, financially, and parentally) and therefore have the right, or that their role justifies the use of abusive, dominating behaviour to gain and maintain their positions of authority and prestige. Oppression is sustained by the privilege associated with a preferred gender, race, religion, class, sexual orientation, age and physical ability.

In order to end woman abuse, all women must become equal to men and be valued and respected equally in society.



Understanding Woman Abuse

Q: Women are just as abusive as men, right?

A: While some men do experience violence within an intimate relationship, the vast majority of victims are women.

According to the Statistics Canada's 2006 *Family Violence in Canada: A Statistical Profile*:

- In 2004, there were nearly 28,000 incidents of spousal violence reported to the police: 84% of victims were female; 16% of victims were male. Women were more likely than men to report being targets of 10 or more violent spousal episodes (pg 11).
- Over a 10 year period, police reports showed males were much more likely than females to be the perpetrators of spousal violence incidents coming to the attention of police and more likely to repeatedly abuse their spouse (pg 13):
 - One time incidents - 86% male vs. 15% female
 - Repeated abuse incidents - 94% male vs. 6% female
 - Chronic abuse incidents - 97% male vs. 3% female
- Women were twice as likely to be injured as a result of spousal violence (pg 21).

Overall, women are more likely to be victims of more severe forms of violence than are men. *The Family Violence in Canada, A Statistical Profile, 2005*, Statistics Canada showed that women and men experienced very different types of spousal violence and that the impact of the violence is more serious for women than men (pg 13). For instance, the data showed that:

- Female victims of spousal violence were more than twice as likely to be injured as male victims.
- Women were three times more likely to fear for their life, and twice as likely to be the targets of more than 10 violent episodes.
- Women were three times more likely to take time off from their everyday activities because of the violence; and
- Women were sexually assaulted in intimate relationships, whereas men were not.
- Women who experienced violence during a relationship stated that the violence increased in severity or frequency after separation, whereas men did not experience this.

These data support the notion that spousal violence against women is often an issue of power and control; when the woman leaves the relationship, the man's control over his partner is threatened and as a result the violence escalates against the woman (pg 16).

The same report showed that for men the most serious violence they experienced was being slapped (34%) and being kicked, bit, hit or hit with something (34%).

A copy of these reports is available online at:

<http://www.statcan.ca/english/freepub/85-224-XIE/free.htm> (2005)

<http://www.statcan.ca/english/freepub/85-224-XIE/85-224-XIE2006000.pdf> (2006)

The Domestic Violence Death Review Committee Annual Report to the Chief Coroner, 2005 reported that, of the 100 cases they examined between 2002 to 2005, females were victims in 93% of the cases and males were victims in 7% of these cases. Males perpetrated the violence in 94% of cases, versus 6% for females. They state that "domestic violence fatalities are not gender-neutral events."

Q: How do women use violence?

A: Violence against anyone is unacceptable and should not be condoned whether it is instigated by men or women. An exception is when violence is used to protect one's self, one's children or pets. Furthermore, being with a partner who is dominating and controlling creates trauma for the victim or victims. Abused women may become aggressive and angry in response to the trauma they endure and this is a warning sign (for more signs see "Warning Signs of Abuse").

Research literature and women's advocates generally acknowledge that women's use of violence can be motivated by numerous circumstances including (but not limited to):

- Self-protection and/or protection of loved ones, such as children and pets (the most common reason for the use of violence)
- A reaction to being abused, dominated and controlled where she is not the dominate aggressor,
- The need to get away from the abuser, during separation or during an attack (this can also be a form of self-protection)
- The desire to control and dominate her partner (research shows that this is in five percent of cases^{1,2,3})

Most Ontarian's feel a personal responsibility for reducing woman abuse...and recognizing it is the first step. Take the warning signs seriously. Visit www.neighboursfriendsandfamilies.on.ca for further information or call the Assaulted Women's Helpline at 1-866-863-0511 or in an emergency the police.

1 Belknap and Melton's "In Brief: Are Heterosexual Men Also Victims of Intimate Partner Abuse?" Washington DC: Applies Research Forum, National Electronic Network on Violence Against Women, National Resource Center on Domestic Violence.

2 Miller and Meloy's "Women's Use of Force", Violence Against Women, Volume 12, Number 1, January 2006, pp.89-115.

3 Johnson and Leone's "The Differential Effects of Intimate Terrorism and Situational Couple Violence: Findings from the National Violence Against Women Survey," Journal of Family Issues, 26(3), 2005, pp. 322-349.





