

Domestic Violence

How do we end this terror?

Context

It is estimated that **25% of the UK's population lives with some form of domestic violence, which ranges in severity and intensity.** As it is often believed, violence in the home does not simply affect women but men aswell. Men who are involved in incidents are more likely not to report the violence to the police and many cases go unreported.

Many see this as a private matter and the state should not involve themselves.

As a domestic violence survivor I think that there should be a change in the law regarding the ways the injunctions do NOT work. They are absolutely useless and are not worth the paper they are written on because the abuser nearly always break the law and continues to harasses the victim

Marie Francourt, UK

My own experience of being physically and mentally abused by my wife is a familiar one, yet most if not all help groups are aimed at women. The politically correct lobby cannot bring itself to face this truth. It is time that abused men are given help through this awful, life wrecking experience too. Let's see local councils and lottery money directed towards this issue.

John, England

I cannot believe in this day and age that people still think that one person can beat/mentally abuse another and it is OK as they live together or are married. If you walked down the street and someone shouted abuse or beat you they would be arrested - why should it be any different because the offender is known to the victim? Don't forget there are often children involved in these relationships and they will take the scars into their adulthoods. It needs to be dealt with not ignored.

JA, UK

I am still suffering now after I hit my wife one year ago. It still hurts so bad knowing that I did what I did and will have to live with it for the rest of my life. I felt so ashamed of what I did and left my kids and personal possessions and I walked away. Although no excuse can be made for it there was little or no love or respect in the relationship and I was suffering from depression. I'm a Dad who has lost everything.

Ian, UK

My father abused my mother all my life, both verbally and physically, usually when drunk. While he was usually (but not always) apologetic the next day, the ultimate problem was that I don't believe he ever accepted this was unacceptable behaviour and so there was never any chance that he would seek help to deal with this. The only time I saw a reduction in the abuse was one day when I was old enough and brave enough to stand up to him. I suspect though that since I've left home he has drifted into old habits. Certainly his drinking is back up. My mother never ever pressed charges when the police showed up and the worst he got was a night in a cell which usually made him much angrier.

Kenny, UK

I am sick of seeing posters declaring 'stop violence against women!' as if violence against other people were perfectly acceptable. When will we understand that domestic violence is a problem regardless of who the victim is? I know men who have been turned away from anti-violence and rape support charities where they have sought help. Proper provision needs to be made for all people in such desperate need.

Jennie Kermode, Scotland

I feel very strongly that men and women who are victims of domestic violence should get all the support they need. The perpetrators should get put away for their crimes. This does not happen. A member of my family has recently been a victim at the hands of her partner. For nearly strangling her and beating her senseless all he got was "community service" I have no faith what so ever in the law. It's an absolute farce!

Kirstin, Greece

I don't think anything is likely to change until there is a major shift in ideology regarding the status of women in this country. Domestic violence is one extreme on a continuum of abuse, degradation and general down playing of a woman's role in society. When we have government spokesmen uttering statements such as "Yes homicide rates have gone up, but don't worry a third of them were domestic" or some such twaddle then what message does that give to the women and men of this country. It speaks for itself.

Jo, UK

Let's not forget you don't become a serial abuser overnight. It's a pattern that develops over time. And what do you do when you cross the line the first time? To my everlasting regret I speak as someone who has been violent to my partner on one occasion. It was a moment of madness and I will regret it to my grave. I was lucky the company I worked for had a confidential counselling service and the counsellor was understanding, but I don't know what I'd have done otherwise. If one in four people are victims there are a lot of perpetrators out there and helping them stop from becoming serial abusers is just as important as helping the victims.

Dave, UK

My mother had a terrible temper, which she took out on dad, me and my brothers and sisters. My dad was knifed and had broken ribs, but never complained to the police. We regularly had bruises. Once at school the bruises were noticed and I was asked if my dad beat me. When I said that it was mum I was told that I was lying.

Steve Vogt, UK

As a victim of domestic violence I have no sympathy for anyone who physically, sexually, mentally or emotionally abuses another human being. I tried to get help from the "aid" agencies out there and it took them three months to bother replying to me by which time it could have been too late. Thankfully I woke up one morning and decided to run away heavily pregnant and with only the clothes on my back. And the reason I didn't run before...because you know that one day they will find you and you are more scared of that than living day to day with abuse.

Charlee, UK

What arrant nonsense this idea that people should deal with this behind closed doors. I understand it is a very difficult situation in all cases, but it really is a symptom of a greater malaise in our society. We simply tolerate violent physical behaviour too much.

There is a definite need for much stiffer penalties for physical assaults across the board. I would hope that this situation would be dealt with in the strongest terms by our society and that the many who suffer in silence will have the courage to speak out and that we have the compassion to provide the support structure to enable their decision. Violent behaviour must not be tolerated, imprison people who are violent and protect the rest of us now.

Baz, UK

The most important thing is for victims to talk. I lived with a father who made me watch him beat my mother and stepmother throughout childhood. I was afraid of him and said nothing. I wish I had because it might have made him stop and face the consequences of his actions. Being brought up in a climate of fear where you had to watch your every word and action because it might provoke a violent response is no way to live. As a child, I turned on myself, attempting suicide at seven and indulging in self-harm throughout my teenage years by cutting my arms with razor blades and broken glass.

I did not talk about what happened until my father died. By then I was thirty nine. Only now am I facing up to the fact that my life has been completely dominated by fear of another person. I do not want others to suffer the same thing. Please tell someone else if this is happening to you and help to put a stop to it now.

D Carman, UK

Having witnessed domestic violence during many years of my childhood and early adolescence, I speak from experience. My brutal Father escaped, scot-free, because in the 50's and 60's domestic violence was "hidden" and considered without the jurisdiction of the law. Consequently my mother suffered countless beatings, unnecessarily. It was not until I was old enough and big enough to defend her that the beatings stopped. It should not be left to children to protect their mothers from domestic violence, laws and legislation should, without doubt or delay, make this heinous crime both reportable and punishable in such way that distinguishes it from non-domestic GBH or aggravated assault charges.

Neil Ashurst, UK Expat in Ghana

Domestic violence is a problem people are facing worldwide. It is a taboo subject so it is essential that governments provide shelters for victims who are either too afraid to leave the situation because they have nowhere else to go or are not aware that help can be provided. Public awareness of domestic violence is essential.

Dina, Cyprus

No human being should have to suffer violence and abuse in any relationship. The abuse and violence suffered by many victims is often compounded by society which refuses to take their suffering seriously on the grounds of their gender. Support should be available to all victims, male or female. The current politically correct myth that women are always victims and never perpetrators is untrue, discriminatory and hurtful to nearly half of all victims. It means support networks are nearly non-existent for nearly half of all victims. Politically correct genderism should be removed from the issue of domestic violence and it should be seen for what it is: a human issue and not a gender specific one.

Colin Smith, Finland