



ADAPT
Agisanang Domestic Abuse
Prevention & Training



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What is Gender Based Violence?

Gender based violence is violence which occurs between men and women in relationships, in the home, at the workplace and in the community. Gender violence is about power and control. It takes the form of physical, emotional, sexual, economic or spiritual abuse, e.g. rape, domestic violence, sexual harassment. It creates fear, breaks down self-esteem, makes people do things they don't want to do, limits behaviour and movement and it physically harms.

Gender based violence occurs in all racial, clan, religious, ethnic and political groups. Generally there is a focus on the abuse of women by men; whilst incidents of violence against men do occur (and domestic abuse within same sex relationships), violence against women is more common and usually more severe.

Not all women and men are victims or abusers. However, when a man does abuse a woman, families, friends and the community often fail to condemn this act of violence. By doing nothing they are passive accomplices and allow perpetrators to continue in the belief that they have the right to abuse their partners.

This problem continues unchallenged because of women's limited knowledge of and access to their legal, economic and social rights and power within society, and this is what ADAPT is committed to change.

Rape occurs when any man has sexual intercourse with a woman without her consent, whether he is a stranger, boyfriend, acquaintance or husband. If a woman is penetrated with a man's finger or a bottle, it is regarded in law as indecent assault, a lesser crime than rape. However, any sexual attention that is unwanted, forced or pressured is experienced as a form of rape and will be as traumatic to the survivor.

NB: The law only recognises that a woman can be raped, not men.

Domestic violence is violence that takes place in the home or between partners in a dating relationship. Violence in the home may include a range of assaults from physical abuse, threats, rape or sexual abuse as well as emotional abuse.

The majority of survivors of domestic violence are the least powerful at home and in society as a whole, i.e. women, children and the elderly. A young girl is more likely to be molested sexually in the privacy of her home than anywhere else; an adult female is more likely to be physically assaulted and even killed in her own home by her partner than anyone else.



The White Ribbon

The white ribbon is a symbol of commitment to no violence against women. You may have heard about the campaign 16 Days of No Violence against Women and Children that takes place in November/December each year. At ADAPT we believe that 16 days is not enough and that we should show our support for no violence every day. We can do this by wearing a white ribbon and informing others why we are doing so.

Types of Gender based Violence

Physical violence

Physical violence occurs when someone uses or threatens to use physical harm to attack another person. Examples include kicking, slapping, restraint (preventing someone from leaving), punching, choking, striking with an object or striking with a weapon.

Consider:

- In general men are violent and women suffer from their violence.
- Violence is often viewed by one or both partners as an indication of love, especially if it is seen as an expression of jealousy. However this form of violence is actually about power and control, not love.
- The pressure to be dating can be powerful for young people. Many survivors of dating violence may believe that having an abusive partner is better than having none at all.
- Between 1 in 6 and 1 in 4 women are regularly abused by their partner.

Emotional violence

Emotional violence may involve intimidating, insulting, humiliating, restricting who someone talks to or spends time with, isolating her/him from friends and family or other expressions of extreme jealousy.

Emotional abuse involves objectification, i.e. viewing someone as an object that you own rather than as a human being with feelings and basic human rights.

Consider:

- It is often difficult to recognise emotional violence because the injuries are internal and thus not visible.
- For many women, emotional violence may be the most painful, humiliating and damaging aspect of an abusive relationship, as it damages one's self-esteem and often takes a long time to heal.
- A woman who suffers verbal abuse may be brainwashed into believing that the negative things that her partner says about her are true (e.g. that no other man will have her, that she is a whore/ugly/stupid).

Sexual violence

Sexual violence may involve rape, unwanted sexual touching or being forced into humiliating sexual activities. Force or the threat of force is often used to gain control over the victim. Often, when a sexual assault occurs, the other types of abuse mentioned above occur as well.

Consider:

- Sexual harassment, degrading sexist jokes and name-calling are linked to, and often a precursor to, physical and sexual violence as these forms of abuse show a lack of respect for the rights of women.
- Survivors of sexual violence are more likely to report the crime if it is committed by a stranger than by someone they know.
- Many women who have been forced to have sex while on a date or in a relationship do not identify this as rape.
- Male survivors are often reluctant to report sexual attacks because of the fear of being ridiculed or being perceived as homosexual.
- Peer pressure can put pressure on young people to have sex and lead to date rape.
- It is estimated that 1 in 2 women in South Africa will be raped in her lifetime.

Economic abuse

Economic abuse involves using money to undermine a woman's rights, e.g. withholding money, questioning what she does with her money, denying medical aid, destroying property in the home whenever there is a disagreement.

Consider:

- Economic dependency is one of the main barriers to leaving an abusive relationship.

Spiritual abuse

A woman's faith may be used to keep her from finding help or leaving an abusive relationship. In the Christian faith, passages from the bible may be used out of context to glorify suffering, show that women belong to men and must obey them, and condemn divorce.

