



West Cork Whisper

WEST CORK WOMEN AGAINST VIOLENCE PROJECT NEWSLETTER

54th EDITION

JAN, FEB, MARCH 2014

6,647 women in West Cork will experience domestic violence in their lifetime.

Are you one of these women?

We are here to support you.



If you are too afraid
or too ashamed to tell
anyone how he treats you
- it's abuse.



**FREEPHONE
HELPLINE**

1800 203 136

MON - WED
9.30AM - 4.00PM
OR PHONE THE OFFICE LINE

**OFFICE
NUMBER**

027 53847

OFFICE LINE IS STAFFED
9AM-5.30PM MOST WEEKDAYS

the **cost** of domestic violence

Domestic Violence costs.

It costs the woman who is being abused, and it costs the children who witness it. It costs the community; and it costs society itself.

It may seem indecent to reduce the appalling abuse that is inflicted on women to a monetary value. How can we put a monetary value on the terror, the pain, the deaths? But in a society that seems unwilling to really tackle the causes of domestic abuse - to **really** look at the ugly reality that one in seven women is **severely** beaten; to **really** look at the ugly reality that, on average, one woman will die this month in Ireland, and **every** month, many of them at the hands of a man who has probably been beating her for years. When our society is wilfully blind and deaf to the pain, the anguish, the suffering - then maybe money can do the talking, and maybe society will listen then.

And society should listen because the cost of domestic abuse to the economy is significant. The Council of Europe estimates that domestic abuse costs each state €555 per citizen annually in policing, health bills, lost productivity and court procedures. That figure translates to an estimated cost to the Irish economy of €2.2 billion a year.

As we pointed out in the last issue of *The Whisper* - "The failure to adequately address the causes of domestic violence and to make perpetrators accountable is costing both lives and money."

Looking first at where some of the direct costs arise, clearly there are costs across a range of State bodies, and in particular to frontline services. These include:

CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM - Garda hours, court time, and legal representation for the victims of abuse who are trying to escape from their abusers, for example. There is also the cost of investigating the deaths of the women who die at the hands of their abusive partners; prosecuting their murderers; and imprisoning them.

SOCIAL SERVICES - Providing the necessary social services and supports that the women who are being abused, and their children, need. There is also the cost of providing housing, both temporary and permanent, for women and their children fleeing from an abusive home.

HEALTH - There are very significant costs to the Health System from domestic violence - both short-term and long-term. Women who have been beaten and/or raped can require immediate medical care from their doctor; and, all too often, they end up in Accident and Emergency and require hospitalisation for their injuries.

Shockingly, 1 in 8 women experience abuse **during** their pregnancy; and, 30% of women who experience domestic violence are physically assaulted for the first time in pregnancy. Domestic violence in pregnancy is a significant indicator of poor maternal and child health outcomes, including maternal mortality and miscarriage. Clearly, there is a significant cost factor to providing the medical services that are needed to care for these women and children.

In both the short - and the long-term, abused women have significantly worse physical and mental health than non-abused women. Women who experience domestic violence are at an increased risk of depression and suicide; and they can suffer from psychosomatic disorders. They can also be permanently physically disabled. Domestic violence is also linked to chronic ill health. All of these negative outcomes generate substantial costs not just to the State, but also to the economy as a whole.

The cost of domestic violence in terms of frontline services is only part of the story. In the wider economy there are significant costs as a result of domestic violence also. Women who are being abused are often forced to miss work, their productivity is affected, as well as their opportunity for promotion. And so the women have reduced income, and business has reduced profits.

The negative consequences, and therefore the economic costs, of domestic violence reaches into the future. This is true not only for the women being abused, but it is true for their children also. Children may be directly targeted for abuse by the perpetrator, or they may witness abuse being inflicted on their mothers, including being forced to witness sexual abuse. Even if they escape being directly abused themselves, children who witness abuse can suffer from this experience and have been found to be more at risk of health problems; poor school performance; and can have significant behavioural problems.

The economic costs of domestic violence are enormous, yet they pale into insignificance when balanced against the personal suffering of women who are being abused, and the negative consequences for those women and their children. The levels of domestic abuse are so high in this country that it seems incredible that there is so little effort on behalf of the State to confront the causes of domestic violence, and to hold the perpetrators to account. If we as a society are reluctant to really tackle the causes of domestic violence because it is the **right** thing to do; then perhaps we as a society will tackle those causes because it is the **economic** thing to do.

One in seven women experiences **severe** domestic violence in Ireland. Domestic violence can affect any woman at any stage of her life regardless of ethnicity, class, age, religion, sexuality, ability, income, lifestyle or location.



