

STATISTICS

- According to Statistics Canada, in 2013 over 90,300 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.
- In Canada, only 29% of spousal violence incidents were reported to police in 2014.
- 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.

A person who has experienced violence needs support.

It takes great courage to tell someone what has been happening.

Understanding the barriers women face when leaving violence will help you support someone who reaches out to you.

If you or someone you know is being abused, please talk to someone you trust. Seek support from friends and family, or professional services

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

Outreach Services can help as well:
902-838-4600, ext 23 Eastern PEI
902-894-3354, ext 224 Queens County
902-436-0517 East Prince
902-859-8849 West Prince

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(902) 894-3354, ext 221 | www.fvps.ca

Why Do Women Stay?



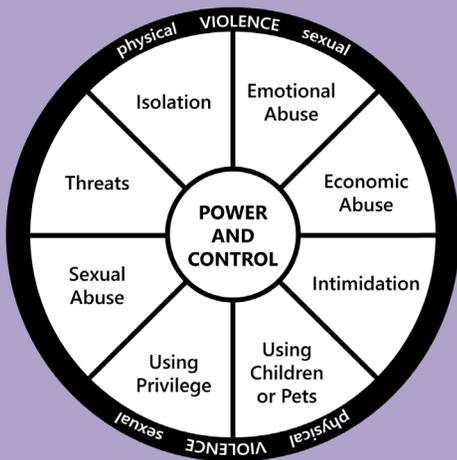
WHAT IS FAMILY VIOLENCE?

Family violence is when someone uses abusive behaviour to control and/or harm a member of their family, or someone with whom they have an intimate relationship. Family violence includes many different forms of abuse: physical, sexual, emotional, verbal, spiritual, and financial. It may include a single act of violence, or a number of acts that form a pattern of abuse. Family violence can have serious and sometimes fatal consequences for victims and for those who see or hear the violence. Family violence can affect anyone, from any demographic: cultural, national and ethnic origin, socio-economic status, education, sexual orientation, gender, age, and physical or mental ability.

WHY DO WOMEN STAY IN ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIPS?

This is the most common questions we are asked. If someone is being abused, why would they remain in that relationship? The reasons women stay in abusive relationships are varied and complex. This resource aims to explain the barriers to leaving violence and how to support someone who is being abused.

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 victim’s low self esteem and self-doubt, and may convince her she is responsible for remaining in an abusive situation.

PSYCHOLOGICAL EXPERIENCES OF THE VICTIM

A victim’s mental health is affected by many conflicting feelings about the abuse and her relationship with the person using violence. These include, but are not limited to:

- Fear for her safety or the safety of her children
- Love for the individual using violence
- Low self esteem/self worth
- Feeling responsible
- Hoping the person will change
- Strong commitment to family
- Self blame/shame
- Fear of being alone
- Fear of being found after leaving the relationship
- Fear of being 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 with their abuser due to fear of financial insecurity.
- 2. Housing** – Women may be scared to find housing if they have not lived on their own, and there is limited access to permanent, affordable housing.
- 3. Employment/Education** – Women may not have worked before, may not have the required education to get a job, and may have limited access to jobs with livable wages. There is also a lack of funding available for women to get a higher education.
- 4. Day Care** – Childcare can be very expensive, and women may have trouble finding daycare close to their homes or work, or that are open at certain times. Childcare for shift work is a challenge.
- 5. Support Services** – While there are shelters and support hotlines in place, many women are still unaware of the services, or scared to access them. Many women also don’t know of financial assistance available to help them leave.
- 6. Criminal Justice System** – Abused women need protection. 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. She can suffer depression, anxiety, and other mental health problems. This can make planning to leave overwhelming. In some cases women turn to alcohol and drugs to help them cope.