



West Cork Whisper

WEST CORK WOMEN AGAINST VIOLENCE PROJECT NEWSLETTER | ISSUE 76 | NOVEMBER, DECEMBER, 2019

Safe House for West Cork 2020!

West Cork Women Against Violence are delighted to announce in the year of our 20th Anniversary, that we have secured philanthropic funds to purchase a Safe House for women and children escaping domestic violence here in West Cork.

This is perhaps the single biggest development in the history of the service. It is the result of the culmination of a number of essential elements: the generosity and support of a major funder and a lot of hard work in building a reputation for high quality, client-centred crisis services by WCWAV staff and Board.

Back in 2016, we undertook an evaluation of our service inviting clients and other service agencies to tell us what they thought we needed to prioritise for the future; providing safe emergency accommodation for women and children fleeing abuse was the overwhelming response. We heard what you had to say, we thought long and hard about how we might make it happen; we talked to sister organisations up and down the country on how to fund such an initiative to learn that there were enormous challenges; we formed a working group of staff and board members to research options; we presented our arguments and statistics to the Homeless Forum & County Council in 2018 who although sympathetic had no current premises which would be suitable. Then unexpectedly in early 2019, we received an invitation from a major philanthropic organisation asking us to submit a letter of interest in response to a donor who was interested in supporting a large capital project. There were other organisations invited to register their interest as well. After a few months, we discovered we had been shortlisted and were requested to submit a larger proposal on how we would develop and provide a Safe House service in West Cork. Eventually, we were told that WCWAV's proposal had been chosen and that the funds required would be made available to us to purchase an appropriate property.



What is a Safe House?

A Safe House operates differently from a refuge. It is smaller, accommodating usually one family at a time but can hold up to two families or one family and one single woman. Occupants live as they would at home, enjoying the entire property responsibly. The length of stay is reviewed on a week to week or sometimes month to month basis depending on the circumstances of the women and children using it. A Safe House support worker assesses their needs, works with them on a safety plan and an aftercare plan for their transition from the house to an independent life. This worker will assist in helping to get the family/ or the individual woman resettled by linking them into the various specialist agencies and services they require. The staff person will visit the house regularly to conduct health & safety checks and to talk with women about their situation and that of their children.

A Safe House is not staffed overnight, but it has state of the art security with reinforced doors, panic buttons and cameras. In the event of any threat during out of office hours, the immediate response will be from the Gardai. For this reason, the Safe House can only be located in areas of West Cork where there is a full-time Garda Station.

There is some way to go yet, we must find the funds to equip and run the Safe House on a secure long term basis and we need to provide staff to support those using the Safe House to assist them in making and implementing plans for a safer future. Tusla has expressed a commitment to resource the staffing of the Safe House service, but we are looking to the great generosity of the people of West Cork to help us in ensuring that there is enough resources and funding to make the Safe House operational into the future.

We will be posting, promoting and writing more about the Safe House over the coming months. Anyone who would like to know more should keep an eye on our facebook page and website.

Anyone wishing to help by donating, sponsoring or fundraising for the Safe House should contact our office: 027 53847 and ask to speak to Marie.

AWARENESS

to ACCOUNTABILITY

16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE CAMPAIGN

16 Days in Context

When the Center for Women’s Global Leadership (CWGL) first launched the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence in 1991, they had no idea that decades later it would be the most widely recognized and longest-running campaign for women’s rights in the world. Its reach and power has been made possible by the thousands of grassroots activists and organizations that give it life as a truly global movement.

The 16 Days campaign was born during a formative moment for the international women’s movement. While today we take for granted that “women’s rights are human rights,” the reality is that it took feminists decades to secure the mere recognition that violations of women’s rights — and particularly violence against women — were not simply private acts outside the purview of the state, but constituted violations of human rights under international law.

