

The Bystander Effect and Domestic Violence

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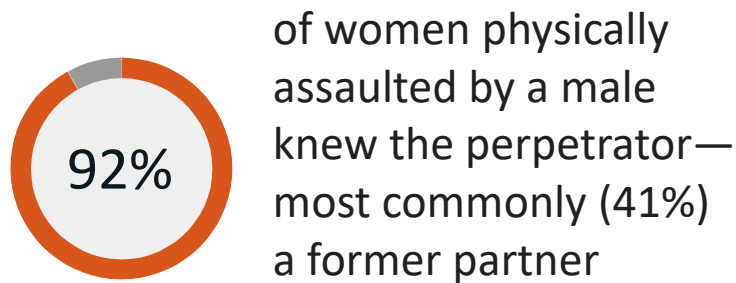


PREVALENCE of Intimate Partner Violence

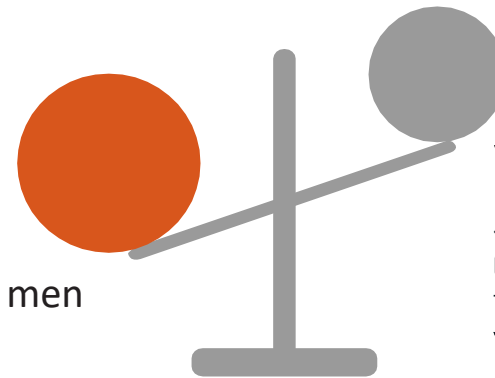
ABS November 2017: adapted from ANROWS



Women were more likely to have experienced violence by a previous partner than a current partner.



Women are **8 TIMES** more likely to experience sexual violence by a partner than men



Women are nearly **3 TIMES** more likely than men to have experienced violence by a partner*

Images you may recognise



What is Domestic Violence?

Domestic violence is behaviour perpetrated by one person against another, where two people are in a relevant relationship, which is:

- physically or sexually abusive;
- emotionally or psychologically abusive;
- economically abusive;
- threatening;
- coercive;
- or in any other way controls or dominates the victim and causes the victim to fear for their own, or someone else's, safety and wellbeing.

Influencers of the 'Bystander Effect'

- **Ambiguity:** the more ambiguous the situation the less likely people will intervene
- **Group Cohesiveness:** the need to behave in correct and socially acceptable ways, thus when other observers fail to react, individuals often take this as a signal that a response is not needed or not appropriate and
- **Diffusion of responsibility.** This can be an obstacle for people to realize there is a need to intervene.

Prevailing Myths: Alive and well

- Domestic violence is a private matter – “it’s not my problem”
- Women who experience DFV can just leave – “it’s up to her”
- DFV is an accepted part of some cultures - “it’s their business”
- Women provoke DFV – “it’s her fault”
- Women make false claims or exaggerate their experience of DFV – “it can’t be that bad”

Need to change the dialogue

From diffusing responsibility:

“How could YOU let this happen?”

“Why didn’t YOU say anything?”

To individual and collective responsibility:

“How could I/WE let this happen in our community?”

“How can I/WE learn to say something?”

Shift of responsibility from victims and toward the family, friends and the whole community and playing a role.

...and change social norms

- More bystander intervention means society's collective responsibility takes on a new role. Studies show that social norms can play a significant role in violence prevention, especially in communities such as college campuses (Banyard et al., 2004).
- Just as Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD), for example, shifted social norms of our society with their slogan, "Friends don't let friends drive drunk," a similar shift is also possible for violence: "Friends don't let friends hurt others."

Change happening: Queensland Campaign



Concluding comments from the campaign

- When confronted with the signs of abusive behaviour, we can stop making excuses and downplaying our instinct to step in.
- Domestic and family violence won't go away by itself – it needs our intervention to break the cycle.
- It needs everyday Queenslanders to take responsibility for learning the signs and taking action to stop domestic and family violence.

For more information, please contact us on –

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