



Billy & Lily by Edel Lawlor

ONCE UPON A TIME there lived a Mummy bear, Daddy bear and two little bears. Billy & Lily bear were the two little bears and they lived with their Mummy & Daddy in a cave deep in the forest. Billy & Lily bears loved to play with their friends by the river and loved to play hide and seek with all the other animals in the forest. Billy & Lily depended on their Mummy and Daddy for food, fun and most importantly they depended on them to be safe.

Billy and Lily sometimes became very sad and afraid

at home and did not understand why their Daddy bear got angry at their Mummy bear. It would be late at night and all the animals in the forest were in bed except the wise owls. The owls never went to bed. Daddy bear would shout at Mummy bear and say bad things about her and bang the table with his big paws. Billy & Lily

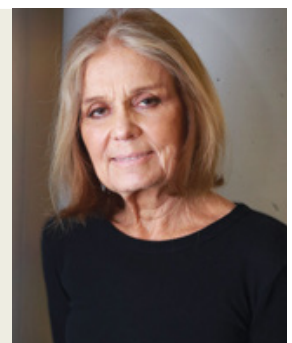
were so little and afraid they did not know what to do. They would curl up together in the cave bedroom.



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Competition time Journalist, activist and international feminist icon Gloria Steinem is speaking at the West Cork Literary Festival about her inspiring, profound and enlightening memoir of one woman's life-long journey on Sat 23rd July. To win a free ticket to this once in a lifetime event, pop your name & contact details to admin@westcorkwomensproject.ie and we will be drawing the lucky name out of a hat on the 15th of July!



In the morning when the little bears got up, Mummy bear would have the porridge ready and Daddy bear would be getting ready to go to work. It was so confusing for the little bears because no one ever talked about what had happened. Even when they played deep in the forest and by the river with the other animals, they still worried. Billy and Lily thought they were different from all the other animals in the forest.

One night when Billy and Lily woke from their bear sleep and heard the noises that made them sad and afraid, Billy said “I know what we should do; we will talk to the wise owls, they never go to bed”. Lily popped her head out the cave window and called a beautiful white wise owl. The little bears told the White Wise Owl about the noises and the butterfly feelings in their

bear bellies. The White Wise Owl listened very carefully to the little bears. He told them that a lot of little animals in the forest

had called upon him for the same reason. The White Wise Owl told them that they were very brave in telling someone about their worries. He told them that the most important thing that they need to do is to keep their little bear selves safe.

The white wise owl left and swooped high into the night. Billy & Lily hugged each other and felt a little better because



I cover my little sister's ears when Mum and dad are fighting because I don't want her to get frightened

A GIRL AGED 12

From '100 Whispers – What children have said about domestic violence'. Printed with permission from The Open Door Network, Kerry's Response to Violence Against Women and Children

For Christmas I want Santa to bring daddy a small pair of hands
A GIRL AGED 5

The Calming Benefit



they talked about the their butterfly feelings in their bear bellies. The little bears were playing by the river the next day with the other animals in the forest, when Lily whispered to Billy. "I wonder who else called upon the White Wise Owl?" They didn't feel that different anymore to the other animals. Billy and Lily also knew that they felt better when they talked about their butterfly feelings, but they always remembered what the White Wise Owl said, "Keep your little bear selves safe."



Edel Lawlor established Expressive Play, a play therapy service for children based in Kilflynn Co. Kerry in 2005.

The Centre offers a number of services and resources for children, parents and professionals. Initially established as a children's play therapy centre, expressive play evolved to include parent therapeutic support services and became a training centre for students/professionals wanting to extend their training in therapeutic play skills, creative work with children, child development and self-awareness, teacher training and puppetry.

*www.expressiveplay.ie
0873836456
066 719 8530*

Benefits of Baby Massage (for both you and your baby)

A gentle massage can work wonders for wonders for your baby- and the power is in your gentle touch!

Of all the five senses touch is the most developed at birth and there is research to suggest that Baby Massage has enormous benefits to help babies settle in to their new environment and to grow and thrive. Massaging your baby can help your baby sleep better, can ease a windy or constipated tummy, can help with teething problems- to name just a few of the many benefits!

Massaging your baby is also calming for you- all that touching and stroking relaxes you as well as your baby and also strengthens the bond between you and your baby.

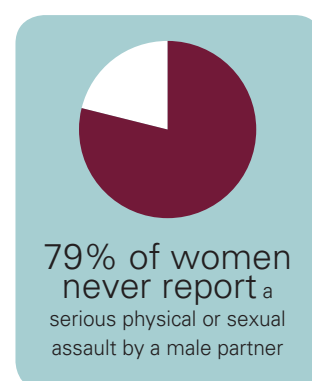
Attending a Baby Massage Class with your Baby is a wonderful opportunity to connect with other mothers and babies in your area, to relax, chat, share information and advice- while learning a new skill! The Babies also love being around other Babies! Baby Massage Classes are suitable for babies from 4-6 weeks after birth to crawling age.