The First Breakthrough

CWGL launched the first 16 Days Campaign in 1991 in collaboration with feminists from the Global North and the Global South who agreed on the pressing need to address violence against women as a key human rights issue. Their efforts began with a worldwide petition drive aimed at the United Nations World Conference on Human Rights that was held in Vienna in 1993, calling upon the Conference to comprehensively address women’s human rights and to recognize gender-based violence as a human rights issue. Prior to the widespread use of email or the Internet, the petition was circulated to 124 countries and translated into 23 languages. Thanks to the efforts of countless feminists around the world, violence against women was finally formally recognized as a human rights violation at Vienna, and one year later the UN appointed the first Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women.



16 Days Evaluated

As a campaign celebrating 27 years, we knew there were many best practices and insights to discover, among grassroots organizations leading the 16 Days campaign in communities around the world. In 2015, CWGL invested in an in-depth evaluation of the campaign where dozens of participating organizations shared their thoughts, experiences, critiques, and recommendations.

Over the years, 16 Days has played a key role in galvanizing women’s rights activists and in demonstrating the relevance of transnational advocacy to domestic struggles.

However, another common thread emerged from those conversations: all the years spent fighting to raise awareness about gender-based violence has not brought about lasting, fundamental change. It has not brought about the radical systemic and cultural shifts we hoped it would, and it has not made gender-based violence against women a universally unacceptable act.

16 Days Re-Imagined

While a historic accomplishment for the international women’s movement, we still find ourselves struggling against the same things, fighting the same fight, and continuing to demand dignity, autonomy, and justice. There has been a shift in consciousness — gender-based violence against women is now broadly recognized as an injustice against women — but there has not been an adequate shift in practice to end violence against women. CWGL will continue to lead the global coordination of the 16 Days campaign to achieve further monumental breakthroughs for women, as well as support and amplify the work of women all over the world, by evolving our focus in three ways:

1 Making the shift from Awareness to Accountability

Governments must be held to their commitments to ensure the human rights of all women and to prevent rollbacks.

2 16 to 365

We are committed to continuing to build on the success of the 16 Days campaign from November 25 to December 10 every year. We also firmly believe that the fight to end gender-based violence against women needs to continue with the same vigour throughout the year.

3 A Global Call to Action

The 16 Days campaign has always been bold, unapologetic, and clear about our demands. This year, we introduced a call to action for all campaigns around the world to join to secure another breakthrough for women. This resulted in the International Labor Organization (ILO) adopting a legally binding convention to end gender-based violence in the world of work in June 2019. We were thrilled when the ILO formally adopted the first global standards focused on ending GBV in the world of work. We will continue with efforts to demand that governments ratify the convention, and that its implementation is as inclusive and effective as possible.

These efforts are meant to complement the local and national actions and campaigns that are held every year between November 25 and December 10 at a more global, systemic level, and to contribute to a global feminist solidarity around a shared goal.

NOVEMBER 25 - DECEMBER 10

With thanks to www.16dayscampaign.org/about-the-campaign/ for the information contained in this article

Strangulation Choking Every second counts

Gael Strack, CEO and co-founder of the Alliance for Hope International and Training Institute on Strangulation Prevention says that 'Strangulation is a method of choice for abusers - it's a very effective way to exert power and control over a victim. It sends a very strong and clear message to the victim that "I can control your last breath; and I can get away with it". The inability to breathe is one of the most terrifying and terrorizing experiences any person can go through.' The abuser is giving their victim the message that they can kill them at any time. Unconsciousness may occur within seconds and death within minutes. Strangulation can be described as the ultimate form of power and control. Victims may lose consciousness by any or all of the following methods: blocking off of the carotid arteries in the neck (depriving the brain of oxygen), blocking of the jugular veins (preventing deoxygenated blood from exiting the brain), and closing off the airway, making breathing impossible.

Strangulation can have devastating psychological effects or a potentially fatal outcome.