*Neighbours,
Friends and
Families:*

*Raising Awareness
with the Media*



Neighbours, Friends & Families



Communicating with the media is an important part of the Neighbours, Friends and Families campaign. Media reports and news coverage are powerful communication tools. Your local media can support the work of this campaign by increasing the availability of accurate information about the warning signs of woman abuse and the local resources available to women, neighbours, friends and families. Consider using the sample letters, press releases and notice for print media included in this booklet to connect with the local media.

In this booklet you will find the following templates:

- Building relationship with media letter
- Sample letter to the editor 1
- Sample letter to the editor 2
- Sample News Release for local NFF launch 1
- Sample News Release for local NFF launch 2
- Media Advisory for local NFF launch
- General News Release about Woman Abuse
- Background facts to include with Media Release
- Notice for print media
- List of quotes from Expert Panel members

Templates that you can personalize with contact information from your own community and organization are available on the CD included in the kit or the website at www.neighboursfriendsandfamilies.on.ca





Building relationship with media letter

Dear _____:

Our community recently began participating in a woman abuse prevention campaign called Neighbours, Friends and Families. The purpose of this campaign is to raise awareness about the warning signs of woman abuse and to engage community members in effectively responding to woman abuse. For more information about the campaign, please visit www.neighboursfriendsandfamilies.on.ca

The media can play an important role in the delivery of information to local communities to help women and children in abusive situations. The following strategies can support accurate depictions of woman abuse:

- Place the story or scenario in its proper context by citing local or national statistics about the prevalence of woman abuse.
- Give your audience tips on what they can do to protect themselves and offer support.
- Avoid using euphemisms in a report about woman abuse such as “the relationship had its ups and downs” or “this was a crime of passion”.
- Refrain from making excuses for an abuser such as “he was depressed” or “alcohol may have been a factor”. Instead, identify these as risk factors.
- Sensitively explore the possibility that a violent episode may be part of a larger story of woman abuse.
- Include details about policies and legislation which may help or hinder women dealing with abuse.
- Take the opportunity to include the warning signs of abuse – see the attached list of warning signs.
- Provide some facts about woman abuse:
 - Women are victims of abuse in this country more often than they are of burglary, muggings, property crimes or other physical crimes combined.¹
 - One out of every four women in Canada say they have been physically abused by their current or former spouse, intimate partner, or date at some point in their lives.²
 - Thousands request help from local woman abuse service agencies every year in Canada.³
 - Run the phone numbers of local woman abuse programs and shelters, and the Assaulted Women's Helpline at 1-866-863-0511 or 1-866-863-7868 TTY.

We would welcome the opportunity to work together with you to ensure that stories about woman abuse provide the most helpful and useful information possible.

Sincerely,

Members of the local Neighbours, Friends and Families campaign

1. Family Violence in Canada: A Statistical Profile, 2005

2. Ibid

3. Ibid

Most Ontarians feel a personal responsibility for reducing woman abuse ... and recognizing it is the first step. Take the warning signs seriously. Visit www.neighboursfriendsandfamilies.on.ca for further information or call the Assaulted Women's Helpline at 1-866-863-0511 or in an emergency the police.





Sample letter to the editor 1

Dear Editor,

The recent **[murder/murder suicide of ...]** in our community has deeply affected me. I am saddened because great numbers of women experience abuse in our community as they do in communities across the country and around the world. I am saddened because we were not able to help prevent the death of this woman.

In my experience, those closest to abused women often do not recognize or respond to the warning signs. Some may think this is a problem that exists between two people, but this thinking over simplifies the extent of the problem. Woman abuse is a societal problem and it impacts our entire community. It affects our family members, friends, co-workers, children and neighbours. We need to learn to work together. We all have a role to play in preventing this problem.

Now more than ever, raising awareness about the warning signs of woman abuse and providing information about how to get help needs to be a priority for our community. I am a member of a local campaign called Neighbours, Friends and Families. We are a local group of people who come together to raise awareness about the issue of woman abuse and strategize how we can play a role in the prevention of woman abuse in our communities.

We invite all members of the community who were touched by this story to learn more about the warning signs of woman abuse and how to help by visiting www.neighboursfriendsandfamilies.on.ca.

