



The official newsletter
of the Families in
Action Peer Helping
Programme

S.O.S. Newsletter

Volume 2, Issue 2

January -March, 2009

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PROVOKED?

He beat her with belts, shoes and pieces of furniture. He controlled her money, her movements and what she ate. He raped her continually even though she was his wife. Then one day, feeling like she could not take anymore, she set him on fire while he was asleep and he was burnt to death.

That's the true story of Kiranjit Ahluwalia as depicted in the Bollywood hit 'Provoked'. More importantly, it is the true story of many real women, young girls and even some men and young boys who face abuse at the hands of their spouses, boyfriends/

girlfriends or partners.

Many abusers blame their behavior on their partners. If their partner had not provoked them, they say, they would not have behaved so badly. Yet, in Kiranjit's case, the drastic measure that she took to ensure her safety was a result of having been provoked beyond reason by her husband's abuse.

So is the recipient of abuse the provoker or the provoked? Whichever he or she is, how would you feel if one of your friends was at the receiving end of abuse?

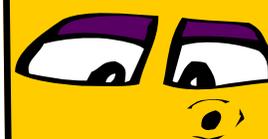


What's the face of abuse?



The case of Chris Brown and Rihanna certainly disputes the idea that abuse targets any particular group. Abuse does not discriminate by age, sex, class or popularity.

Scholar Says:



Remember Scholar Gangoolie our student reporter? Well he's done some digging and has found out that:

- At least one in every three women around the world has been abused during her lifetime.

Mother's Final Words

Submitted by Khadija Searles of Holy Faith Convent,

It was a bright and sunny Friday morning and it was October 13th. My friends and I never really believed in bad luck on that day, so we carried on with our normal daily activities. We were going to the movies later that evenings.

I remembered quite clearly when I came downstairs for breakfast and found my mother crying by the kitchen sink. When I said 'Good Morning' she quickly tried to hide the tears to no avail. I asked her what was wrong even though I already knew both the answer that she would give and the truth.

My father was a horrible nightmare. He never took care of us yet gave people the impression that he was a loving father and husband. Whenever he came home from work he was always broke and when asked about it he would quickly change the topic or pretend that he hadn't heard the question. Whenever my brother and I did something wrong he'd beat us until we were black and blue or until our mother could restrain him, which was rare.

Although I could have changed my plans that day, my mother insisted that I not. I could tell that she wanted me to have fun and forget the horrors that we faced. I therefore ended up going for

ice cream and then to the movies with my friends. When they decided to go to a party afterward, I decided to head home to take care of my family.

The journey home was uneventful but when I reached I was astounded to see my neighbours crowded in my yard in which red and blue lights flashed and my brother crying in Ms. Ali's arms. That's when I saw my father with bloodstains on his shirt and a satisfied grin on his face being carried away in handcuffs.

"Mum! Mum! Mum!" I yelled loudly as realization hit. Spinning around frantically and scanning the crowd high and low, I desperately searched for her calm face but it was nowhere in sight. Then a stretcher passed in front of me carrying her bloodied corpse. Anxiety took over as I fainted, falling hard on the concrete.

Although my father got a lifetime in prison for what he did but I don't think that I can ever forgive him. I learnt that he'd taken out his stress and anger on my mother that evening because she'd confronted him about involvement in illegal activities.

Every time I close my eyes my mother's last words are etched in my memory, "You go on and have fun. I'll be fine. I'll be waiting for you to come back. I love you sweetie."



ABOVE:

Students of various schools participating in the activities at the Feb 2009 Peer Helpers' Follow-up at ALGICO Plaza., POS.

READ THE SIGNS

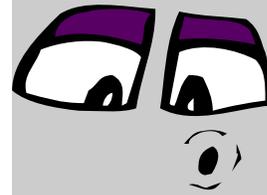
The old saying that 'knowledge is power' is as applicable to abuse as it is to nearly everything else in life. Here are some things that you should know about the various forms that abuse can take in romantic relationships:

PHYSICAL ABUSE

The use of physical force such as hitting, kicking, biting, cutting and shoving of partner. This type of abuse can also take the form of intimidation and even stalking.