Slumped

Slumped,
The slamming door echoes in
her head
He'd shared her secrets
Shared her bed
She's angry with herself
For being taken in
She forgave him before
He's broken her trust again
Promises, promises
Empty as her purse
His love is the bottle
A couples curse
Take them for better
Take them for worse
Another generation to suffer
the curse
She has a Protection Order
She'll make that call
She's resolute now
It's best for them all!

MARGARET O'DRISCOLL,
Bandon Women's Group

1 Out of the 194 women murdered in Ireland since 1996, 75 women (53% of resolved cases) were killed by those closest to them - a current or former husband, partner or boyfriend.

2 40 - 70% of women who are murdered worldwide are killed by their current or former husband or boyfriend. (*World Report on Violence and Health, WHO, 2002*).

3 In the UK between 2001 and 2002, 46% of female homicide victims compared with 5% of male homicide victims were killed by a current or former partner. Over 2 women a week were killed by a former or current partner during this period. (*Flood-Page et al, Crime in England and Wales 2001/2002: Supplementary Volume, Home Office, 2003*)

4 In 2007, 45% of female homicide victims in the US were murdered by a male partner or ex-partner, compared to 5% of men. (*Female Victims of Violence, Bureau Of Justice Statistics Selected Findings, September 2009, USDOL*)

<http://www.womensaid.ie/16daysblog/2013/12/05/53-of-women-murdered-in-ireland-since-1996-killed/>

West Cork Women Against Violence Project provides confidential support, information, and accompaniment to women in West Cork who are living in or who have left an abusive relationship.

the house or in your job, about your family and friends, about how you look, about your lack of education or that you are too well educated. The point is not that there is anything actually wrong with you; the point is for him to reduce your confidence in yourself which means he can control you more easily. These comments make you feel bad, but you are a woman who wouldn't dream of trying to hurt another person so you ignore or shake off these comments but inside you begin to believe that you must be doing something to make these criticisms happen. You then alter your own behaviours and patterns in order to try to placate a situation.

not have a penny to call your own and he spends the money as he wishes. You may be on a very low income and he still spends the money as he wishes and the family can often go without food. You put yourself last and do whatever has to be done in order to keep the children fed and clothed and to give them a future.

Physical abuse is the most obvious form of control, but often that can be very unpredictable or subtle and hidden so that only the victim knows that it is happening. Sometimes women experience only one form of violence and for others it can be several.

abuse: what is it?

That's a clear statement of what we do, but how does a woman always recognise when a relationship is or has become abusive? None of us would stay with a man who beat us up on the first date, but we know that 1 in 5 of us will experience domestic violence at some point in our lives, so how does it change from a starry-eyed romance to a situation where our lives may be in danger? What makes it different from those women who don't experience violence?

Women who experience domestic violence come from every social, religious, racial, and ethnic background. The one feature that does seem to be in common is that they are women who show empathy to others and they are in a relationship with a male who chooses to be abusive.

Domestic abuse starts with small, insignificant steps of psychological abuse; little criticisms or 'jokes' about how you may do things around

Alongside this runs emotional abuse; jealousy of other significant relationships and comments about you spending more time with others than with him, which make you feel guilty. You may stop seeing your family as much or at all in order to reduce this guilt, stop the arguments and make him happy. You also do this in order to prevent the important people in your life from being involved in conflict and aggression. So he has now isolated you which makes him much more powerful. If there are children in the family unit then he can use their welfare as a tool to frighten and also control you. You start to ignore and deny how you feel in order to ease situations and make him happier.

Another aspect in his control of you can often be financial. If you both work he doesn't give you any of 'his' money; he may pay the mortgage though as the house is in his name! This means your wage is stretched to feed and clothe the family, pay the bills, put the kids through school and college and even Christmas is paid for by you. If you don't work he can make you account for every penny spent with receipts and invoices. To the outside world your family can appear to be well off but you may

Either way horrendous damage has been done to your self-esteem by these consistent abuses, so you don't trust your own feelings about what is happening, have become isolated from any source of help, are afraid of making any changes to a precarious situation and find it difficult to identify your own power to change the situation. Maybe the dangers of changing the situation are too great for you to risk as the consequences can be too high - further violence or a risk to the children. You may believe positive change can occur - he can be very sorry afterwards and promise it won't happen again; you want the violence to stop, the kids love him and you don't want to break up the family; because he has threatened to hurt the kids if you try to leave; because he has said he will kill you if you try to leave. Then he blames you for his violent outbursts and the cycle goes round again.

You are a woman who is looking after those she loves in the best way you know how !

Violent and abusive behaviour is the responsibility of the abuser not the abused person.

There are people who will listen, believe, and support you.

