

# West Cork Whisper

West Cork Women Against Violence Project Newsletter

40th Edition

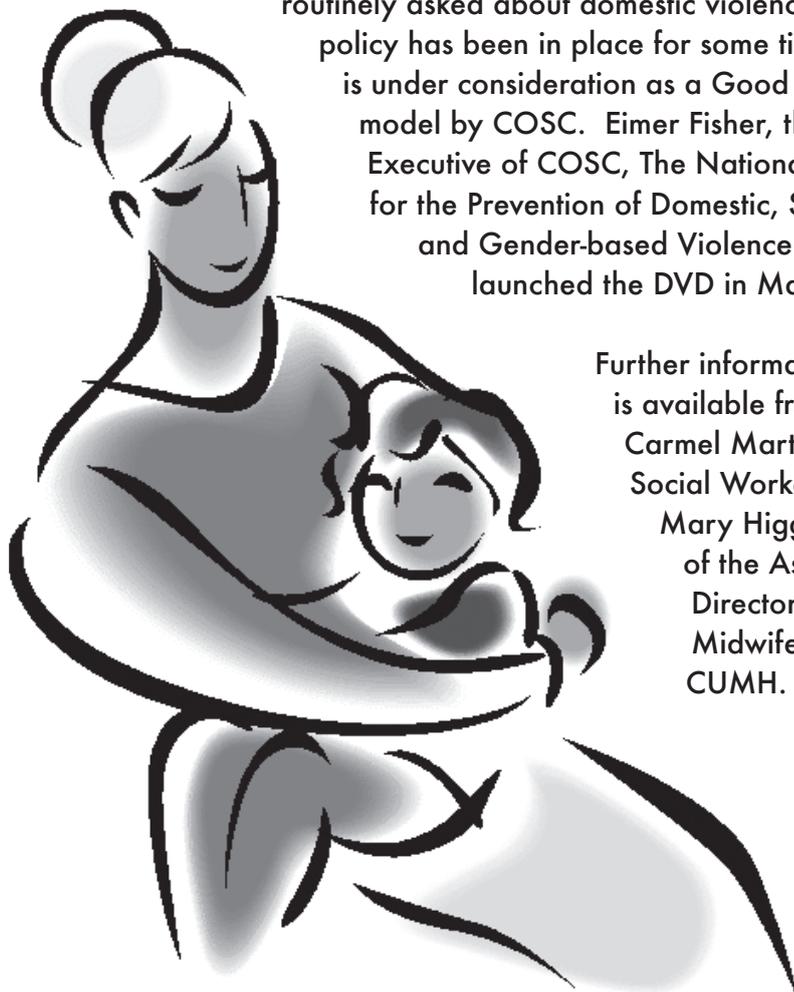
July August September 2010

## Maternity Service Domestic Violence Screening Policy

It is shocking to think that women can experience abuse in pregnancy, when they are most vulnerable to harm. Yet research in Ireland, at the Rotunda Hospital in Dublin, has shown that this is a fact. Congratulations are therefore due to Cork University Maternity Hospital who recently launched an educational DVD to be used during staff education programmes. Their Domestic Violence screening policy is for all women using the maternity service. It states

that all women attending for ante-natal care are routinely asked about domestic violence. The policy has been in place for some time, and is under consideration as a Good Practice model by COSC. Eimer Fisher, the Chief Executive of COSC, The National Office for the Prevention of Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based Violence officially launched the DVD in May.

Further information is available from Carmel Martin, Social Worker and Mary Higgins, one of the Assistant Directors of Midwifery at CUMH.



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## Break the Silence on Domestic Violence

West Cork Women Against  
Violence Project,  
Harbour View,  
Bantry, Co. Cork.

Freephone Helpline:  
Tuesday 10am - 4 pm  
Tel: 1800 203 136

Office: Tel: 027 53847  
Open: 10am-1pm,  
Monday - Friday

Website:  
[www.westcorkwomensproject.ie](http://www.westcorkwomensproject.ie)

Email: [admin@westcorkwomensproject.ie](mailto:admin@westcorkwomensproject.ie)

# Domestic Violence Figures Show Unprecedented Trend Upwards in Ireland

Safe Ireland (the national representative body for 41 frontline domestic violence services in Ireland) recently launched *"In Just One Day"*, a 24 hour snap shot of the reality of domestic violence nationally on 4th November 2009.