We all have a role to play in preventing woman abuse in our community.

Sincerely,

A member of the local Neighbours, Friends and Families campaign

Most Ontarians feel a personal responsibility for reducing woman abuse ... and recognizing it is the first step. Take the warning signs seriously. Visit www.neighboursfriendsandfamilies.on.ca for further information or call the Assaulted Women's Helpline at 1-866-863-0511 or in an emergency the police.





Sample letter to the editor 2

Dear Editor,

The recent **[murder/murder suicide]** of **[insert name/s]** has left our community shocked and saddened. Many are asking if such tragedies can be predicted and prevented. **[Murders/Murder-suicides]** such as this are motivated by jealousy and a desire to dominate and control one's partner. These are characteristics of abuse.

Intimate partner murders do not occur without warning. Over the past three years, the Domestic Violence Death Review Committee to the Chief Coroner has examined in detail 34 cases involving 88 deaths. In every case reviewed, people around the victim or abuser had some knowledge of the escalating circumstances or the warning signs, but didn't understand their significance.

Neighbours, Friends and Families, a new campaign of the Expert Panel on Neighbours, Friends and Families, the Centre for Research and Education on Violence Against Women and the Ontario Women's Directorate, is raising awareness of the signs of woman abuse so that people who are close to an at-risk woman or an abusive man can help. Through research, 15 warning signs and 23 risk factors have been identified to help those around the victim and abuser understand what they are seeing and be able to intervene.

For more information about warning signs and risk factors, visit the the Neighbours, Friends and Families campaign website at www.neighboursfriendsandfamilies.on.ca.

Sincerely,

A member of the local Neighbours, Friends and Families campaign

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Sample news release for local NFF launch 1

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

[date]

[Name of Town/City] – Woman abuse is a serious social problem in our community that everyone can play a role in preventing, said [Name of Community Facilitator] today, in announcing the formation of a Neighbours, Friends and Family campaign in [Name of Town/City].

Intended to foster community organizing, the Neighbours, Friends and Families campaign provides communities with information and strategies to help prevent woman abuse, including tools and educational activities to:

1. Recognize the warning signs of woman abuse,
2. Support women and other members of the community who are impacted by woman abuse, and
3. Locate supportive resources in the community.

We know women in Canada who experience abuse are:

- three times more likely than male victims of abuse to fear for their life.¹
- three times more likely to take time off from their everyday activities because of the abuse.¹
- more than twice as likely to be injured as male victims.¹
- twice as likely as men to be the targets of more than 10 violent episodes.¹

[Highlight special events, community meetings or forum planned to help increase public awareness and prevention of woman abuse.]

More information, including awareness raising and promotional materials, can be found on the Neighbours, Friends and Families website at www.neighboursfriendsandfamilies.on.ca.

For further information contact: [name, telephone and email of local contact]

1. Family Violence in Canada: A Statistical Profile, 2005

Most Ontarians feel a personal responsibility for reducing woman abuse ... and recognizing it is the first step. Take the warning signs seriously. Visit www.neighboursfriendsandfamilies.on.ca for further information or call the Assaulted Women's Helpline at 1-866-863-0511 or in an emergency the police.





Sample news release for local NFF launch 2

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

(Date)

NEW CAMPAIGN HELPS PREVENT WOMAN ABUSE IN [NAME OF TOWN/CITY]

[Name of town/city] – [Name of group] is launching a new campaign today in [name of town/city] to help neighbours, friends and families recognize signs of woman abuse and know what action to take.

“Domestic violence is everyone’s business,” said Sandra Pupatello, Minister Responsible for Women’s Issues. “The Neighbours, Friends and Families campaign gives individuals the information they need to recognize the signs of woman abuse and know what to do to help.”

The Neighbours, Friends and Families campaign is part of a province-wide initiative developed in partnership with the Ontario government, the Ontario Women’s Directorate and the Expert Panel on Neighbours, Friends and Families, through the Centre for Research and Education on Violence Against Women and Children. Locally, the campaign is coordinated by [name of committee/group].

“We all have a role to play in preventing woman abuse,” said (name of official, professional title). “Through research by an Expert Panel, 15 warning signs and 23 risk factors have been identified to help those around the victim and the abuser understand what they are seeing and enable them to intervene. Neighbours, friends and families have a crucial role to play in preventing woman abuse, and this campaign provides the tools to help when individuals know a woman is being abused.”