Strangulation always shows an escalation in violence and is considered to be on the end of the continuum of violence. In terms of risk assessment, strangulation is seen as a red flag for future harm. US data shows victims who have been strangled by their violent partner are seven times more likely to later be killed or seriously harmed than a woman who has been physically threatened by a current or former intimate partner.

Perpetrators have been known to use the phrase, "I only choked her a little bit". According to The Training Institute for Strangulation Prevention; in the same way that that you can't be 'a little bit pregnant', you can't be 'choked just a little bit' and not have serious, significant, permanent or even fatal damage to a victim's throat or brain. They argue that phrases like "I didn't know my own strength", "I didn't mean to choke her that hard" should not be valid anymore. They state that 70% of strangled women believed they were going to die. There is also a terrifying fact that if you have been choked before, you are more likely to be choked again, and that you are at high risk of being killed by someone who has choked you before.

They say that only half of victims have visible injuries. The most common visible injuries are neck bruising and so called 'petechiae spots' which show up on the face, scalp, mouth, earlobes, eyelids, and eyeballs of choke victims. Choking causes damage to the victim's throat, making breathing, swallowing, coughing and talking difficult. Injuries may not always be immediately visible, or may be missed, as in they may not be attributed to the incident. A raspy voice for example or difficulty with concentrating may not be symptoms that one would necessarily associate with choking.

Before lapsing into unconsciousness, a victim of strangulation will usually resist violently, often resulting in injuries to her own neck in an effort to claw off the abuser, and frequently also producing injury on the face or hands of the abuser. These defensive injuries may not of course be present if the victim is physically or chemically restrained before the assault.

As with all forms of domestic violence the psychological impacts of strangulation/choking can be even more debilitating for the victim than the physical aspects. Psychological injury can include post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), suicidal ideation, memory problems, nightmares, anxiety,

severe stress reaction, amnesia, restlessness, agitation, difficulty with concentration, and possibly psychosis.

Despite its deadly nature, survivors may not bring their experience up with a support person. This could be because of the trauma which can impede a survivor's ability to remember, as well as a lack of blood to the brain which can have the same effects. Some survivors may be asked if they have ever been 'choked', but may not identify with that word, considering what happened to them not being as serious as being choked or strangled. Some may have been convinced by their abuser, that 'strangulation' is part of 'normal sexual behaviour'. Victims may also minimize the abuse in order to cope with what they have experienced, or in order to protect their abuser. The Institute for Strangulation Prevention suggests the better question may be "Has anyone applied pressure to your neck by any means? Did your breathing change in any way?"

Even a temporary loss of oxygen can cause brain damage. Victims are encouraged to always seek medical attention, and to observe and document injuries for several days post incident. Injuries may be internal and may develop and worsen within 24-72 hours post incident. "We don't want victims to suffer a stroke. Every second counts to the brain", says Strack.

References-
Douglas (2019) Victoria's commitment to a non-fatal strangulation offence will make a difference to vulnerable women. *The conversation.com*
Albrect (2017) *The truth about domestic violence murders.*
Gael Strack. *The strangulation intimate partner factsheet.* Training Institute for Strangulation prevention. Alliance for Hope international. strangulationtraininginstitute.com
Kippert (2018). *Abusers use strangulation as a power move.* www.domesticshelters.org



'Facts Victims of Strangulation Need to Know' is a leaflet produced by Alliance for HOPE International showing the signs and affects of Strangulation. To receive a copy please contact admin@westcorkwomensproject.ie

'Bob pushed me onto the floor and dragged me into the closet. While I was in the closet he put his hand over my mouth again and pushed on my neck. I started to feel dizzy and was kicking my legs and hitting his arm to try to let him know I thought I would die -

Doya, domestic violence strangulation survivor.
Douglas, 2019

homicide timeline

Women's Aid Femicide Watch 2018 report found that almost 9 in 10 women murdered in Ireland are killed by a man known to them. This was only one of many shocking figures relating to femicide, the killing of women and girls by men, in Ireland. Too often the dangerous patterns of behaviour by perpetrators of domestic violence are minimised or not understood. The ability to understand the actions and abusive behaviour that precedes intimate partner femicide is critical for number of reasons. It allows an accurate

assessment of escalating risk to law enforcement and other professionals. It also enables women to identify the level of threat they are in and reduce misleading coverage of deaths as 'one off crimes of passion' when they are planned, determined crimes.

