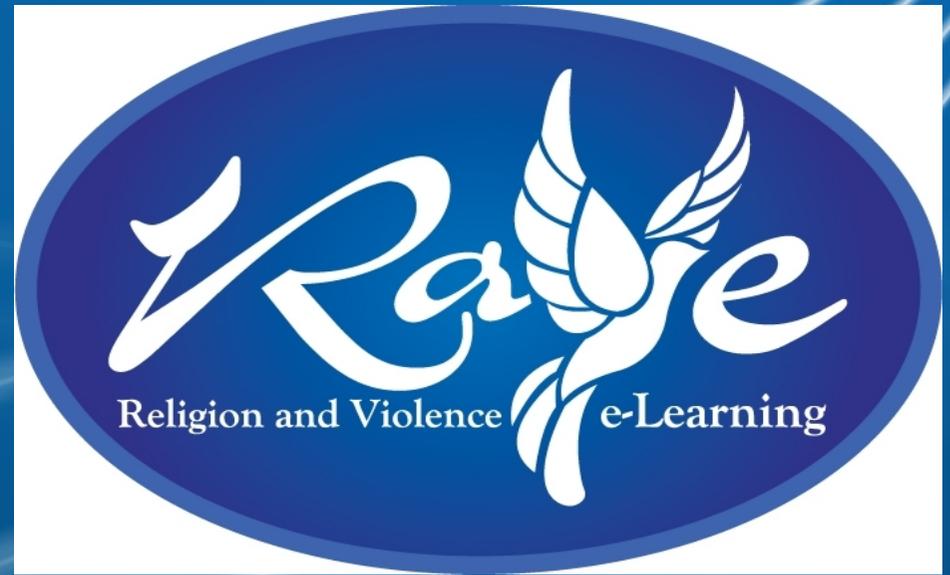


Violence Against Women



Learning objectives

1. We will consider examples of domestic violence as well as numerous examples of abusive relationships.
2. Then we will examine national statistics from data collected in Canada.

Examples of abuse

As discussed in a previous lesson, researchers posit that at least 25% of women will experience some form of abuse in their lifetimes. Interestingly, research also shows that the percentage of churched and unchurched abused women is exactly the same.

This abuse can take many forms:

- physical violence
- sexual violence
- emotional violence

Physical violence



Physical abuse can take many forms including hitting, pinching, shoving, kicking, choking, etc.

Consider the following scenario and how you might respond.

A woman from your church arrives at your office and tells you that her husband hit her last night. She doesn't know what to do.

Would you be able to discuss a safety plan with her? For a sample copy of a safety plan, [click here](#).

Do you know the name of the local women's shelter in your area? If not, [click here](#).

Sexual violence

Abuse can also take the form of sexual violence. This can happen in marriages, dating relationships, with an acquaintance or between complete strangers.



Consider how you might respond to the following scenarios.

A young teenager from your congregation tells you that she has been sexually assaulted by her boyfriend. She doesn't want her parents to know what happened.

A woman from your church is being sexually harassed by a co-worker. She is afraid that reporting the harassment may jeopardize her position.

Emotional violence

Sometimes there are no visible wounds from the abuse. But that does not mean that the victim is in any less pain. In fact, many abused women tell us that the emotional abuse is more painful than physical violence.



How might you respond to the following scenario?

Your music minister's wife confides that her husband is verbally abusive in the home. He also yells at their children.

Other forms of abuse

Abuse can also take a variety of other forms and often several forms of abuse are taking place within a relationship. An abusive husband may isolate his wife from her close friends and family. Sometimes he will have total control over the family finances and even control medication.

How might a church community respond to the following situation?

A young couple has been actively involved in your church, yet after the birth of their first child the woman becomes withdrawn and seems depressed.

Canadian statistics

Women tend to be more fearful than men of becoming victims of violent crime. They are particularly cautious when it comes to:

- waiting for public transit after dark;
- walking alone in the dark; or
- being home alone in the evening.