Public service announcements, brochures and wallet cards are being distributed as part of the campaign. A website, www.neighboursfriendsandfamilies.on.ca, also provides accessible information. The McGuinty government is investing in the campaign province-wide to help individuals know what action to take when they recognize the signs of woman abuse, including information on speaking to abusive men.

“Talking to abusive men is critical to ending woman abuse,” said (name of official, professional title). “Making abuse unacceptable helps deter men from being abusive. Knowing that support is available helps women feel more confident about reaching out. Working together in our community to stand against woman abuse does make a significant difference.”

For further information contact: [name, telephone and email of local contact]

Most Ontarians feel a personal responsibility for reducing woman abuse ... and recognizing it is the first step. Take the warning signs seriously. Visit www.neighboursfriendsandfamilies.on.ca for further information or call the Assaulted Women’s Helpline at 1-866-863-0511 or in an emergency the police.





Media advisory for local NFF launch

MEDIA ADVISORY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

[Date]

CAMPAIGN TO END WOMAN ABUSE TO BE LAUNCHED IN [NAME OF TOWN/CITY]

Name of Area – The (name of local committee/group) will launch a new campaign to help prevent woman abuse in Name:

DATE

TIME

LOCATION

For further information contact: [name, telephone and email of local contact]

www.neighboursfriendsandfamilies.on.ca





General news release about Woman Abuse

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

[date]

[Name of Town/City] – Woman abuse is a serious social problem in our community that everyone has a role to play in preventing, said [Name of Community Facilitator] today, in response to the recent woman abuse fatality in [Name of Town/City].

The Neighbours, Friends and Families campaign focuses on the prevention of woman abuse, highlighting the importance of recognizing the warning signs and locating supportive services in the community to help keep women safe.

[Insert quote from Community Facilitator about the importance of neighbours, friends and family members recognizing warning signs and acting on them]

Some of the warning signs include:

He puts her down

He does all the talking, dominates the conversation

He checks up on her all the time, even at work

He tries to suggest he is the victim and acts depressed

He tries to keep her away from you

He acts like he owns her

He lies to make himself look good or exaggerates his good qualities

He acts like he is superior and of more value than others in his home

She may be apologetic and makes excuses for his behaviour or becomes aggressive and angry

She is nervous about talking when he's there

She seems to be sick more often and misses work

She tried to cover her bruises

She makes excuses at the last minute about why she can't meet you or she tries to avoid you on the street

She seems sad, lonely, withdrawn and is afraid

She uses more drugs and alcohol to cope

(Warning signs apply equally to gay and lesbian relationships.)

More information about the warning signs of abuse can be found on the Neighbours, Friends and Families website at www.neighboursfriendsandfamilies.on.ca.

For further information contact: [name, telephone and email of local contact]

Most Ontarians feel a personal responsibility for reducing woman abuse ... and recognizing it is the first step. Take the warning signs seriously. Visit www.neighboursfriendsandfamilies.on.ca for further information or call the Assaulted Women's Helpline at 1-866-863-0511 or in an emergency the police.





Background facts to include with media release

BACKGROUNDER

[Date]

WARNING SIGNS AND RISK FACTORS FOR WOMAN ABUSE

The following 15 warning signs and 23 risk factors for woman abuse have been identified through research. They can help individuals around the victim and abuser understand what they are seeing and enable them to intervene.

Warning Signs He May Be Abusive

- He** puts her down
- He** does all the talking and dominates the conversation
- He** checks up on her all the time, even at work
- He** tries to suggest he is the victim and acts depressed
- He** tries to keep her away from you
- He** acts as if he owns her
- He** lies to make himself look good or exaggerates his good qualities
- He** acts like he is superior and of more value than others in his home

Warning Signs She May Be Experiencing Abuse

- She** may be apologetic and makes excuses for his behaviour or becomes aggressive and angry
- She** is nervous about talking when he's there
- She** seems to be sick more often and misses work
- She** tries to cover her bruises
- She** makes excuses at the last minute about why she can't meet you or she tries to avoid you on the street
- She** seems sad, lonely, withdrawn and is afraid
- She** uses more drugs or alcohol to cope





Indicators for Risk of Future Harm: the Danger May Be Greater if...