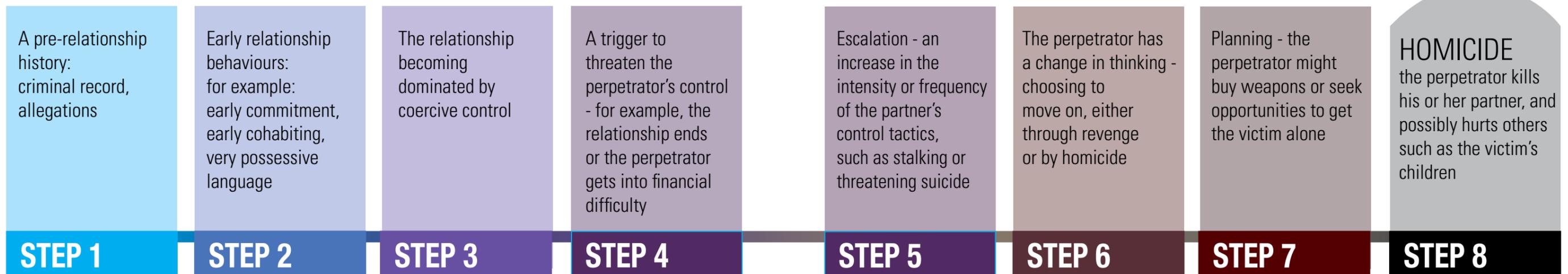
As part of Femicide Watch 2018, criminology expert Dr Jane Monckton Smith discussed her eight step 'homicide timeline'. Through her work she has consistently highlighted the links between domestic violence and femicide. Where there is

control, violence (even low level) and a separation after living together, there is a 900% increase in the potential for homicide (Stark, 2009). Dr Monckton Smith completed research into 372 killings in the UK identified on the *Counting Dead Women* website*. In doing so she discovered eight steps that were evident in almost all of the killings.

These eight steps are outlined in the timeline below.

In all of the cases Dr Monckton Smith examined, planning and coercive control were evident. The hope is that by using Dr Monckton Smith's model, law enforcement will be better able to track potential perpetrators and women will be able to articulate to professionals the levels of danger they are in. Women's Aid also made the recommendation that the State set up a Domestic Homicide Review and also that risk assessment and management in relation to victims of domestic violence is introduced by the relevant authorities such as An Garda Síochána.

* <https://kareningalasmith.com/counting-dead-women/>



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women of west cork



In this issue we chat to Kate Smyth, Co-owner, Bantry Bookshop

Where are you from? Dublin, born, bread & buttered, but emigrated to Cork 30 years ago and then moved to Bantry about 4 years ago.

Job Title: Bookshop Owner

What does your work entail? Buying and selling books and everything it takes to make that happen. Helping customers in the shop find the books they want, and discover new books and authors. Often, this means long hours, because we also have to keep up-to-date with latest publications, work with suppliers, plan events such as West Cork Literary Festival, author readings and signings. I also keep a special focus on building collections for children and early adult readers. There is a fair amount of admin involved behind the scenes. We are lucky to have a great team working at the shop, and that makes for a wonderful community feel to our every day!

Why and how did you get involved in West Cork Women Against Violence? I don't think there is anyone who hasn't been in some way or another affected by DV issues; over the years, I have been involved with fundraising and education at community level. I'm particularly committed to supporting practical

assistance through organizations such as WCWAV. As a firm supporter of community-based action, I always look for and support action-based initiatives to improve the lives of the most at-risk women and families in our communities.