SOCIAL ABUSE

The isolation of the victim from his/her family and friends so that total dependence on the abuser develops. This involves restricting social visits and use of the telephone among other things.



In a study done in the US, 73% of teens said that if they are trapped in an abusive relationship, they would turn to a friend for help.

EMOTIONAL ABUSE

Also called verbal/ mental abuse, this involves the use of behaviours to terrorize or control the victim without the use of physical force. Such behaviours include but are not limited to insults, threats, mind games, blame and minimizing the abuse.

SEXUAL ABUSE

Forcing, manipulating or coercing partners sexually, including forced penetration (rape) or any other type of sexual contact (assault) and/or unwanted sexual attention (harassment) all fall under this category of abuse.

FINANCIAL ABUSE

This is when money and gifts are used to control the victim. The abuser controls the money and possessions in the relationship and uses it to threaten or manipulate the victim.



SIGNS THAT A FRIEND IS BEING ABUSED

Abuse is not limited to adult relationships and the reality is that if one of your friends is in an abusive relationship you will not know unless you know what to look for. So if your friend is becoming increasingly secretive and withdrawn, avoids friends, family and other social events, is increasingly ashamed for no apparent reason and consistently has marks of physical violence, encourage them to talk to your school's Guidance Officer or a teacher that he/she trusts.

Free

I Loved him
And I believed
When he said he loved me
But I am young
I was too blind to see
The blood in my mouth
The pain seemed to never go
As much as I screamed and shouted
No amount of make up
Could cover my scars
I'd give anything
To put him behind bars
The lies I told to cover for him
The smiles I faked
I should never have believed him
It was a Stupid mistake
One day I said, "This has to stop!"
Now with the help of a caring friend
I am almost free
To live my life as it should be.

- Submitted by
Kathleen Bedayse
of Mayaro Composite



Whole

(A song by Candace Coker of Naparima Girls' High)

I look at the clouds and they're all gone
Just like the colour of my face
I look at the trees and they're all brown
And I'm also withering away

Bridge: 'cause you cut me deep
Yeah you hurt me
But I couldn't speak
But you can't hold me back anymore

Chorus: And now I'm lying on my bed and I close my eyes
And I wipe away the tears 'cause you tore me up inside
And I waste away, waste away
To a point of nothingness
Ooh, ooh, ooh you did me wrong but now I'm strong
Ooh, ooh, ooh I was left alone but now I'm whole

All my bones you tried to break
And then you beg me to stay
You cut me deep with the words you say
And now my self-esteem is floating away

Bridge: 'cause you pulled my hair
Then you'd wipe my tears
But now gone are my fears
And you can't bring me down anymore

Chorus: I don't need your selfish words to tell me that I'm beautiful
It's okay, it's alright, 'cause I will make it
But there is one in the air, it's strange to say, but He is my friend
And I know that I can live

Chorus: And now I'm sitting in my bed and I close my eyes
And I'm packing up my things, but I'm still torn up inside

Ha Ha Corner

A blind man, with a seeing eye dog at his side, walks into his local grocery store. He walks to the middle of the store, picks up the dog by the tail, and starts swinging the dog around in circles over his head.

The store manager, who up until this point thought he had seen it all, thinks this is quite strange. So he decides to find out what's going on. The store manager approaches the blind man swinging the dog and asks, "Pardon me. May I help you with something?"

The blind man replies, "No thanks. I'm

Ask an expert, call...

Coalition Against
Domestic Violence at
624-0402

800-SAVE

Men Against Violence
Against Women at
637-0926

Rape Crisis Society at 622-7273

Child Line at 800-4321

... to talk about abuse