He has access to her and her children

He has access to weapons

He has a history of abuse with her or others

He has threatened to harm or kill her if she leaves him: He says "If I can't have you, no one will."

He threatens to harm her children, her pets or her property

He has threatened to kill himself

He has hit her, choked her

He is going through major life changes (e.g. job, separation, depression)

He is convinced she is seeing someone else.

He blames her for ruining his life.

He doesn't seek support

He watches her actions, listens to her telephone conversations, sees her emails and follows her

He has trouble keeping a job

He takes drugs or drinks every day

He has no respect for the law

She has just separated or is planning to leave

She fears for her life and for her children's safety or she is in denial and cannot see her risk

She is in a custody battle, or has children from a previous relationship

She is involved in another relationship

She has unexplained injuries

She has no access to a phone

She faces other obstacles (e.g. she does not speak English, is not yet a legal resident of Canada; lives in a remote area)

She has no friends or family

The Assaulted Women's Helpline (1-866-863-0511, TTY 1-866-863-7868) can provide practical support to those who feel they may know an abused woman or abusive man. The Helpline is anonymous and confidential and is provided in up to 154 languages.

For further information contact: **[name, telephone and email of local contact]**





Notice for print media

Neighbours, Friends and Families is hosting a community forum this [date/time] to talk about woman abuse in our community. Please join us at [location] as we share information and ideas about how our community can help prevent woman abuse. For more information about Neighbours, Friends and Families visit www.neighboursfriendsandfamilies.on.ca

All are welcome!

Most Ontarians feel a personal responsibility for reducing woman abuse ... and recognizing it is the first step. Take the warning signs seriously. Visit www.neighboursfriendsandfamilies.on.ca for further information or call the Assaulted Women's Helpline at 1-866-863-0511 or in an emergency the police.





List of quotes from Expert Panel members

“Domestic violence is everyone’s business,” said Sandra Pupatello, Minister Responsible for Women’s Issues. “The Neighbours, Friends and Families campaign gives individuals the information they need to recognize the signs of woman abuse and know what to do to help.”

Honourable Sandra Pupatello

Minister Responsible for Women's Issues, Government of Ontario

“In most of the tragedies we see, the key people are right there beside the victim; they’re friends, family, co-workers and neighbours.”

“In the majority of cases there were several risk factors that family, friends or co-workers could have identified. Had they understood the significance of what they were seeing, they might have been able to inform the person who became the victim of the risk or they may have been able to intervene with the abusive man.”

Dr. Peter Jaffe

Academic Director

*Centre for Research and Education on Violence Against Women and Children,
Member of the Expert Panel for Neighbours, Friends and Families Campaign*

“Woman abuse is a societal issue and as a society we all have a role to play.”

Alfredo Marroquin

Program Coordinator, SalvAide

Administrative Coordinator for Neighbours, Friends and Families Campaign

“When community members step forth and really make a choice to end violence against women; that contributes to the healing of the whole community, because then it’s not isolated. That’s what this whole campaign is about. Abuse is not just in the house of the man beating up the woman, especially in the smaller communities, it affects all members.”

Terry Swan

*Program manager, Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centers
Member of the Expert Panel for Neighbours, Friends and Families Campaign
Chair of the Aboriginal Expert Panel for Neighbours Friends and Families Campaign*

“Unless we figure out how to engage everybody; it will be very difficult to end woman abuse.”

Tim Kelly

Executive Director, Changing Ways

Chair of the Expert Panel for the Neighbours, Friends and Families Campaign

continued on next page





List of quotes from Expert Panel members (cont'd.)

“We can point to almost every case [where a woman is killed by her intimate partner] and find that somebody knew something but they didn’t understand the significance of it and they didn’t understand what to do about it.”

Al O’Marra

(former) Chief Counsel, Office of the Chief Coroner and Chair of the Domestic Violence Death Review Committee

“...a lot of times families where abuse is occurring look good on the outside. The neighbours would rather believe that nothing is happening, when in fact it is. I think the warning signs are important because they help us to think about what we are seeing. This encourages a person to take some action when we notice something that doesn’t feel right.”

Tracey Marshall

*Durham Regional Police, Police Risk Assessment Expert
Member of the Expert Panel for Neighbours, Friends and Families Campaign*

“We need family members, we need neighbours, we need friends to get on board to assist us in trying to keep people safe.”