Since your first involvement with WCWAV do you feel things have improved for women experiencing DV? Absolutely! At a local level, the expansion of the PSU this year has been a major step forward in spreading resources through the area and proves that working in partnership with other services in West Cork can actively improve protection and intervention rates.

How do you relax? Walking the dogs in beautiful Bantry! As a retired professional archaeologist, I give occasional talks and lead walks with the Bantry Historical Society. I also read, garden, cook, and have been known to do most of my own DIY!

What changes would you most like to see for women? A 360-degree integrated approach to family security -- education, housing, nutrition, child-care, job training and job sharing. We need continuous qualitative improvement of all policies that impact women and families at risk, especially on the issues of homelessness, unaffordable rents and insecure private sector housing



Many thanks to Muintir Bháire Community Social Support Group, the Wild Atlantic Mizen Cycle and The Little Way Charity Shop in Schull (pictured) for donations amounting to €6000

Life *shrinks* or
expands
in proportion
to one's
courage

AN AIS NIN



Policing Progress for West Cork

Here at West Cork Women Against Violence we are delighted that combined community, policing and political efforts have been successful in bringing to fruition the establishment of a Protective Services Unit for West Cork. The PSU has already recruited its team who will be highly trained in specialist investigations and interviewing on some of the most difficult crimes and offences; sexual violence, domestic violence, child abuse and sex trafficking.

In our next edition of Whisper we will carry a detailed article about the work of the PSU and its presence in West Cork. In the meantime, the very best of luck to all involved and be assured of WCWAV co-operation and support for the future.

<https://www.irishexaminer.com/breakingnews/ireland/new-garda-unit-specialising-in-sexual-crimes-and-domestic-violence-to-open-in-west-cork-949700.html>

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 Board 066 712 6900

Tralea Women's Resource Centre
066 712 0622

national

Women's Aid Freephone 1800 341 900

Citizens Information Service West Cork

Citizens Information Service West Cork 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.

Bantry The Square, 076 107 8390
Daily from 10am - 5pm
(Fridays until 4pm, closed 1pm-2pm
Mon, Tues & Thurs)

Dunmanway, Ross House,
The Square, Dunmanway
Every Monday 10am-1pm

Macroom South Square Macroom,
0761 078 430
Mon, Tues, Weds, Thursday
(Closed Friday)

Bandon, c/o St Michael Centre,
South Main Street, Bandon
Every Thursday from
10am - 1pm & 2pm- 4pm

Castletownbere c/o Beara West
Family Resource Centre, Unit 1,
Knockanroe House, Bank Place,
Castletownbere, Beara, Co.Cork.
Monthly 2nd and 4th Thursday 10am-1pm

Clonakilty, c/o Employability Service,
16 Rossa Street, Clonakilty
Every Wednesday from
10am - 1pm & 2pm- 4pm

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

jennydempseydesign.com



West Cork Money Advice & Budgeting Service, is a National FREE, Confidential and Non-Judgemental Service. If you are already in debt or feel you are in danger of getting into debt, please do not hesitate to contact our office in Dunmanway on 0761 07 2450 or email dunmanway@mabs.ie to arrange an appointment.

CONFIDENTIALITY West Cork Women's Project assures all women contacting us that four core values underpin our service:

- Confidentiality
- To be believed
- To be listened to
- 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.

We're here to support you

FREEPHONE
1800 203 136

Office 027 53847
Mon to Fri: 9 am to 5.30 pm



Bantry Office: 027 53847 Mon to Friday: 9.00 am to 5.30 pm

Helpline: 1800 203 136 during office hours

Skibbereen Outreach: 028 23607 Fridays 11.00 am - 2.00 pm

Clonakilty Outreach Thursdays by appointment

www.facebook.com/westcorkwomenagainstviolence

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