WE ARE HERE TO SUPPORT YOU

WE SUPPORT:

- Any woman, over 18 years of age, who is now or has in the past been in an intimate abusive relationship. Abuse can include Physical, Emotional, Financial or Sexual violence.
- A friend or family member of a woman who is in an abusive relationship.
- Professional and community organisations via telephone support and training around domestic violence.

WHEN YOU CONTACT US:

- We will listen to you and support you no matter what your choices.
- We will not judge you or tell you what to do. It is our belief that you are the only person qualified to make decisions for your life.



We are a free, confidential listening and information service

SERVICES PROVIDED:

- Ongoing support for you whatever your choice may be.
- We can provide you with information on court orders, housing entitlements, etc. and can refer you to other appropriate services.
- We can go with you to Court for a Domestic Violence Order or can accompany you to other services.
- We can provide transport for you in a crisis.
- We can advocate on your behalf.

HOW TO CONTACT US

- Freephone Helpline 1800 203 136. This will be answered weekdays when a trained Support Worker is available.
- Our office line, 027 53847, is usually staffed weekdays 9am to 5pm. Call to arrange a telephone or one-to-one appointment with a Support Worker.
- Drop-in to our Bantry office or make an appointment.
- Drop-in to Skibbereen office Fridays 11am to 2pm.
- Phone to make an appointment in other locations in West Cork

**CALL OUR FREEPHONE
HELPLINE 1800 203 136**

Worried about being homeless?

In March 2012, Novas Initiatives opened a Tenancy Support and Sustainment Service in West Cork. This is our first service in Cork. The geographical remit of this service extends from Bandon to Mizen Head and covers hundreds of miles of rural dwellings and large county towns. Novas' Support and Sustainment Worker provides sensitive and pragmatic support services to families and single people who are homeless or at risk of being homeless in the West Cork region. Novas Initiatives is the only voluntary housing agency providing a homeless service in the area. The most prevalent issues among this client base include addiction, mental health issues, financial strain, domestic violence and separation.

Within this service, the individual needs of each client are assessed and bespoke care-management programmes are subsequently developed and delivered in conjunction with other voluntary and statutory agencies, with the client's specific needs in mind. The agencies we collaborate with include the Local Housing Authority, Social Work Teams, West Cork Women Against Violence, West Cork Mental Health Services, Family Resource Centers, the Gardai and Community Welfare Officers. In relation to women who find themselves with housing concerns, a very supportive, coordinated and proactive approach is taken. Each case is treated individually and all avenues to secure accommodation as quickly as possible are exhausted. Some 62% of clients who accessed our service in 2012 were women at risk of homelessness. Two thirds of those women were part of a family unit. Our service works to secure accommodation for women and their children, thus keeping the family unit together. We also link in with the Mental Health Services in supporting the accommodation and housing needs of clients and thus aiding in their recovery.

Given the region, rural isolation is an additional obstacle that we support clients to overcome. The Tenancy Support and Sustainment Officer works with clients to help them engage in their local communities. Considering the lack of accommodation support services in the region, and indeed the lack of holistic support for those on the margins of society, this service offers a vital means of advocacy for many individuals and families experiencing social isolation and at risk of homelessness.

If you would like any further information on this service, please contact the Tenancy Support and Sustainment Worker, Julie Brosnan on 086 8279996 or julie.brosnan@novas.ie.

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

Moving from One-Parent Family Payment when my youngest child turns twelve

Question: My youngest child turns 12 next month and I hear that my One-Parent Family Payment will stop at that stage. Is there any other payment I can get instead?

Answer: You may qualify for a *Jobseeker's Allowance Transition (JST)*. This payment aims to support lone parents into the workforce.

You must have been getting a *One-Parent Family Payment (OFP)* within the three years before you make your claim for *Jobseeker's Allowance Transition* and your payment must have stopped because your youngest child reached the relevant age limit. You do not qualify if your OFP stopped for another reason, for example if you started cohabiting or if your income went over the income limits.

You must also be habitually resident in Ireland, you must be capable of work and your youngest qualified child must be aged at least 7 and under 14. When your youngest child turns 14 the normal *Jobseeker's Allowance (JA)* conditions will apply to you.

The rules for JA and JST are very similar. The means test is exactly the same and the maximum weekly rate is the same (€188). Income from work is assessed in the same way. The main differences between JA and JST are:

- For JST, you are not obliged to be unemployed, available for full-time work and genuinely seeking work.
- The 4-in-7 rule applying to JA does not apply to JST (you do not have to be fully unemployed for 4 out of 7 days). This means that you could work part-time for 5 days, for example.
- You cannot cohabit with another person while you are getting JST.

