

Note: In this issue, we talk about "husbands" and "wives." But we also mean other men and women, for example:

- girlfriends
- ex-girlfriends
- ex-wives
- common-law wives
- boyfriends
- ex-boyfriends
- ex-husbands
- common-law husbands

Home can be a dangerous place



This man is hurting his wife. He is holding her and choking her. He hits her and hurts her often. This man is breaking the law. The police can help this woman. They can arrest her husband. He might go to jail.

These people are actors. The photo is from the TV program, *A Fair Cry From Home*, courtesy CBC.

Wife abuse is common in many countries of the world. Abused women and their husbands can be young or old, rich or poor. They can have many years of school or just a few. They can live in big cities or small towns.

Wife abuse in Canada

Many men in Canada abuse their wives. In a recent study, 29 per cent of women in Canada said that their husbands or boyfriends abused them.

Wife abuse is against the law

Wife abuse is always wrong. And some kinds of wife abuse are against the law in Canada.

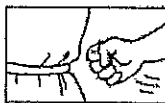
The police, the government, and community groups are working together to help abused women.

There are different kinds of abuse

Physical abuse

A man might:

☛ punch his wife



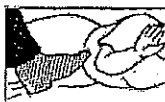
☛ slap her



☛ pull her hair



☛ kick her



☛ break her arm, finger, or other bones



Psychological abuse

A man might:

☛ threaten his wife

For example:

"I'll take the kids."

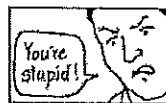
"I'll send you back to your country."



☛ break her things



☛ call her names



☛ say she is having sex with other men



☛ not let her go out alone or see her family and friends



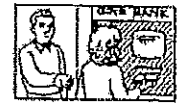
Economic abuse

A man might:

☛ give his wife very little money for food, clothing, and other things



☛ take her pay cheques



☛ not let her work outside the home



Sexual abuse

A man might:

☛ force his wife to have sex with him



☛ make her do sexual things she does not like

Physical abuse often has a cycle

Physical abuse often goes in a cycle. The cycle has three parts.

Part 1: The husband is angry

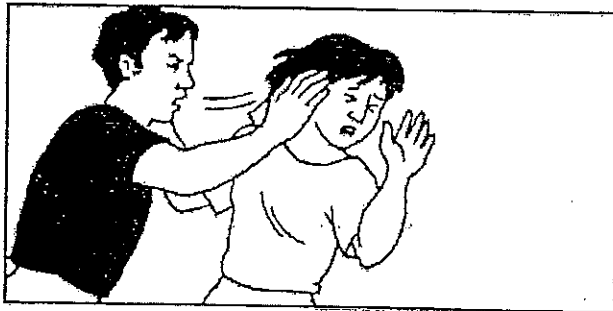
The husband gets angry for no reason. He yells at his wife. She tries to please him so he will not hit her. Part 1 can last for days, weeks, or months.



Part 2: The husband hurts his wife

The husband gets very angry. He hits her, throws things at her, or hurts her in some way.

The wife feels sad and alone. She is afraid. She thinks, "No one can help me." She might not know who to talk to.



Part 3: The husband is sorry

The husband is sorry. He might say, "I love you. I will never hit you again."

His wife might forgive him. Part 3 is often like a honeymoon. The couple feel in love.



The abuse often gets worse

The husband abuses his wife again and again. The abuse often gets worse.

An abusive husband wants to control his wife

An abusive husband often thinks that he is the head of the family. He thinks he must have all the power. He thinks he must control his wife. How does he control her? For example, he controls:

- what she does
- who she talks to
- where she goes
- what she wears

The husband and the wife are not equal. For example:

■ The husband can go out with his friends, but his wife must stay home.

■ The husband can buy things he wants, but his wife cannot buy things she wants.



It is against the law for a husband to hit his wife.

What are the laws in Canada?

Many kinds of wife abuse are against the law in Canada.