According to Statistics Canada, 58% of female night-time transit users worried when taking it alone at night, twice the proportion of 29% among male night-time users. Likewise, 27% of women worried for their personal safety when they were home alone at night, compared with only 12% of men. Women were almost three times as likely to be afraid for their safety when walking alone after dark.

(Source: <http://www.statcan.gc.ca>.)

Canadian statistics



Yet, we should all be concerned about the levels of violence that take place in intimate relationships.

Female victims of spousal violence (653,000 reported cases in 2004) were three times more likely than male victims of spousal violence to fear for their life (34% versus 10%) and three times more likely to take time off from their everyday activities because of the violence (29% versus 10%).

Shelter admissions

58,486 women sought refuge in one of 473 shelters across Canada between April 1st, 2003 and March 31st, 2004.

76% of women who were seeking safety in a shelter on April 14th, 2004 were escaping abuse.

Almost 7 out of 10 reported physical abuse, 50% threats, 46% financial abuse, 31% harassment, and 27% sexual abuse.

Of the women who had stayed in shelters previously, 221 of them, along with 112 children, could not or would not be accommodated at one of 93 shelters on April 14th, 2004. Of these 93 shelters, 62% reported that the reason for referring them elsewhere was because the shelter was full.

Homicides

There were 198 victims of female homicide in Canada in 2004. On average, 182 females were killed every year in Canada between 1994 and 2003.

There were 62 female victims of spousal homicide in 2004. 27 women were killed by their legally married husband, 20 by a common-law partner and 15 by a separated or divorced husband.

Among solved homicides involving victims aged 15 and older in 2004, one-half of all women were killed by someone with whom they had an intimate relationship at some point, either through marriage or dating. This compares to 8% of male victims of homicide.



Spousal violence



Research finds that less than half of all cases of spousal violence involving female victims are reported to police.

Female victims of spousal violence tend to experience more severe consequences than men. Female victims are more likely to experience some form of physical injury as a result of spousal violence.

Women are more likely to be victims of multiple incidents of spousal violence.

Source: http://www.swc-cfc.gc.ca/dec6/facts_e.html

Sexual assault

Women make up the vast majority of victims of sexual assault.

The majority of victims of sexual assault are under 18 years old.

In 2000, 40% of female victims of sexual assault were assaulted by a friend or casual acquaintance, 23% by a stranger, and 20% by a family member (including a spouse or ex-spouse).

(Source http://swc-cfc.gc.ca/dates/dec6/facts_e.html)

Criminal harassment



In 2000, most victims of criminal harassment were women.

90% of female victims in 2000 were stalked by men, most of whom knew the stalker from a previous intimate relationship, usually an ex-husband or former boyfriend.

(Source: http://swc-cfc.gc.ca/dates/dec6/facts_e.html)

Help Now

These statistics on the rates of violence against women in Canada show that this is a serious social problem and that women you know could be in serious danger.

Do you know of a woman who is in need of immediate assistance?

Do you know where to turn?



Canada



The RAVE Project is designed to help equip religious leaders with the resources they need to help victims of violence in their congregations.

You can locate the shelter nearest you by [clicking here to link you to the Canadian shelter map.](#)

USA



In addition to providing links to American national hotlines for domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking and dating abuse, the RAVE Project also features links to shelter maps for every state as well as for state coalitions.

To locate and try out these important resources [click here.](#)

Things to consider . . .

Although many women fear becoming victims of violent crime at the hands of a stranger, in reality women are at greater risk in the company of their boyfriends, husbands and ex-spouses.

Abuse takes a variety of forms, not just physical abuse. Many perpetrators are verbally and emotionally abusive, isolate their victims from family and friends, and control access to family resources.

Victims may not immediately disclose the abuse. The next time a woman tells you that her home life is unhappy, or that her life is in disarray, consider carefully what you have learned about violence against women. While such statements may not be evidence of abuse, you may want to offer a listening ear.

For additional reading consult [The Sourcebook on Violence Against Women.](#)