## On the 4th November 2009 nationally ....

- 368 women and 291 children were accommodated and/or received support from a domestic violence service.
- 184 helpline calls were received from women.
- 11 women and 16 children were admitted to refuge but 6 women could not be accommodated because there was not enough space.

## Year on year ...

- 7,400 women received support from a domestic violence service in 2009 ; 6,111 women in 2008 ; 5,195 women in 2007
- 43% increase in the number of women accessing services across Ireland over two years.

*"This census reveals that 368 women and 291 children were accommodated or received support from an Irish domestic violence service throughout the country on just one day last year. If you break down these figures, it means that 15 women and 12 children – 27 people in total were getting support every hour. These stark numbers underline the reality of what domestic violence agencies are working with on an average day and reflect the stressful and vulnerable conditions women and children are living with every day, including the incredible stress of being out of their home due to domestic violence. On the 4th November 2009, 182 women were in refuge or transitional housing. This means that these women and their children are homeless because they are not safe in their homes.*

*Essential supports and options to assist women and children are being cut at the same time that Irish statistics show an unprecedented 43% increase in the number of women accessing domestic violence services in Ireland over the last two years. The trend is that violence is not disappearing but is increasing. Cutting back on specialist domestic violence services is a false economy. More women will have no choice but to present elsewhere if services are cut. The cost of not funding services will be far greater in the long run for women, for children and for the state. Women experiencing violence in Ireland are running a high risk of being caught in the trap of recession, poverty, closing down of options and homelessness".*

The census report can be downloaded from the Safe Ireland website: [www.safeireland.ie](http://www.safeireland.ie)

West Cork Women against Violence welcomes the publication by COSC of the **National Strategy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based Violence**. This report was created through extensive consultation with voluntary and statutory agencies. It sets out the Government's vision for the next four years to 2014. It needs government resources to make it work. As COSC states:

*"The actions required to tackle domestic and sexual violence primarily cut across the justice sector, the health sector, the education sector, the housing sector and the non-governmental sector. Progress must be made in the context of a common vision to ensure that those affected receive the benefit of a holistic service."*

The report is available through the COSC website: [www.cosc.ie](http://www.cosc.ie)

We offer an appointment and court accompaniment service

# It Happened To Me

My boyfriend tried to hurt me.  
I got out.  
This is my life.  
I am in control.  
Hey, Mom, I met this guy –  
He is the one –  
He treats me like a queen.  
He is my soul mate.  
We moved in together.  
We are engaged.  
He shoved me.  
He was drunk.  
It won't happen again.  
He said he was  
  
"Sorry."  
  
I believed him.  
  
It happened again;

This time it was a punch.  
One to me, the other into the door.  
He said he was  
"Sorry."  
I replaced the door.  
I believed him.  
If I try hard enough, I can change him.  
And . . . I married him.  
  
Things were okay:  
Only a few punches  
But many words  
Words that linger  
Words that hurt.  
It was all about control!  
I was allowed none.  
The day would come when I could  
Stand it no longer.  
  
Today is that day.  
He broke my nose.

It was supposed to be only a slap.  
I tell no one –  
I am ashamed.  
I let this happen to me.  
  
It's not my fault;  
He is to blame.  
I am the victim.  
  
I make him go.  
I don't care where.  
I did not care.  
Safety is my only concern.  
I found help from  
A Woman's Place.  
They gave me strength.  
  
I'm in control again.  
I will not lose it this time.  
  
*Anonymous*  
*From: A Gathering of Voices,*  
*2002*

## When Does Teasing become Abuse?

Many people have talked about teasing that is disturbing or humiliating. Others have wondered about an appropriate response. People sometimes fear being labelled as a baby, brat or someone who lacks a sense of humour.