Baby Massage Classes – West Cork offer Baby Massage Classes throughout West Cork and can be contacted on 086 8788022 (or via facebook page Baby Massage Classes – West Cork).

the State we'

Safe Ireland, the national organisation for domestic violence support services of which West Cork Women Against Violence is a member, has released its 2016 national safety audit research which measures how domestic violence and its victims are treated in Ireland and how our government, state agencies and institutions respond to them. The State report card is in- and the appraisal leaves a lot to be desired.. 'must do better, must do more and must do it quickly- nowhere near good enough.'

Here's a snapshot of the levels of violence that the Safe



And here's how the STATE responds:

We believe the most fundamental rights that women and children fleeing violence should have are the right to a safe home and the right to reliable and equal treatment by our justice system.

But these rights are severely eroded and at times completely lacking because:

Domestic violence is simply not on the homeless agenda. Women leaving violent homes are not considered homeless by local authorities, they are seen as out of home s they have a home, no matter that it is a violent and unsafe one. Hence they are rendered invisible in current housing responses. Spiralling rents and the absence of any available social housing stock mean that women cannot find places to live with their children.

Consequently, women are staying in emergency refuge for months. And for a good part of the time there simply is not room in the refuges.

As a result many women are choosing to return to their abusive homes and deciding to stay in abusive relationships because they see no other way out.



What can you do?

If you are concerned enough or moved to make your thoughts known on how the State is letting down women and children experiencing violence in their own homes, you can let the Minister for Justice, Frances Fitzgerald, who is responsible for legislation and protective rights, know directly how you feel about the State We Are In.

The Minister can be emailed at minister@justice.ie

rein

Sharon O' Hallorhan, CEO of Safe Ireland, " It is our culture and attitudes that allows domestic violence to continue as the most under-reported, largely undocumented and certainly under-prosecuted crime in the country. And we have to understand that the root of all violence is what happens in the home and that home is not an island. It is clearly situated in society and clearly affected by culture. We know that childhood trauma dramatically affects health across a lifetime; exposure to early adversity affects the brains and bodies of children. Within homes across Ireland offenders are creating lifetimes of trauma, lifetimes of violence and a society deeply rooted in cycles of violence.

Ireland National Safety Audit found:



Domestic violence does not necessarily begin at a low level and escalate. Respondents indicated that at least one of the indicators of a serious threat to the victim's life (attempted strangulation, physical abuse while pregnant, threats to kill woman or children) were present in the very first violent incident.



Domestic violence is rarely a once-off event. Instead it tends to be a pattern of ongoing events.

Two thirds of those who participated in the research reported that they experienced physical abuse on at least a weekly basis and for one third, physical/emotional/psychological abuse was a daily feature of their relationship.


There is no such thing as a typical victim of domestic violence. They range in age, occupation and education levels. They are as likely to be married as not.

Our legal system at every level continues to fail women and children who are living with violence and abuse in their homes.



Allegations of domestic violence are not always fully investigated. Breaches of safety orders and barring orders are going unpunished. Women are being silenced in courts and told by their own legal representatives not to speak in court.

The law is being applied differently in different areas by different judges.



Garda reaction to domestic violence has been inconsistent with its own stated policy, with no risk assessment or risk management practice systematically in place.

"ALL OF SOCIETY LOSES WHEN YOU HAVE GENDER INEQUALITY. All of society is flawed if gender violence is allowed to occur, is tolerated, and if an intolerable silence prevails around this grave issue. Then too, no invocation of cultural differences or tradition can ever be accepted as an excuse for gender violence." PRESIDENT MICHAEL D. HIGGINS (MARCH 2016)



NEW
LAW

guardians

The Irish court system can be extremely combative on a daily basis and especially so when it comes to the hearing of domestic violence cases. West Cork Women against Violence want to inform you of certain changes that have recently occurred in the Irish constitution in relation to guardianship rights.

Guardianship means that the other parent can ensure a continued say in the daily lives of their child up to the child reaching eighteen years of age– where they go to school, live, religion, sports/ activities, passport and travel arrangements, access to psychology. In fact, anywhere parental consent is required. Irish law through *The Guardianship of Infants Act 1964* dictates that married parents of a child are joint guardians and have equal rights in relation to the child. If a child is born outside of marriage, the mother is the sole guardian.

Certain provisions of *The Children and Family Relationships Bill, 2015* came into effect on 19 February 2016. This new Bill attempts to support a more child-centred approach in deciding issues of guardianship with the best interests of the child being the paramount consideration in all proceedings relating to guardianship, custody and access.

Mum and Dad used to say everything would be alright, but it kept happening, the same things over and over again

A BOY AGED 8

From '100 Whispers – What children have said about domestic violence'. Printed with permission from The Open Door Network, Kerry's Response to Violence Against Women and Children

some of these

- An unmarried father will automatically be a guardian if he has lived with the child's mother for 12 consecutive months after 18 January 2016, including at least 3 months with the mother and child following the child's birth.