- Church leaders should be sensitive to issues of violence in their congregation and preach a more tolerant message to help survivors.

Are you in an abusive relationship or in danger of suffering from /perpetrating gender based violence? Think carefully about your relationships with members of the opposite sex and answer the following questions truthfully.

MEN

1. Are you excessively jealous of your partner?
2. Do you always criticise what she says, does or wears?
3. Do you come from an abusive home?
4. Do you become aggressive or violent when using alcohol or drugs?
5. Do you make threats about beating her or about killing yourself if she leaves you?
6. Do you criticise her friends and stop her from seeing them?
7. Are you often depressed or withdrawn but won't talk about your feelings?
8. Do you have traditional ideas about what women and men should and should not do?
9. Have you ever hit her, no matter how sorry you felt afterwards?
10. Do you believe that a woman 'owes' you sex if you buy her dinner or gifts?
11. Do you think that sometimes no means yes?

If you answered 'yes' to any of the questions above, then you are in danger of perpetrating gender based violence, if you are not doing so already. Remember:

- You are not alone. Many men have learned from childhood to use violence or threats to dominate and assert their manhood. You can learn less damaging ways to express your emotions and relate to your partner.
- Take responsibility for your own behaviour. Your girlfriend or partner does not make you hit her. Being violent is your problem, stopping the violence is your responsibility.
- Your violence will increase if you don't take action to stop it. You may destroy your relationship, seriously injure or even kill your partner.
- Blaming your violence on drugs, alcohol or sickness and apologising afterwards will not solve your problem. You remain responsible for your actions, whether sober or not.
- You are never owed sex as a payback.

You can change your behaviour with the support of your community, family and ADAPT.

WOMEN

1. Do you feel you cannot live without him?
2. Are you scared of him, and afraid to tell him your feelings about the relationship?
3. Do you act a certain way to prevent him from getting angry?
4. Do you believe that you are the only one who can change him?
5. Do you stay with him because if you leave him he has threatened to commit suicide?
6. Do you believe that jealousy is a sign of love?
7. Do you believe that he hits you because he loves you?
8. Does your partner constantly put you down and make you feel inferior or worthless?
9. Do you believe in men's dominance over women?
10. Do you believe that rape only occurs between strangers?

If you answered 'yes' to any of the questions above, then you are in danger of suffering from gender based violence, if you are not suffering already. Remember:

- You are not alone. Many women are silent victims of violence in relationships.
- You cannot control his behaviour but there are steps you can take to ensure your own safety.
- Tell someone. Talk to your parents, friends, church minister, teacher, counsellor or someone you trust.
- Recognise that no one has the right to control you and that everyone has the right to live without fear.
- If the violence continues, consider ending the relationship. Without any help or intervention, his violence will become more frequent and severe.
- If you have children, they too are at risk.
- You may report him. Prosecuting an abusive partner is necessary to protect yourself.

You can seek help and support from ADAPT in order to take back control of your life.

What can be done to prevent gender based violence?

As an individual you can teach yourself and others that:

- Rape is a crime of violence that is motivated by a need to control rather than sexual desire.
- No one has the right to force sexual activity on another person regardless of the nature of the relationship.
- Controlling and possessive behaviour between friends or partners is not appropriate.
- Excessive jealousy in a relationship is not a sign of love. It is a sign of insecurity and a need to control.
- Respect is essential for any relationship. The use of force and insults are not acceptable in a caring relationship.
- Conflict can be resolved without violence.
- We are all responsible for our own actions.

As a community member you can:

- Run an awareness and prevention programme by organising meetings with other community leaders.
- Participate in initiatives to form support groups for young women and men in the community. This will create a safe space for both victims and perpetrators to discuss issues and to provide support.
- Join or form a lobby group for the establishment of youth development centres and provision of crisis counselling for victims.
- Encourage your local school to develop educational programmes that promote healthy sex roles, offer information about sexual violence and teach young people to resolve conflict without resorting to violence.

Vision

ADAPT is working to create a society free from gender based violence, through the active participation of all members of the community.

Mission

ADAPT is committed to changing the social values and structural factors that perpetuate violence against women by promoting a spirit of interdependence, mutual respect and co-existence between women and men.

Objectives

- To empower both victims and perpetrators of gender based violence to take control of their lives and actions.
- To educate and empower members of the community to recognise and take responsibility for gender based violence.
- To challenge and redefine the cultural, social, political and economic factors underlying violence against women.

Services

Counselling and Support Groups

- Offering individual and group support to survivors of gender based violence.
- Offering individual and group support to perpetrators of gender based violence.

Training Workshops & Seminars

- Providing legal, gender sensitivity and trauma counselling training for health workers, police, court officials, educators, youth and other key community members in order to promote accurate identification and appropriate interventions for abused women.
- Gathering, documenting and disseminating information about gender-based violence.

Community Empowerment

- Initiating and supporting economically viable micro enterprises for abused women.
- Advocating the eradication of gender based violence through the media, cultural events.