To get JST you must sign a quarterly declaration to confirm that you are still entitled to the payment. You must participate in employment activation measures. You will also be able to access childcare supports.

You can get more information about *Jobseeker's Allowance Transition* from your local Intreo centre or social welfare local office or *Citizens Information Centre*.

Know Your Rights has been compiled by West Cork Citizens Information Service which provides a free and confidential service to the public. Tel: 0761 07 8390 Address: Wolfe Tone Square, Bantry, Co Cork. Weekly outreach in Dunmanway and Bandon. Information is also available online at citizensinformation.ie and from the Citizens Information Phone Service, 0761 07 4000.

YOUTH RAP PROJECT



These are some of the lyrics from the Rap performed by a group of young people from Bantry, Dunmanway and surrounding areas.

"Demon is off its leash"

"Kids wake up not knowing what the noise is"

"At only 10 years of age, Felt like a bird trapped in a cage"

"Sitting there with so much on her mind, wondering why, wondering why"

"You're going to need more snap jack to capture the picture"

"Powerful" the word used most often to describe the Rap performance at our conference.

Seven young people performed their song with *Temper Mental MissElayneous*, which was recorded by GMC, live at our recent conference in Bantry. A number of other young people who had been involved in the project over the previous few months were unable to perform on the day. We at WCWAVP would like to say well done to everyone who was involved and to send a big thank you to all the young people who participated in the project, to our volunteers, to COSC for funding the project and to everyone else who supported us. The project was a partnership between Dunmanway Family Resource Centre and West Cork Women against Violence Project.

A recording of the song is now available on our website: westcorkwomensproject.ie, on our Facebook page, and on Dunmanway FRC Facebook page. We hope to have a video ready soon, check our website and facebook for this too. Please like and share to spread the word. Copies of the CD are also available to purchase, contact our office if you would like a copy.

Things do not change;
we change

HENRY DAVID THOREAU



The National Office for the Prevention of Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based Violence
An Oifig Náisiúnta um Fhoréigean Baile, Gnéisach agus Inscnebhunaithe a Chosc

SKIBBEREEN JOBSEEKERS RESOURCE CENTRE

Located in Ilan Street
(Opposite the Busy Bee).

The volunteers at Skibbereen Jobseekers Resource Centre assist Jobseekers with Curricula Vitae, cover letters, interview preparation and training options. This service is free to everyone. It is a community run office.

Open: Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday 10.00 am - 4.00 pm.
Please phone 028 22711 or email skibbjrc@gmail.com.
No appointment necessary.

we're here to help

If you - or someone you know - think we could help we're offering you this card to cut out and keep in your wallet for when you get the chance or courage to ring us. We've purposely made it discreet so only you will know what it is about. Trust us, Trust yourself

We are here to
support you.

1800 203 136

support services for women

cork

West Cork Women Against Violence Freephone 1800 203 136

Cuanlee Refuge, Cork.....021 427 7698

Free Legal Aid Clinic..... Locall 1890 350 259
Information and referral

IRD Duhallow Domestic Violence Support..... Helpline 087 7733 337
from Monday to Saturday 10am - 10 pm or office at 029 60633

Legal Aid Board, Cork.....021 455 1686 / 021 427 5998

Mná Feasa (Domestic Violence Project)021 421 1757

OSS, Cork..... Freephone 1800 497 497
(Domestic Violence Resource Centre for men and women)

S.A.T.U.....021 492 6100

Sexual Violence Centre..... Freephone 1800 496 496

Domestic Violence Social Work.....021 492 1728

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

kerry

Kerry's Women's refuge and Support Services (Adapt).....066 712 9100

Kerry Rape & Sexual Abuse Centre..... Freephone 1800 633 333

Legal Aid Board066 712 6900

Tralee Women's Resource Centre.....066 712 0622

national

Women's Aid Freephone 1800 341 900

west cork citizens' information service

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.

The Square, Bantry,076 107 8390

South Square, Macroom, 076 107 8430

CIS Outreach, Dunmanway every Wednesday 10am - 1pm

Legal Aid Board - monthly on 3rd Tuesday 10.30am - 4.30am - For an appointment with the Legal Aid Board please phone the Legal Aid Office on 021 455 1685

Free Legal Aid Clinic - monthly on 1st Tuesday 6pm - 7pm - For an appointment please contact West Cork Citizens' Information Service by either dropping in or phoning 076 107 8390.

MABS outreach Clinic - Each Friday 10am - 11.30am - For an appointment please phone MABS on 023 885 5155.

West Cork Women Against Violence Project, Harbour View, Bantry, Co. Cork
www.westcorkwomensproject email: admin@westcorkwomensproject.ie