

## 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%)
- Although 89% of stalking and harassment is done by an ex-spouse.
- Only 28% of spousal violent incidents 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 the 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 endures obstacles 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)

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# Why Do Women Stay?



**A resource for  
service providers**



**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 woman is responsible to make the marriage work.
2. The home is a sacred place which is private and no-one should intervene
3. The family should stay together no matter what
4. Children need a father in their home regardless

## 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
- 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
- She loves him

## BARRIERS TO LEAVING

1. Financial barriers
2. Little access to appropriate ,affordable housing
3. Lack of required education/ job skills /experience
4. Employment worries (women may have never worked before or can't find a job with a living wage to support their families).
5. Child care issues
6. Lack of support services (hotlines, shelters, and people who understand and can help)
7. Criminal justice system (police response to domestic violence plays an important role in whether women stay or leave)
8. Victim-blaming by family, friends, themselves, the abuser, and community
9. Change in lifestyle (e.g. fear of economic instability)
10. Addiction issues
11. Mental health barriers
12. Lack of adequate income and support services
13. Lack of funding or programs to assist women to get a higher education