

**SAY NO TO VIOLENCE
AGAINST WOMEN!**



An information brochure from The MiRA Centre

SAY NO TO VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN!

What is violence against women?

Violence against women is a universal occurrence. Throughout the ages women have held a weaker position in comparison to men. In the patriarchal

society the woman is subordinate to the man, hence the man's norms and values dominate the social order. Male violence against women exists at all levels of society and

can be found within every area of the community, e.g. the judicial system, employment market, and the public health system.

Violence against women can have many causes. Regardless of the cause there is an urgent need to take action that can stop this violence. Throughout the 20th century women fought for their rights and equality in the social, political and economic spheres. This battle has resulted in many countries passing laws that secure women's rights in both a private and public instance. The United Nations (UN) has focused extensively on all forms of violence and

has prepared several conventions to protect women. The most significant is the *Convention to prevent all forms of discrimination against women*, which was adopted by the UN's general assembly in December 1979.

The different forms of violence

The most common form of violence against women is domestic abuse. Violence within the four walls of the home is frequently associated with stress, psychological disorders, and alcohol and drug abuse. Comprehensive research has revealed that the home is the most dangerous place to be for women.

Violence can be both physical and psychological. It can develop from shoving, pinching, spitting, hitting and kicking. Some women have been beat with heavy objects, dragged by their hair, had boiling water or acid thrown over them, been set alight or been raped. Physical violence can result in fatal consequences for the victim and in the worst cases can result in death. It is not uncommon that over time, the abuse increases in both scale and intensity.

Psychological violence can exist as continual verbal abuse, deliberate intimidation, or confinement.

«Violence against women can have many causes. Regardless of the cause there is however an urgent need to take action to stop this violence.»

When a man attempts to curb a women's contact with family and friends, refuses her the use of the telephone or access to email, deprives her of money in an attempt to «pacify» her, these are all forms of psychological abuse.

Violence against women can also have various forms of expression in different cultures i.e. circumcision and enforced marriage.

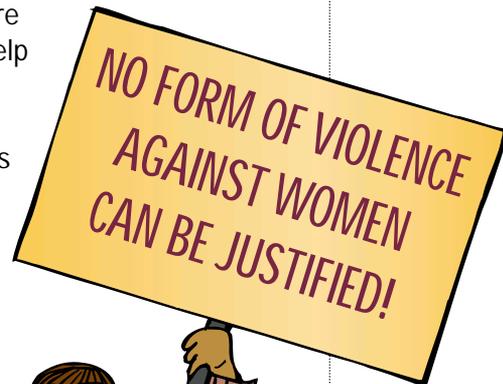
Violence against women affects everyone

When a woman is abused, regardless of whether she is a daughter, mother, sister or wife, the abuse affects the entire family. Aside from the serious physical and psychological implications for the victim, the children in the family will also suffer from the trauma of being witnesses to violence. In some cases the children are also physically abused due to the direct involvement in a violent situation, whereupon they have attempted to protect the victim. In other cases, children's involvement has been purely coincidental.

Working against violence

No form of violence against women can be justified nor should be accepted in any society or culture. The Norwegian authorities have taken significant steps to prevent violence. Laws protecting women's rights exist and are practiced. Crisis centres help women in acute situations, voluntary organisations (NGO) and other institutions and groups are all working towards stamping out violence against women.

«The most common form of violence against women is violence in the home . . . the home is the most dangerous place for women to be in.»



IF YOU HAVE BEEN SUBJECTED TO VIOLENCE, YOU MUST:



1. POLICE: Contact the nearest police station. All police districts in Norway have a family violence co-ordinator that supports women who are subjected to violence.

2. DOCTOR/HEALTH PERSONNEL: Contact a doctor or other public health personnel to assess any physical injuries or abuse. It is extremely important to report any physical abuse and to NOT just keep it to your-



self. Many women do not tell public health personnel that bruises and scars are a result of violence perpetrated by the husband/partner or another assailant. They might either be afraid to involve strangers in family problems, or the assailant may have threatened them to not tell anyone about it. Public health personnel are trained to recognise signs of violence and to provide the victim with the help she needs.



3. CRISIS CENTRES: Contact a crisis centre for assistance. The crisis centres are able to help women and children that have been subjected to violence with a temporary, safe place to stay. The crisis centres can also assist with finding a lawyer, new residence and provide other practical aid.



4. ORGANISATIONS: Contact voluntary organisations, such as the MiRA Centre, for information on legal rights, to meet other women in the same situation, for moral support or to receive help to work through traumatic experiences such as violence and abuse.



5. NEIGHBOURS/FRIENDS: Contact your neighbours and friends for support. Research in many countries has revealed that it takes a long time before women dare to speak to others about violence in the family. As long as the woman keeps quiet about the situation, the assailant is given the power to continue the violence. It is therefore very important to speak to someone. Violent behaviour cannot be justified, and the attacker



must not be protected for the sake of family honour or the culture. Protecting family honour is everyone's responsibility, both women and men. Women must not bear the burden alone by accepting family violence.

6. SOCIAL WELFARE: Contact your local social welfare office if you want to break out of a violent marriage, but are not able financially to start a new life independently.

Children that experience violence in the home should tell a person that they trust, such as for example a teacher, supervisor of the recreation/sports club, parents of a friend or others. Both the school and child-care department are obligated to intervene if they suspect that children are being mistreated.



Krisesentersekretariatet

Storgata 11, 0155 Oslo

Telephone: 23 01 03 41

E-mail: ks.sekretariatet@oslo.online.no

Web: www.krisesenter.com

You can find a county overview of crisis centres in Norway at: www.noabuse.no/so/kri.htm

Telephone numbers for individual crisis centres and crisis telephones are found under General information in the telephone catalogue. *Call telephone directories on 1881 (Opplysningen)*, for telephone numbers to crisis centres, crisis telephones and support centres against incest.

Oslo Police (24-hour duty)

Telephone: 22 66 90 50

Police alarm number – only emergency telephone number: 112

Alternative to violence in Oslo

Korsgata 28 B, 0551 Oslo

Telephone: 23231570

E-mail: atv-alle@online.no

Web: www.alternativtilvold.no

Available to both women and men.

DIXI Resource Centre for women rape victims (Oslo)

P.O. Box 6715, St. Olavs Plass, 0130 Oslo

Telephone: 22114320

E-mail: dixioslo@online.no

Web: www.dixi.no

Please contact The MiRA Centre if you need help or would like answers to questions on violence against women.

WE ARE BOUND BY AN OATH OF CONFIDENTIALITY!

The MiRA Centre

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