

Family Violence

PREVENTION

Men Abused by Intimate partners

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“During her periods she would get very violent. She would attack me and when we were young, fine, I just turned my back and let her pound me to get rid of her frustrations. But as the years went on it became more violent, and I couldn’t just ignore it because she was hurting me.”

“Physical abuse, the odd confrontation was two or three times. What I felt was emotional and mental abuse. There was never any threat that she would do me physical harm. She got angry enough a couple of times where there was physical; she hit me once and gave me a black eye, but I never felt it as a threat. This fear of failure is maybe more important to a man than the threat of physical violence.”

“There were only three incidents where I was hit. On two of them I was hit across the head with enough strength that it made my glasses fly off and in another incident I was hit in the back and my shirt was literally ripped off my back.”

These are the words of three Alberta men who came forward to tell their stories of being abused by women intimate partners. These men claimed that few were interested in their abuse not only because they are men, but because men should never admit to being a victim, especially at the hands of a woman.

Perhaps the most contentious issue on the field of family violence is how often men are abused and the effects on male victims (*Sarantokos, 2004*). While most Canadians do not abuse their partners, in the latest national Canadian study on intimate partner violence, the 1999 General Social Survey (GSS) on Victimization (*Statistics Canada, 2000*), men reported being victimized by women to a similar degree as women have been victimized by men. “The five-year rate of violence was similar for women (eight percent) and men (seven percent). Overall, this amounts to approximately 690,000 women and 549,000 men who had a current or former partner in the past five years and reported experiencing at least one incident of violence.”

These equally reported rates by men and women are substantiated in over 40 studies worldwide that used a similar sociological telephone survey using a tool entitled the Conflict Tactic Scales (CTS) (*Lupri, 2004*). Canada’s GSS, which utilized the CTS, added additional questions about the context and consequences of violence. Although the abuse against women by male partners is more serious than the abuse of men by women partners, men are victimized. For example, while women were more than twice as likely as men to report being beaten, five times more likely to report being choked, and almost twice as likely to report being threatened by or having a gun or knife used against them, men were also beaten, choked and threatened with weapons. “Men were more likely than women to report being slapped (57 percent versus 40 per cent), having something thrown at them (56 per cent versus 44 per cent) and being kicked, bit or hit (51 per cent versus 33 percent).”

Men who received violent acts from their partners were abused repeatedly 54 per cent of the time (65 per cent of women), 13 per cent of these were victimized more than 10 times (26 per cent of women). The abuse reported by men who had experienced violence in the past five years led to injury 13 per cent of the time (40 per cent for women) and these injuries required medical attention. Seven per cent of these men feared for their lives (38 per cent of women) (*Statistics Canada, 2000*). Men are also murdered by female partners. In Canada in 2002, 16 men were killed by female partners (67 women) (*Statistics Canada, 2004*).