June Dobson

*Ontario Provincial Police, Provincial Abuse Coordinator
Member of the Expert Panel for Neighbours, Friends and Families Campaign*

“We always hear that ‘he’s a good father, a good provider’ so he must be a good man. However, good fathers or good men don’t beat the crap out of children’s mothers’. You can’t be a good father and abuse your children’s mother. We know children who witness violence against their mothers are as traumatized as if they were abused directly. This is one of the messages we need to give to Neighbours, Friends and Families.”

Debbie Ball

*Executive Director, Faye Petersen Transition House
Member of the Expert Panel for Neighbours, Friends and Families Campaign*

“Bringing an end to woman abuse will require vast changes among individuals, communities, institutions, and systems. The Neighbours, Friends and Families Campaign is about communities taking action to build a society in which violence against women is unacceptable in our homes, in our families, and in our network of friends.”

Wendy Komiotis

*Executive Director, Metropolitan Action Committee on Violence Against Women and Children (METRAC)
Member of the Expert Panel for Neighbours, Friends and Families Campaign*



Book and Video List



General Interest Books – Fiction

- Big Girls Don't Cry by Connie Briscoe (Harper Collins, 1996)
- Black and Blue by Anna Quindlen (Random House, 1998)
- The Color Purple by Alice Walker (Washington Square Press, 1983)
- Eyes of a Child by Richard North Patterson (Ballantine Books, 1996)
- Fried Green Tomatoes at the Whistle Stop Cafe by Fannie Flagg (Ballantine Books, 1987)
- I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings by Maya Angelou (Bantam, 1997)
- If He Hollers Let Him Go by Chester Hines (Dutton, 1971)
- Island Justice by Elizabeth Winthrop (William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1998)
- Jazz by Toni Morrison (Plume, 1992)
- Joy Luck Club by Amy Tan (Putnam, 1989)
- Othello by William Shakespeare (Routledge, Chapman & Hall, 1985)
- The Rainmaker by John Grisham (Dell Publishing, 1995)
- Rose Madder by Steven King (Viking Press, 1995)
- Sassafrass, Cypress and Indigo by Ntozake Shange (St. Martin's Press, 1996)
- Tar Baby by Toni Morrison (Plume/Penguin Books, 1982)
- The 13th Juror by John T. Lescroart (Donald I. Fine Books, 1994)
- This Boy's Life: A Memoir by Tobias Wolff (The Atlantic Monthly Press, 1989)
- "Weight" in Wilderness Tips by Margaret Atwood (Doubleday, 1991)
- The Woman Who Walked Into Doors by Roddy Doyle (Penguin Books, 1997)

General Interest Books – Non-Fiction:

- The Burning Bed: The True Story of Francine Hughes – A Beaten Wife Who Rebelled by Faith McNulty (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1980)
- Community Secret: The Story of Two Filipinas by Jaqueline J. Agtuca (Seal Press, 1993)
- Deals with the Devil and Other Reasons to Riot by Pearl Cleage (Ballantine Books, 1993)
- I, Tina: My Life Story by Tina Turner (Avon Books, 1987)
- Living with the Enemy (photographs) by Donna Ferrato (Aperture, 1991)
- The Macho Paradox, Why Some Men Hurt Women and How All Men Can Help, Jackson Katz
- Next Time She'll Be Dead.' Battering and How to Stop It by Ann Jones (Beacon Press, 1994)
- Point Last Seen (a memoir) by Hannah Nyala (Penguin Books, 1998)
- The Stalking of Kristin: A Father Investigates the Murder of His Daughter by George Lardner (The Atlantic Monthly Press, 1995)
- To Have or To Harm: True Stories of Stalkers and their Victims by Linden Gross (Warner Books, 1994)



Neighbours, Friends & Families



Book and Video List (continued)



