

STATISTICS



- According to Statistics Canada in 2006 over 38,000 incidents of spousal violence were reported to police across Canada
- Spousal violence is more common with current partners than former partners (69% vs. 31%)
- 89% of stalking and harassment is done by an ex-spouse.
- Only 28% of spousal violent cases are reported to police and prior to that 61% of victims had more than one prior incident of violence.
- Approximately 31% of admissions to shelter are repeat admissions
- Emotional and physical abuse are the most common reasons to seek shelter
- Women aged 25-34 are 3 times more likely to be physically or sexually abused.
- Only 22% of spousal violence victims in Canada reported incidents to the police in 2009.
- Currently one in five women reports being emotionally or financially abused in their current or previous relationships.
- The majority of spousal homicides occur within one year of leaving a relationship.

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

This brochure was developed to help you have a clear understanding of the reality an assaulted woman faces when she reaches out for help.

1. So you don't fall into the trap of blaming or judging her when she can't make the necessary changes as quickly as you think she should.
2. So you can prepare her not to blame herself when she runs into issues that slow her progress.

If you or someone you know is being abused please talk to someone you trust. Seek support from friends, family, doctors, nurses or counselors.

You can call the **Anderson House Crisis Hotline** 24 hours a day 7 days a week: **902-892-0960** or toll free at **1-800-240-9894**.

FVPS Outreach Services are here to help as well:

902-566-1480, ext. 224 Queens Region (Ch'town)

902-436-0517 East Prince (Summerside)

902-838-0795 Eastern PEI (Montague)

902-859-8849 West Prince (O'Leary)

Developed by:
Laura Vail SN4, UPEI School of
Nursing in partnership with:

PEI FVPS Inc.

(902) 894-3354, ext. 221

www.fvps.ca

Why Do Women Stay?



WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

WHAT IS FAMILY VIOLENCE?

Family violence includes many different forms of abuse, mistreatment or neglect that adults or children may experience in their intimate, family, or dependant relationships. Abuse can be physical, emotional and psychological, sexual, financial and economic, spiritual, or exposing a child to family violence and neglect.

WHY DO WOMEN STAY IN ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIPS?

The reasons women stay in abusive relationships are varied and complex and many shelter workers, outreach workers, police, and Victim Services workers seldom see a woman who is assaulted only once.

THE USES OF POWER AND CONTROL

RELATIONSHIPS IN WHICH ABUSE OCCURS ARE BASED ON ONE PARTNER'S NEED FOR POWER AND CONTROL.



FALSE SOCIETAL BELIEFS:

1. **The Traditional Female Role** – Women are placed under great pressure to make the marriage work and feel they are responsible for the success or failure of the union.
2. **Privacy of the Home** – Society teaches that family is a sacred place and no one on the outside should intervene. This belief keeps others from intervening when they witness or hear of abuse.
3. **The Two-Parent Family is Ideal** – Many people feel the family should stay together at all cost, and believe that children need a father in the home regardless of the risks endured as a result of his presence.
4. **Victim-Blaming** – Statements such as: "Why can't you just leave?" feed into the assaulted woman's low self esteem and self-doubt to convince her she must be responsible for remaining in an abusive situation.

PSYCHOLOGICAL EXPERIENCES OF THE VICTIM

An abused woman's mental health is affected by emotional responses to the violence which impacts whether she stays or leaves. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Fear
- She loves him
- Low self esteem/ self worth
- Feeling responsible
- Hoping he will change
- Strong commitment to him or the family
- Self blame/Shame
- Fear of being alone
- Fear of being found by him and killed

BARRIERS TO LEAVING

1. **Financial Dependency** – Women who are financially dependent on their abuser are less likely to leave, or more likely to return. Women who leave a relationship experience a significant drop in resources. Some stay out of fear of financial insecurity.
2. **Housing** – Women may be scared to find housing if they have not lived on their own and there is little access to permanent, affordable housing.
3. **Employment/Education** – Women may not have worked before, may not have required education to get a good job, and may have little access to jobs with a livable wage. There is also a lack of funding available for women to get a higher education.
4. **Day Care** – Child care can be very expensive, and there may be child care issues with women having trouble finding daycare close to their homes or work, or that are open at certain times.
5. **Support Services** – There are not enough support groups and hotlines or shelters for assaulted women. There are also gaps in income and support services offered to women who need assistance.
6. **Criminal Justice System** – Abused women need protection and a positive police response to domestic violence plays an important role in whether women stay or leave.
7. **Addiction Issues/Mental Health** – A woman's mental health is greatly affected by abuse and she can suffer depression, anxiety, and other mental health problems. In some cases women turn to alcohol and drugs to help them cope.