Violence against women and domestic violence

Renee Fiolet
School of Nursing and Midwifery
Deakin University
World Health Organisation definition of violence

The intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community that either results in or has a likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment or deprivation

What behaviours would you consider to be abusive?

What is:
• Verbal abuse
• Emotional/Psychological abuse
• Financial abuse
• Physical abuse
• Sexual abuse
• Abuse of pets and children
• Stalking

Have you ever thought about more discreet types of abuse such as using male privilege and encouraging isolation?
Some statistics that won’t make you yawn!

• 1 in 3 Australian women experience physical abuse*

• 1 in 5 Australian women experience sexual abuse*

• Violence against women is the leading cause for homelessness in our country

• More than 1 woman is killed every week in Australia by an intimate/former partner

• Over 60,000 family incidents reported to Victoria Police in the last year and yet we know that less than 20% get reported

• These figures are known to be higher for women with disability, women in rural/remote areas and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women
Why is violence against women an important issue?

• According to VicHealth:

Violence against women is the biggest contributor towards morbidity and mortality for women aged 15-44 years

*Many of our Deakin students and staff fit into this age group
What groups of women are more at risk of experiencing domestic violence?

• Rural and remote women

• Women with disability

• CALD women, especially newly arrived

• Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women
What could be the signs that someone you know is experiencing domestic violence?

• Physical

• Cognitive

• Emotional/Psychological

• Isolation and withdrawal
Health Outcomes resulting from violence against women

Homicide  Depression  Female Genital Mutilation
Bruising  Withdrawal  Internal bleeding  Anxiety
Misscarriage  Post Traumatic Stress Disorder  Scarring
Disability  Pelvic Inflammatory Disease  Isolation
Obesity  Fractures  Stress  Suicide  Unwanted pregnancy
Engagement in risk taking behaviours  Low self esteem
Fear  Insomnia  Eating disorders  PTSD
Some myths that need to be addressed

• Violence against women is a women’s issue
• Violence occurs mainly within certain racial/religion or SES groups
• Some women ask to be raped or provoke a beating (victim blaming and slut shaming)
• Women should avoid drinking
• Women should just leave the man who is harming them
• There is nothing that can be done by an individual to prevent VAW
• Perpetrators of violence are mentally ill
• Without drugs and alcohol VAW would not occur
Why is VAW such an issue in our society?

Patriarchal society
Masculinity
Traditional gender roles
Mateship
Pornography
If you are scared or become threatened by violence you should:

• Create a safety plan (preferably with someone who has expertise in the area)
• Discuss your concerns with people you trust
• Make copies of important documents
• Have a safe bag and put it in an accessible but hidden place
• Try to avoid arguments in high risk areas such as the kitchen and shed
• Stand between the perpetrator and the door, not the other way around
• Have emergency numbers stored discreetly on your phone
What can you do for someone experiencing violence?

- What skills do you need? *Listen, don’t judge, be an advocate, support*
- Try learning what you can about domestic violence – *be informed!*
- Challenge sexist jokes and behaviours – *Remind mates they are better than that*
- How to maintain your own safety – *Take violence seriously, choose your timing*
- Spread the word – *Talk about sexism and violence*
- Join online and community initiatives – *Such as 16 days, White Ribbon*
- Examine your own behaviours – *This is confronting!*

**REMEMBER: MOST MEN ARE NOT VIOLENT BUT THEY WILL KNOW SOMEONE WHO IS**
Want to know where to get help for you or a friend?

- DV Vic [www.dvvic.org.au](http://www.dvvic.org.au)
- DVRCV [www.dvrcv.org.au](http://www.dvrcv.org.au)
- CASA [www.casa.org.au](http://www.casa.org.au)
- 1800RESPECT phone line or [www.1800respect.org.au](http://www.1800respect.org.au)
- Police 000