Suggested video rentals

- **Bhaji on the Beach** – An assortment of women, all ethnic Indians living in England, take a day trip to a seaside resort where their different stories mix and play themselves out.
- **Boys on the Side** – A buddy/road movie that explores the special relationships that can develop among women.
- **The Burning Bed** – Farrah Fawcett plays a woman reaching the breaking point with her abusive and brutal husband. Based on a true story.
- **Coal Miner's Daughter** – The film biography of country singer Loretta Lynn traces her impoverished Appalachian childhood through marriage at thirteen up to her reign as the “First Lady of Country Music.”
- **The Color Purple** – Alice Walker's story about the growth to maturity and independence of a mistreated African American woman in Georgia.
- **Defending Our Lives** – Academy Award-winning documentary about abused women imprisoned for killing their abusers, which clearly demonstrates how the criminal justice system and society often fail to protect abused women. Two versions (42, 30 minutes). Cambridge Documentary Films, Inc., (617) 354-3677
- **Fried Green Tomatoes** – The story of friendships between women, starring Kathy Bates and Jessica Tandy. Based on the novel by Fannie Flagg.
- **It's Not Always Happy at My House** – Provides help in breaking down the sense of isolation and secrecy that prevails in the battered family.
- **It's Not Like I Hit Her** – This video examines the emotional abuse of women by their male partners.
- **Joy Luck Club** – Based on the novel by Amy Tan, the film explores the turbulent lives of four Chinese women, each of whom emerges from mainland China's male-dominated society to face the challenge of raising a daughter in the United States.
- **Killing me Softly III** – Reviews if and how the image of women in advertising has changed over the last 20 years.
- **Kindergarten Cop** – Arnold Schwarzenegger plays an undercover cop who poses as a kindergarten teacher.
- **Ladybird, Ladybird** – A single mother battles with social services for custody of her children.
- **Mona Lisa** – A crime thriller starring Bob Hoskins.
- **Once Were Warriors** – A mother of five re-evaluates her eighteen-year marriage to her alcoholic, hot-tempered husband when his barroom violence moves tragically into their home life. Produced and filmed in New Zealand, the film also presents a view into the ways urbanization has undermined the culture and strength of the Maoris, indigenous peoples of that country.
- **Othello** – Laurence Fishburne and Kenneth Branagh star in Shakespeare's tragedy, the most famous tale of spousal homicide of all time.
- **The Piano** – A mute Scotswoman travels to New Zealand to marry a man she has never met.
- **Tough Guise: Violence, Media, and the Crisis in Masculinity** – Examines the relationship between pop-cultural imagery and the social construction of masculine identities.
- **Raging Bull** – Robert de Niro profiles prizefighter Jake La Motta.
- **Seen... But Not Heard: A Docudrama About the Serious Emotional and Physical Effects on Children Who Witness Their Mothers Being Abused** – This video focuses on the emotional and psychological effects on children who witness family violence.
- **Sleeping with the Enemy** – Julia Roberts escapes an abusive husband to start a new life.
- **Sling Blade** – The story of an outsider, newly released from a mental asylum, who tries to make a new life and reconcile his past.
- **This Boy's Life** – Autobiography of writer Tobias Wolff, starring Leonardo di Caprio, Ellen Barkin and Robert deNiro.
- **What's Love Got to Do with It?** – The story of Ike and Tina Turner.
- **Wrestling With Manhood: Boys, Bullying, and Battering** – Examines the enormous popularity of professional wrestling among male youth, addressing its relationship to real-life violence and probing the social values that sustain it as a powerful cultural force.



Neighbours, Friends & Families



Public Service Announcements Description



The Neighbours, Friends and Families PSA was developed to capture abusive behaviours and warning signs that should be taken seriously. The PSAs are available in English and French. An Aboriginal version, part of the Kaynawayhitowin campaign, is planned.

The PSAs are great multi-media tools and when used by communities have the potential to greatly increase public awareness about woman abuse. Ask the local television affiliate, college/university broadcasting group, and other visual media outlets to air one or all of the PSAs. You can also add your local contact information to the end of the PSAs for a nominal fee, contact: info@neighboursfriendsandfamilies.on.ca

Please note that the PSAs can only be broadcast by television broadcasters on a free of charge basis.

Each PSA includes a number of warning signs and subtle risk factors of woman abuse. We have included a brief description of some of the warning signs and risk factors included in the PSAs in the next column.

