

Woman Abuse & Children
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A Resource for Mothers

Anderson House



What is Woman Abuse?

Woman abuse...

This booklet is a resource for mothers who have left or are thinking about leaving abusive relationships.

Special thanks to the staff, moms and children at Anderson House, PEI Family Violence Prevention Services Inc. (FVPS). Also the agencies referred to in this booklet and to all who support women and children on PEI.

...is a pattern of manipulative behaviour used to control a partner.

...is never okay

...is always the abuser's fault

...is not healthy for children who live with it

.. can be financial, physical, verbal, spiritual, emotional, psychological or sexual. It also includes intimidation and isolation

Did you know...?

Ending exposure to abuse is the best thing you can do for your child

You can make up for lost time. You can start today

Children are resilient and can thrive

You aren't alone and neither are your kids: In 2004, about half of the people who stayed in

Canadian women's shelters were children. About two-thirds of these children were under 10 years of age.

How does woman abuse affect children?

Some children who live in homes where woman abuse happens may become more aggressive.

Others may become stressed, depressed or feel bad about themselves.

Children who have witnessed woman abuse often have trouble with school and making friends.

Some children may develop wrong ideas about violence against women. They may think violence is normal. They may even go on to become involved in abusive relationships of their own when they get older.

Some evidence suggests that exposure to woman abuse may even cause children to have an increased risk for some diseases, such as asthma, eating disorders, diabetes, and heart disease later on.

You and Your Baby or Toddler

What might I notice?

Babies and toddlers who have been exposed to woman abuse may be scared to explore and play. They may have delays in development and they may be scared by loud noises. They may also develop physical problems caused by stress such as poor digestion/bowels. Of all the age groups, babies are the most likely to be injured during an assault as they are being held by their mothers at the time.

How can I explain violence to my baby or toddler?

Don't. Babies and toddlers can't understand violence. How you act is more important than what you say.

What can I do to help?

Leaving the abuse is the best thing you can do as a mother.

Spend time face-to-face with your baby.

Hold, hug and tell your baby you love them.

Take a parenting course — especially if you are feeling unsure of yourself.

Make a safety plan.

Take care of yourself, your child needs you.



You and Your Preschooler

What might I notice?

Preschoolers who have been exposed to woman abuse may be clingy or anxious. Sometimes they may show aggression or are violent, and may be cruel to animals.

How can I explain violence to my preschooler?

If the abuser is somebody the child sees as "Daddy", be careful not to blame him for separation. Your child only needs to be told in simple terms that Mommy and Daddy need to live apart. Tell your child that what happened was not their fault, that they are loved and that Mommy will keep them safe.



What can I do to help?

Getting away from the abuse is the best thing you can do as a mother.

Re-establish familiar routines as soon as possible.

Have clear rules and consequences.

Do not rely on your child for emotional support.

Read a book made for your child's age level.

Make a safety plan

Take care of yourself, your child needs you.

You and Your School-Age Child

What might I notice?

School-age children who have been exposed to woman abuse may bully, be depressed, misbehave, or do less well in school.

How can I explain violence to my school-age child?

Explain the abuse in terms of rules. You could say "There is a law that people cannot hit others. It's a good rule that keeps everyone safe. Daddy must learn not to break this rule." You can also tell them that problems are not solved by yelling and being mean to others.

What can I do to help?

Getting away from the abuse is the best thing you can do as a mother.

Let your child know that you are there to talk to whenever the child is ready.

Reassure your child that you are okay.

Find activities that your child can do with friends (like team sports).

Spend some "fun time" together (homework and chores don't count).

Limit or eliminate violent television, movies and video games.

Make a safety plan.

Take care of yourself, your child needs you.



You and Your Teenager

What might I notice?

Teenagers who have been exposed to woman abuse may find themselves in abusive dating relationships. They may also perform poorly in school, experiment with drugs and alcohol, or run away from home. Some may think about or try to hurt themselves.

Teens are also at a high risk of becoming hurt during an incident as they are more likely to jump in to defend their mother.

How can I explain violence to my teenager?

You can have an honest talk with your teenager about what you think and feel, but spend most of the time listening to what they are thinking and feeling. This may not be pleasant for you to hear, but it's important to let your child talk.

What can I do to help?

Getting away from the abuse is the best thing you can do as a mother.

Let your child know that you are there to talk when they are ready.

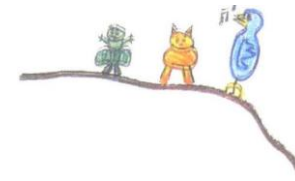
Do not to rely on your teen for emotional support.

Work out clear, age appropriate rules and consequences.

Encourage healthy coping strategies like seeking support or Joining an activity.

Make a safety plan

Take care of yourself, your child needs you.



Where to go for help

PEI Family Violence Prevention Services Inc.

PEI Family Violence Prevention Services Inc. is an organization that aims to provide a safe place for women and children who are victims of abuse to stay, to advocate for abused women and children, and to educate the public about the issue.

PEI F.V.P.S. operates Anderson House, a shelter for abused women and their children, Second Stage Housing, and Outreach Services across PEI.

Anderson House

Crisis Line: 892-0960 or 1-800-240-9894

Business Line: 368-8658

PEI Family Violence Prevention Services Inc.

Administration office: 894-3354/admin@fvps.ca

Website: www.fvps.ca

Queens County Outreach: 566-1480

East Prince Family Violence Prevention: 436-0517

West Prince Family Violence Prevention: 859-8849

Eastern PEI Family Violence Prevention: 838-0795

Family Resource Centers

Family resource centers are non-profit organizations across PEI that offers programs for parents or guardians, preschool children, and expectant parents. There is no fee for service.

CHANCES: 892-8744

Four Neighborhoods: 368-6930

Mi'Kmaq: 892-0928

Kids West Inc: 853-4066

Family Place: 436-1348

CAP Enfant: 854-2123

Kids R First: 436-1348

Families First: 838-4600

Main Street: 687-3928



Catholic Family Services

Catholic Family Services is an accredited family service agency that aims to promote and strengthen the quality of family life on PEI. They provide professional counseling for adults and children, including play therapy, parenting classes, and personal development classes. Programs operate on a fee for service basis. The fee is negotiated on an individual basis, considering income and family size.
Catholic Family Services Bureau: 894-3515

Community Counseling Services

This service offers counseling to individuals and families as well as credit counseling.
Prince County: 436-9171
Charlottetown: 892-2441



The Kids Help Phone

The Kids Help Phone is a number that kids and teenagers can call to speak with someone privately about personal problems or questions. Toll-free and operate 24-hours a day.
Kids Help Phone: 1-800-668-6868

Island Helpline: 1-800-218-2885

Native Youth Crisis Hotline: 1-877-209-1266



Youth Programs

Aboriginal Cultural Connections: 892-5314
Adventure Group: 628-8668
Big Brothers/Big Sisters: 569-5437
Boys & Girls Club:
 Ch'town/Youth Survival Centre: 892-1817
 S'Side: 436-9403
 Wellington: 854-3174
Generation X: 436-7699
Hillsborough Youth Group: 628-6870
O'Leary ADIC: 859-1464
Stratford Youth Can Do: 569-6925

Other Resources

Positive Parenting from Two Homes: Toll Free
1-877-203-8828

Chief Mary Bernard Memorial Women's
Shelter: 831-2332

This brochure was created for Anderson House by Alison Scott, SN4, UPEI School of Nursing.

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Please feel free to make copies.

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