As well as fathers, certain other people may NOW apply to the court for guardianship:

- A step-parent, a civil partner or a person who has cohabited with a parent for not less than 3 years may apply to the court to become a guardian where they have co-parented the child for more than 2 years.
- A person who has provided for the child's day-to-day care for a continuous period of more than a year may apply for guardianship if the child has no parent or guardian who is willing or able to exercise the rights and responsibilities of guardianship.
- Also a parent can nominate a temporary guardian who can be appointed by the court if the parent is suffering from a serious illness or injury which prevents them from exercising their guardianship responsibilities in respect of their child.



ship rights

changes are:

The Act provides for the circumstances in which a guardian can be removed, for example, if another guardian is being appointed, if existing guardians are unwilling or unable to exercise their guardianship rights or have failed in their duty to that child to such an extent that the welfare and safety of the child is likely to be affected unless removal takes place.

In relation to custody and access:

- The Act provides that a parents spouse or civil partner, or a parents cohabitant of not less than three years duration, can apply for custody where they shared parenting of the child for two years.
- Enforcement orders can be applied where one parent 'unreasonably' denies custody or access to the other parent. These enforcement orders include the attendance at parenting programmes, family counselling or mediation and the inclusion of compensatory time (extension of periods of access) when access orders are breached.

The new Act clarifies and outlines the factors which the courts must consider when deciding on the best interests of a child. It provides that the court must take into consideration all of the factors or circumstances that it regards as relevant to the child concerned and its family. This includes parental capacity and willingness to place the child's needs first. One of the factors that the bill allows to be considered is any harm which the child has suffered or is at risk of suffering, including harm as a result of household violence, and the protection of the child's safety and psychological well-being when granting access, guardianship. In any proceedings relating to the guardianship, custody or upbringing of, or access to, a child, the court may order an expert report on any question affecting the welfare of the child and/or appoint an expert to find out and convey the child's views. This system has always been available through the courts and can be gleaned through social workers development of a Section 20 report, psychologist reports or through specialist interviewing.

Domestic Violence Relationships

In domestic violence relationships, we know that the abusive partner retains control over his partner and the children, using the fear he has instilled through the cycle of violence to ensure his needs are met and prevent any change occurring. In child protection, there is now an acceptance of the impact that domestic violence has on the developmental, emotional and physical safety of a child. The ability of the mother to facilitate and encourage a close and continuing relationship between the child and the other parent is compromised due to the risk of her own safety during access and handovers. After the mother has separated from the abusive partner, his capacity to influence and damage the woman lessens, but he often develops different strategies and tactics to ensure continued stress is imposed on the children, thereby ensuring continued impact on the woman. Despite the recognition of the impact of violence on a child, the courts have continued to give access to violent men even when reports that have been presented to court advise of the fathers potential for violence. We are aware of incidents where children have made the decision not to see their abusive father but women are forced through the courts to ensure access is given (despite the child being vocal in their viewpoint). We are concerned about the fact that enforcement orders can now be applied to ensure access is continued.

WCWAV welcome the changes to guardianship for the vast majority of Irish citizens where there are no relationship difficulties or violence, ensuring broader acceptance of the people who represent a caring adult in children's lives and the diversity of family forms. Nevertheless, we would be concerned that the new Act could be exploited by men attempting to create more difficulties and to exercise continued control over the women they have abused.

Without leaps of imagination, or dreaming, we lose the excitement of possibilities. Dreaming, after all, is a form of planning.

GLORIA STEINEM

HELPLINE
FREEPHONE:
1800 203 136**Tuesday:** from 10am to 4pm**Other weekdays:** Helpline is covered
10am to 4pm whenever possible**Office:** 027 53847 -**Mon to Fri:** 9 am to 5.30 pm**CONFIDENTIALITY** West Cork Women's
Project assures all women contacting us that
four core values underpin our service:

- Confidentiality
- To be listened to
- To be believed
- Respect for her choice

Speaking to someone, perhaps for the first time,
about experiencing violence or abuse in the home
is never easy. Placing your trust in a stranger
on the end of a phone or meeting someone for
the first time face to face takes courage. These
first stages of seeking support can be a time of
stress and fear for women. It is important that
women understand that they have the right to
remain anonymous when contacting the service.
If a woman is comfortable with giving identifying
details, these details are not passed on to any
other agency except at her request.

There are two exceptions to confidentiality:

- If a disclosure raises concerns with regard to
Child Protection issues
- If a woman discloses that she intends to harm
another person.

*I stay in my room
until the fighting stops
and then I check Mum*

A BOY AGED 10

From '100 Whispers – What children have said
about domestic violence'. Printed with permission
from The Open Door Network, Kerry's Response to
Violence Against Women and Children

*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
<i>from Monday to Saturday 10am - 10 pm or office at 029 60633</i>	
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 Board	066 712 6900
Tralee Women's Resource Centre	066 712 0622

National

Women's Aid	Freephone 1800 341 900
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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 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.

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www.westcorkwomensproject.ie
email: admin@westcorkwomensproject.ie

TÚSLA
An Ghníomhaireacht um
Leanaí agus an Teaghlach
Child and Family Agency