

- Fear that she will not be believed or helped by the police, the family, or the community
- Religious or cultural values/beliefs

THE CYCLE OF VIOLENCE

An abuser usually goes through three clear repeating stages in his behaviour. This cycle of violence is important in keeping the woman in the relationship because the abuser is both kind and abusive.

Tension building stage:
An event occurs that leads to tension building. It can be arguments for whatever reason

Abusive stage
The abuse escalates, verbally/emotionally, physical and sexually. The incident can last minutes or days

"Honeymoon" stage:
The abuser apologises, proclaims love, buy gifts to win her. He promises that he will never do it again and often the abused forgives

As the relationship progresses, the abusive stage usually becomes more severe, and the cycle gets shorter, making the abusers never enter the 'honeymoon stage'. They never feel sorry for what they do.

WHAT CAN ABUSED WOMEN DO

- Ask family or friends for support
- Go for counselling for yourself or couple counselling
- Lay a charge of assault with the police

- Get a Domestic Violence Protection Order at the local Magistrate's Court
- Call a family meeting
- Ask a supportive religious leader to intervene
- Move out temporarily
- Make plans to go: arrange housing, set money aside, seek employment, pack essentials
- Get a divorce
- Go to a shelter
- Contact a women's organization for help, support and legal advice if you need more information about any of these options

WHAT CAN THE COMMUNITY DO?

- Intervene if you witness behaviour that you believe is violent or abusive or call the police anonymously
- Inform yourself and other people about women abuse; arrange a talk for your school, church or community group
- Lobby the police and government for better service for abuse women
- Listen to and believe a woman who confides in you; ask her how you can help and what she needs to feel safer
- Respect that any information an abused woman gives you is confidential
- Support the right of all women to live in safety



FOR MORE INFORMATION OR ASSISTANCE,
CONTACT US ON

Web address : www.powa.co.za
 Email address : info@powa.co.za
 legal@powa.co.za
 Telephone (011) 642 4345/6
 Fax (011) 484 3195

GBV National Helpline : 0800150150
 GBV Command Centre : 0800 428428

WOMEN ABUSE

The Basic Facts

WHAT IS ABUSE?

Abuse is any form of behavior that controls another person, causes physical harm or fear, makes someone do things they do not want to do, or prevents them from doing things they want to do. Abuse can be emotional, physical, sexual and financial. Abused women usually experience multiple forms of abuse.

FORMS OF ABUSE

Physical abuse include:

- Slapping, punching, hitting, kicking, shoving, scratching, biting, throwing things at you.
- Threatening or attacking you with an object.
- Locking you in or out of the house or abandoning you in a dangerous place.
- Refusing to help you when you are injured, sick or pregnant.

Sexual abuse includes:

- Making you wear clothes or do sexual things that makes you uncomfortable
- Pressuring or forcing you to perform sexual acts that you do not want to do
- Having sex with you when you don't want to
- Forcing you to have sex with other people
- Forcing you to observe other people having sex.

Emotional abuse includes:

- Insulting you
- Making you feel stupid or worthless
- Ridiculing your beliefs
- Humiliating you in public or private
- Ignoring you
- Intimidating or harassing you
- Being overly jealous or possessive
- Cheating /having extra marital affairs
- Accusing you of infidelity without good reason
- Isolating you from your family or friends
- Preventing you from going to work or school
- Attacking your children or pets
- Threatening to kill you, leave you or throw you out
- Threatening to kill himself if you leave

Financial abuse includes:

- Taking or spending your money
- Preventing you from having a job
- Taking or destroying your possessions
- Spending most of the money on himself or giving you a very small allowance
- Expecting you to account for every cent or do more with the money than is possible
- Refusing to give you information about your joint financial situation
- Lack of knowledge of ones rights

WHY DOES HE ABUSE?

There are many common beliefs about why men choose to be violent:

- He had a sad or traumatic childhood
- He drinks and uses drugs
- He has trouble expressing his feelings
- He is unemployed
- He can't control his anger

THESE ARE ALL EXCUSES!!!

We all experience trauma, stress, anger and fear, but an abusive man CHOOSES to abuse as a way of dealing with his pain or problems. He use excuses to avoid taking responsibility for his behavior. Frequently he tries to blame the woman for the abuse saying that she is a bad partner, a bad mother that she provokes him or asked for it, because it is hard to live, he tries to make her feel that she would not survive without him. He needs her to believe that she is bad and want her to stay dependent on him. He can control his violence, but he chooses to control her instead.

There is no acceptable excuse for abuse! The abuser is the only person responsible for the abuse, he is the ONLY person who can make it stop.

WHY DO ABUSED WOMEN STAY

Perhaps the common myth about women abuse is that "it can't be that bad". In reality there are many practical and emotional factors that contributes staying with men who abuse them.

Economic and Legal Factors:

- Financial dependence on the abuser
- Lack of employment skills
- Fear of being unable to support the children and not receiving maintenance
- Lack of alternative accommodation
- Lack of knowledge of ones rights
- Lack of faith in the police, often based on bad experiences with the police in the past.

Isolation:

- The abuser may forbid her to see other people or attack her when she tries to reach out
- He may threaten to harm people she cares for
- People she turns to for help may not believe her or blame her for what is happening

Emotional Factors:

- Love, pity or sorrow for her partner
- Believe or hope that the abuser will change
- Believe that she can make the abuse stop if she tries hard enough
- Fear of the unknown
- Fear that the abuser may kill her if she leaves or lays the charges
- Numbness to the abuse (usually when there has been a history of childhood abuse)
- Low self-esteem, feelings of worthlessness; believes that she deserves the abuse
- Paralysis caused by fear

Societal Factors:

- Shame and embarrassment about the abuse
- Desire to protect her partner, parents, children or other loved one from the shame involved
- Believe that the children need their father