PSA: At the game

The warning signs:

- He puts her down
- He does all the talking and dominates the conversation
- He acts as if he owns her
- He lies to make himself look good or exaggerates his good qualities
- He acts like he is superior and of more value than others in his home
- She is apologetic and makes excuses for his behaviour or becomes aggressive and angry
- She is nervous talking when he's there
- She seems sad, lonely, withdrawn and is afraid

The risk factors:

- She is a young woman
- The family is separated
- The child is present

PSA: At the store

The warning signs:

- He puts her down
- He does all the talking and dominates the conversation
- He checks up on her all the time, even at work
- He acts as if he owns her
- He tries to keep her away from friends and family
- He acts like he is superior and of more value than others in his home
- She is nervous talking when he's there
- She seems sad, lonely, withdrawn and is afraid

The risk factors:

- She is a young woman
- The family is separated

Most Ontarians feel a personal responsibility for reducing woman abuse...and recognizing it is the first step. Take the warning signs seriously. Visit www.neighboursfriendsandfamilies.on.ca or call the Assaulted Women's Helpline at 1-866-863-0511 or, in an emergency the police.



Neighbours, Friends & Families





*Neighbours,
Friends and
Families:*

*Everyone has a role
to play in preventing
Woman Abuse
in our communities*

*By understanding the warning signs and
risk factors of woman abuse, you can help.*



Neighbours, Friends & Families

*Most Ontarians feel a personal responsibility for reducing woman abuse. Recognizing it is the first step.
Take the warning signs seriously. For further information visit: www.neighboursfriendsandfamilies.on.ca*





Neighbours, Friends and Family Warning Signs to Identify and Help Women at Risk of Abuse

Are you concerned about someone you think is being abused? Recognizing the warning signs and risk factors of woman abuse is the first step.

He puts her down
He does all the talking and dominates the conversation
He checks up on her all the time, even at work
He tries to suggest he is the victim and acts depressed
He tries to keep her away from you
He acts as if he owns her
He lies to make himself look good or exaggerates his good qualities
He acts like he is superior and of more value than others in his home

She may be apologetic and makes excuses for his behaviour or becomes aggressive and angry
She is nervous about talking when he's there
She seems to be sick more often and misses work
She tries to cover her bruises
She makes excuses at the last minute about why she can't meet you or she tries to avoid you on the street

She seems sad, lonely, withdrawn and is afraid
She uses more drugs or alcohol to cope

(Suggestions in this card apply equally to gay and lesbian relationships.)

The situation may be more dangerous if, in addition to the warning signs: the couple has recently separated; the couple has custody and access issues; he has access to weapons; he is convinced she is seeing someone else; he has a history of abuse and he threatens to harm her children, her pets or her property.

The Assaulted Women's Helpline at 1-866-863-0511 offers a 24-hour telephone and TTY 1-866-863-7868 crisis line for abused women in Ontario. The service is anonymous and confidential, and is provided in up to 154 languages. They will discuss the warning signs of abuse you have seen and give you practical advice on ways to help.

For more information about the services of the Assaulted Women's Helpline visit www.awhl.org.

For further information about the Neighbours, Friends and Families campaign visit www.neighboursfriendsandfamilies.on.ca.

In an emergency, call the police.

Disponible en français



Neighbours, Friends and Family Safety Planning Tips for Women Who Are Abused

Safety planning is a top priority. Here are some important things you can do to increase your safety:

- 1 Tell someone you trust about the abuse.
- 2 Gather important documents: all personal identification, financial and legal papers, house deed/lease, address book, medication and money/credit cards.
- 3 Put together valued pictures, jewellery and objects of sentimental value, as well as toys and comforts for your children.
- 4 Carry a photo of the abuser and your children with you.
- 5 Contact a women's shelter or the police. Ask for an officer who specializes in woman abuse cases. He/she can help you do further safety planning.
- 6 Consult a lawyer. Keep any evidence of physical abuse (such as photos). Keep a journal of all violent incidents, noting dates, events, and threats and witnesses.
- 7 Make sure your children's school or day care centre is aware of the situation and has copies of all relevant documents.
- 8 Do not tell the abuser you are leaving. Leave quickly.
- 9 Do not return to your home, unless accompanied by police.
- 10 Never confront the abuser.

The Assaulted Women's Helpline at 1-866-863-0511 offers a 24-hour telephone and TTY 1-866-863-7868 crisis line for abused women in Ontario. The service is anonymous and confidential and the toll-free number won't show up on your phone bill. Services can be provided in up to 154 languages.

For more information about the services of the Assaulted Women's Helpline visit www.awhl.org.

For further information about the Neighbours, Friends and Families campaign visit www.neighboursfriendsandfamilies.on.ca.

If you are concerned about your immediate safety, call the police.

Disponible en français





Neighbours, Friends & Families