

**WHO ARE THE VICTIMS OF FAMILY VIOLENCE?**

The primary victims of family violence are women, children and the elderly. As there is no current national method for collecting child and elder abuse statistics, the extent of the problem in Canada is difficult to determine. The abuse of elders is still not widely recognized or discussed, however estimates are that 4% of Canada's elders suffer some form of abuse. Violence against children within the family is also difficult to determine, as only reported cases are documented. The nature of the problem, its secrecy, shame, and the legal sanctions, along with the youthfulness and dependency of those experiencing the abuse means that many cases do not come to the attention of authorities. Estimates from Health Canada on child abuse suggest that about 225,000 Canadian children have been abused.

While it is true that some men are beaten by their female partners these constitute a very small proportion of cases, and in most of these cases the women are reacting to the initial violence of their partners. It is also true that on a continuum of abuse women can be just as psychologically and emotionally abusive as men. However, the assaults against women compared to other types of assaults are more likely to result in injury, require medical attention and hospitalization, and to result in lost time from work A 1993 Statistics Canada survey shows that:

- \* One-quarter of all women have experienced violence by a current or past partner.
- \* One in six currently married women reported violence by her partner.
- \* More than one in ten women in a current marriage have at some point felt their life was in danger.
- \* Three-quarters of women who experienced violence by past partners endured repeated assaults.
- \* Of the 245 women murdered in Canada in 1991, 47 percent women were slain by a spouse or boyfriend.

**WHAT ARE THE SIGNS OF FAMILY VIOLENCE?**

Family violence follows a vicious cycle often exploding in violence. Often friends and family see the signs but don't believe it could happen to someone they know, or that someone they know and care about could be an abuser. Some signs of abuse may be:

- \* Frequent "accident" injuries
- \* Increased isolation from family and friends
- \* Dwindling self-esteem
- \* Partner jealousy or possessiveness
- \* Constant complaints/criticism about partner/child
- \* Bruising on the face, upper arms and buttocks.
- \* Early signs of **Shaken Baby Syndrome** can include: changes in the pattern/sound of the baby's crying; vomiting for no known reason; seeming "groggy"; sleeping more than usual or being harder to wake than usual.
- \* Suicide attempts
- \* Extreme nervousness
- \* Fear of partner
- \* Depression
- \* Unexplained absences from school/work.

**WHO CAN YOU CONTACT IF YOU NEED HELP, or IF YOU WANT TO HELP?**

**HELP FOR WOMEN AND THEIR CHILDREN**

The province of Manitoba supports shelters and services for abused women and their children. Women in crisis are urged to call their nearest shelter or the province-wide toll-free line for free, confidential information.

**Toll-Free Province-Wide Crisis Line (24 hours) 1-877-977-0007**

**Winnipeg Crisis Lines (24 hours) Osborne House- 942-3052 or Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin Inc.- 987-2780 or 1-800-362-3344**

**HELP FOR MEN:** If you are a man who is in crisis or you know a man who needs help, please call:

**EVOLVE -(204) 784-4070 or MA MAWI-WI-CHI-ITATA CENTRE: 925-0348**

**HELP FOR TEENAGERS: TEEN TOUCH** - a 24 hour confidential distress line - **783-1116 (Wpg.) or 1-800-563-833**

**ELDER ABUSE RESOURCE CENTRE:** Provides counselling, support, information & referral - **956-6449 (Wpg.)**

**SOURCES:** *Abuse Myths and Facts*. MB Family Dispute Services (1996)  
*A Guide To Enhancing Services for Abused Older Canadians*. Health Canada (1997)  
*Link : An Educational Package*. ARF (1995)  
*Promises aren't the only that get broken*. MB Family Services (n.d.)