For example, one woman's boyfriend repeatedly called her a wench. When she asked her boyfriend to stop, he said she had no sense of humour and was being a baby. He also suggested she "lighten up." She felt embarrassed and decided she was taking it too seriously. At the same time, her boyfriend continued to address her this way, to the point of never using her name. Eventually, the relationship ended.

How do we know when teasing has crossed a line? Simple. When it stops being funny. If you find yourself going along with the joke but feeling hurt or embarrassed on the inside, a line has been crossed. The teasing is not funny and must stop.

Another person asked, "But how can you make them stop?"

This too is a simple answer. You tell them it's not funny and you don't like it. If they continue you have a bigger problem than the teasing. They are not respecting your wishes. In this case you say you cannot stay in a relationship with someone who is intentionally hurting you. Overreacting? Not necessarily. If you stay in this type of relationship, you will eventually observe your partner behaving disrespectfully in other areas. The relationship will probably become abusive or end.

Remember also that partners are not mind readers. It is possible your partner is just being playful. If you don't like whatever they are doing, tell them. Be clear and unequivocal. "Don't call me that. I don't like it". Be aware that you must also be careful about teasing. Anything that might hurt or insult your partner is out of line. You should treat your partner with the same respect you expect and deserve from him or her.

*Extract from "The Breakable Vow" by Kathryn Clarke – Dating Violence Prevention – Curriculum Guide/ Instructor's Manual.*

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## Irish Country Women's Association

West Cork Women Against Violence Project would like to thank the Dunmanway Guild for their kind invitation to speak at their Cork Federation Meeting held in Dunmanway on May 31st 2010. The Project always aims to raise awareness of domestic violence and the services available, and it was especially gratifying to see the large number of women at the meeting from all areas of Cork County.

We would like to take this opportunity to wish the ICA a very Happy Centenary Anniversary. The number of women whose lives have been enhanced in the last 100 years by ICA members advocating on behalf of issues affecting women's lives, such as rural water and electricity in the 50's and 60's, to access to education, to campaigning for cancer screening in the more recent years is incalculable.

We wish the ICA continued success in their endeavours over the next one hundred years. Go Raibh Maith Agat.



### Support Services for Women:

West Cork Women against Violence Project, Bantry  
..... Freephone 1800-203136

Women's Aid Freephone ..... 1800-341 900

Cuanlee Refuge, Cork.....021-4277698

Legal Aid Board, Cork.....021-4551686  
.....021-4275998

Mná Feasa (Domestic Violence Project).....021-4211757

OSS Cork ..... Freephone 1800-497497  
(Domestic Violence Resource Centre for men and women)

Sexual Assault Treatment Unit .....021-4926497

Sexual Violence Centre..... Freephone 1800-496496

Domestic Violence Social Work .....021-4921728

Y.A.N.A. North Cork .....022-53915

### Kerry

Kerry Women's Refuge and Support Services  
(ADAPT) .....066-7129100

Open Door Network .....066-7185472

Kerry Rape & Sexual Abuse Centre.....1800-633333

Legal Aid Board .....066-7126900

Tralee Women's Resource Centre .....066-7120622

*According to the Council of Europe, domestic violence is the major cause of death and disability for women aged 16 - 44, and accounts for more death and ill-health than cancer or traffic accidents.*

Source: Women's Aid

### West Cork Citizens' Information Service

The Square, Bantry. Ph: 027 52100  
South Square, Macroom. Ph: 026 42179

*West Cork Citizens' Information Service can provide you with information, advocacy and advice on all your rights and entitlements. The service is free, confidential and independent. Open daily, please call for times.*

#### LEGAL AID BOARD

3rd Tuesday of month 10.30am – 4.30pm  
For an appointment with the Legal Aid Board please phone the Legal Aid Cork office on:  
**021 4551686.**

#### FREE LEGAL ADVICE CLINIC (F.L.A.C.)

1st Tuesday of month 6pm – 7pm  
Appointments for F.L.A.C. are made by contacting the West Cork Citizens' Information Service via drop in or telephone 027 52100.

#### MABS OUTREACH CLINIC:

Each Friday 10 am – 11.30 am  
Phone MABS at 023 55155 for an appointment.

These are Confidential Services

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