For example, it is against the law for a man:

- to hit his wife
- to say he will hurt her or kill her
- to force her to have sex
- to follow her, phone her, or bother her in a way that makes her afraid

What can the police do?

The police can arrest an abusive husband. He might have to go to court. The wife might have to go to court to testify. This means she will have to tell the judge what her husband said and did.

The judge might tell the husband he has to stay away from his wife. Or the judge might tell the husband he has to pay a fine or go to jail.

Phone a crisis centre

You can phone a crisis centre. Look for the number on the first page of the White Pages of the phone book. People at this number will try to help you. You can phone day or night.

You can also phone the Victims Information Line at 1-800-563-0808.

Phone the police

You can phone the police if your husband is abusing you or your children. The police might arrest your husband. They can help you leave.

How to phone in an emergency

In many parts of B.C., you can dial 911 for the police. But some communities have a different number for the police. Look on the first page of the White Pages of the phone book for the number in your community.

You can also dial "0" for an emergency.

My husband is hitting me, I need help now!



Leave home

You can leave your home if your husband is abusing you. Take your children with you.

Phone a transition house or the police. They will help you find a safe place to stay.



Take your:

- passport
- keys
- medicine
- bank book
- money
- important papers



Go to a transition house

There are transition houses in many parts of B.C. They are free and safe. You can phone day or night. To find the number, phone the crisis centre and ask for the nearest transition house.

You and your children can stay at a transition house for up to 30 days. You can get food and clothing. You can talk to a worker about a place to live, money, and legal problems. If you do not speak English well, you can get help finding an interpreter.

See a doctor

If your husband hurts you, go to a doctor or to the hospital. Tell the doctor your story. The doctor can write a report. The report shows that your husband hurt you. You might need the report if you go to court.



Talk to a lawyer

You can talk to a lawyer if your husband is abusing you. A lawyer can tell you about your legal rights.

Look in the White Pages of the phone book under "Legal Aid - Legal Services Society." You can get free help or advice.



Why do some women stay?

Some abused women leave their husbands. Others stay. Some women leave and then go back to their husbands. Why do some abused women stay with their husbands? Here is what they say:

I want to keep my family together. My child needs a father.



My family says I should stay. And I don't have a job or money. How will I live?



I love my husband. He's a good man. He will change. And I don't want to leave my home.



I'm an immigrant. My husband sponsored me. What will happen to me and my children? I don't know Canadian laws.



I don't want other people to know my husband hits me. I feel ashamed. And it's hard to get help in my community.



Help for children

Many children are at home when their fathers abuse their mothers. The children see the hitting. They hear the yelling.

What happens when children see abuse at home?

- These children might have problems at school. They might not sleep at night.
- Some children might think, "My father hits my mother because I am bad."
- Boys might learn that it is okay to hit. When they are adults, they might hit their wives and children.
- Girls might learn that it is okay for someone to hit them.



How to phone for help

Children can phone for help, or you can phone for them.

☎ Dial **310-1234/**
☎ **1-800-663-9122**

You can phone 24 hours a day. Your call is confidential. This means no one will say that you called.

Help for men



Abusive men need to understand why they hurt women. They need to learn other ways to act.

If you want help, call your nearest mental health centre. Look in the Blue Pages of the phone book. Find the Government of B.C. section. Look under "Health - Ministry of Mental Health Centres." People at a mental health centre or a family services organization can help you get counselling.

Help for immigrant women

Immigrant women have many questions about their rights in Canada. They might need to see a lawyer.

They can phone a transition house or an immigrant aid agency. They can also phone a lawyer. (See page 3.)



Immigrant women often have many worries.

Remember

- ☞ Many women are abused.
- ☞ Abuse is never okay.
- ☞ Abuse usually gets worse.
- ☞ Wife abuse is against the law in Canada.
- ☞ You can get help from people who understand.

This Special Issue on Wife Abuse is available from:

This space is provided for the name, address, and logo of your organization.

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