

## FACT SHEET 6

### Why haven't we heard more about battered men?

Perception: Accidents and fatalities in Australia are blamed on the truck driver by the media, even though 5 or 6 accidents are caused by the car driver. It is the perception the media have gotten away with through miss information.

Like the transport industry, the media reports and advertising campaigns have only revealed the women who are victims of Domestic Violence. This perception then in turns provides little or no support for the male victims because all funding opportunities are directed to 'the other side'. The reality is that there as many men as there are women that are victims.

### Myth - Men who experience domestic abuse are weak or not 'real' men.

### Reality - It takes great strength and self-control to put up with long-term abuse without retaliating

Many first-time callers to the Help Line initially find it incredibly difficult to talk about their experience of domestic abuse. Some feel that the very fact that they have suffered abuse somehow emasculates them in their own or other people's eyes.

### What are the signs of domestic violence?

- Do you change your behavior because you are afraid that violence might result if you don't?
- Do you often have the feeling of "walking on eggshells"?
- Do you feel that no matter what you do, you can't do anything right?
- Does your partner tell you that you are worthless, unattractive, that no one else would want you?
- Has your partner ever hurt or threatened to hurt you or your children?
- Does your spouse abuse drugs or alcohol?
- Do they become out of control get extremely angry and then try to make up afterwards?
- Do you constantly worry about the next time they get high?
- Has your partner ever tried to keep you from

getting medical help?

- Do they prevent you from sleeping at night?
- Are you worried about being attacked in your sleep?
- Has your partner ever deliberately destroyed or damaged something of value to you?
- Does your partner throw things at you or break objects during an argument?
- Is your partner extremely jealous?
- Does your intimate partner unjustly accuse you of flirting with others or having affairs?
- Is it hard for you to maintain relationships with others because your intimate partner doesn't approve of them?
- Has your partner ever forced you to have sex or made you do things during sex that made you feel uncomfortable?
- Does your partner sometimes spend large sums of money and refuse to tell you why or what the money was spent on?
- Do you know what the family's assets are and where important records are kept?
- If you wanted to know, would your partner make it difficult for you to do so?
- Has your intimate partner ever kicked you in the testicles?
- Has your partner ever bit you, hit you with a hard object, scratched you, slapped you, hit you with their fist, thrown hard objects at you, or threatened you with a knife or gun?
- Does your partner frequently threaten you with never seeing your children again if you leave because "women always win custody"?

If any of the above has happened to you, you are experiencing domestic abuse. If several of the things above have been happening, you are in severe danger.

Take on an "I can handle it" attitude. Even if you have been hurt much worse physically playing sports or other activities, that is not the same thing as being physically attacked by your intimate partner. It hurts emotionally as well as physically.

Continuing this pattern can result in depression, substance abuse, loss of confidence, and suicide. It can also result in death at the hands of your partner or by someone your partner has induced to kill you. Keeping silent and not confiding to a friend, relative, or health-care professional is a common reaction of both male and female victims of domestic violence because it's embarrassing.

Men, however, face a greater degree of disbelief and ridicule than do most women in this situation, which helps reinforce the silence.

They make excuses for apparent injuries and explain them as due to accidents or being hurt while playing sports when friends or medical personnel ask.

Hiding From it. Truck drivers often escape from a bad home life that they are afraid of by doing extra loads, or even sleeping in the truck in preference to going home.

#### **What to do**

- Never be provoked into retaliating with physical
  - or verbal abuse yourself.
- Always talk to your doctor about your health and seek medical attention for any injuries.
- If you are seeing a mental health counselor, tell
  - them about your domestic violence concerns.
- They may not ask. Many counselors believe it
  - only happens to women.
- Always keep a record of dates and times of
  - incidents and keep copies of medical records and police reports.
- Take photographs of injuries.
- Keep these documents in a safe place.
- Always take legal advice.
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- Insist that police record your injuries and take a report and that it is recorded accurately.
- Don't keep silent.
- Seek out counselling for yourself, contact official domestic violence and victims advocates offices where available, tell a friend.
- Recognise that it happens to men as well. You are not alone.
- You may have to "put on your male hero hat" however, and make an effort to find others.
- You can even start your own support group with the help of a concerned mental health professional.
- Don't be afraid to ask for help from others. It is not a sign of weakness; it is a sign of strength.

They fear the ridicule or disbelief of friends, colleagues and outside agencies, and worry they might fit the old stereotype of the "hen-pecked" or bullied husband / partner.

The reality is that it takes great strength and self-control to put up with long-term abuse without retaliating when you are physically the stronger party. It takes courage to stay in a controlling unhappy relationship (sometimes for years), for the sake of your children, or because you still love your partner and hope that they might change. It takes another type of courage to admit that you are in an abusive relationship, and that you might need outside help.

If you are in a situation and want help, call Trans-Help and we will assist you in getting the support you need.

[www.transhelpfoundation.com.au](http://www.transhelpfoundation.com.au)

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