



A RESOURCE BOOK ABOUT
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
FOR UN STAFF IN THE PACIFIC

GUIDELINES ADAPTED FOR UNCT PACIFIC

These guidelines have been copied and adapted from UNICEF'S CARING FOR US Dealing with Domestic Violence booklet published in 2006, with adaptation and specific information inserted related to the Pacific.

Special thanks to the members of the Pacific UN Gender Theme Group for their technical contribution towards the development of these guidelines. Financial support was provided by UN Women, UNFPA and UNICEF.

2023

PREFACE

Violence against women and children is a global phenomenon and it impacts every dimension of women's lives – both in their private and professional spheres.

The Pacific has some of the world's highest recorded levels of violence against women. Research has revealed an epidemic of violence against women and girls in the region. Between 37-79% of women have experienced physical and/or sexual violence in their lifetime, with 8 out of 10 countries having prevalence rates of more than 50%, and 7 out of 10 more than 64% according to surveys conducted between 2007 and 2020. This is more than twice the global average in 7 out of 10 countries. Even when services exist in the region, few women access them. Shame and stigma make it difficult for women to talk about their suffering and to seek help in breaking the cycle of violence.¹

Despite the enormity of the problem, change is occurring in the region. Governments are beginning to advance legislation, policies and national action plans on ending violence against women. There have been advances in expanding women's access to healthcare, social services and justice. Civil society and organisations are creating supportive environments for women and families affected by violence.

The high regional prevalence tells us that there are women in our midst – in our own families, communities, as well as the UN workplaces who are impacted by violence daily. The UN urges 'zero tolerance' at the highest levels of leadership of the UN to end gender-based violence against women and girls. As UN Resident Coordinators we have the duty to take measures to ensure that the UN workplace is safe and supportive for all UN staff. We are proud to join the growing number of organisations in the Pacific who are committed to breaking the stigma around violence against women.

The guidelines contained within this booklet – A Resource Book about Domestic Violence for UN Staff in the Pacific – assert that women have a right to live free of violence. This booklet will help the UN family in the Pacific better understand domestic violence – why it happens, what it looks like, how it presents in the workplace, and where to get support – and how we can all work to prevent and end it, both in the workplace and our communities.

Only by coming together to speak up and create supportive spaces for women in our workplaces, will we be able to effect positive change in attitudes, beliefs, and behaviour, and create new norms that champion respectful relationships and gender equality.

We extend our thanks to the Pacific UN Gender Group for investing time and effort to develop this guide. We wish to urge all UN agencies to include this guide as part of the induction package for all incoming staff. We furthermore would encourage all UN staff in the Pacific to consider this guide as a 'living document' and to feel confident in providing inputs/comments to the UN Gender Group on the content that may have inadvertently been left out. We also would suggest that the UN Gender Group undertakes an annual review of the guide in case it requires updating.

Jaap van Hierden

UN Resident Coordinator Palau,
Federated States of Micronesia,
Republic of Marshall Islands,
Nauru, Kiribati

Dirk Wagener

UN Resident Coordinator
Fiji, Solomon Islands, Tonga,
Tuvalu, Vanuatu

Themba Kalua

UN Resident Coordinator
Samoa, Cook Islands, Niue,
Tokelau

1 Family Health and Safety Studies conducted between 2007 and 2014 and MICS results for Kiribati, Samoa, Tonga and Tuvalu conducted between 2019 and 2020.



Violence against women is a major barrier to the fulfilment of human rights and a direct challenge to women's inclusion and participation in sustainable development and sustaining peace...It is time to further our collective action to end violence against women and girls – for good. That takes all of us working together in our own countries, regions and communities, at the same time, towards the same goal.

António Guterres, UN Secretary-General



CONTENTS

2	INTRODUCTION
4	CHAPTER 1
4	WHAT IS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE?
5	FORMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
7	CHAPTER 2
7	WHAT CAUSES DOMESTIC VIOLENCE?
8	WHY DOES SHE STAY?
9	WHY DOES HE ABUSE?
11	CHAPTER 3
11	THE EFFECTS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
15	CHAPTER 4
15	STOPPING THE ABUSE STARTS WITH RECOGNIZING THE SIGNS
17	THE CYCLE OF VIOLENCE
18	CHAPTER 5
18	GETTING HELP
18	SOME BASIC CHOICES FOR SUPPORT
20	MAKING A SAFETY PLAN
20	LEGAL SOLUTIONS
21	HELP FOR CHILDREN
22	HELP FOR THE ABUSER
23	CHAPTER 6
23	I THINK SOMEONE IS BEING ABUSED – HOW CAN I HELP?
24	BE PREPARED TO RESPOND SUPPORTIVELY IF SOMEONE DISCLOSES
24	SOME IMPORTANT ‘DO’S’ WHEN PROVIDING HELP
25	WHAT CAN A UN OFFICE DO?
27	CHAPTER 7
27	RECOVERY
28	CULTIVATING NEW WAYS OF THINKING
29	RESOURCES SECTION
29	SERVICE RESOURCES SECTION – PACIFIC RESOURCES BY COUNTRY
33	INFORMATION RESOURCES – PACIFIC

INTRODUCTION

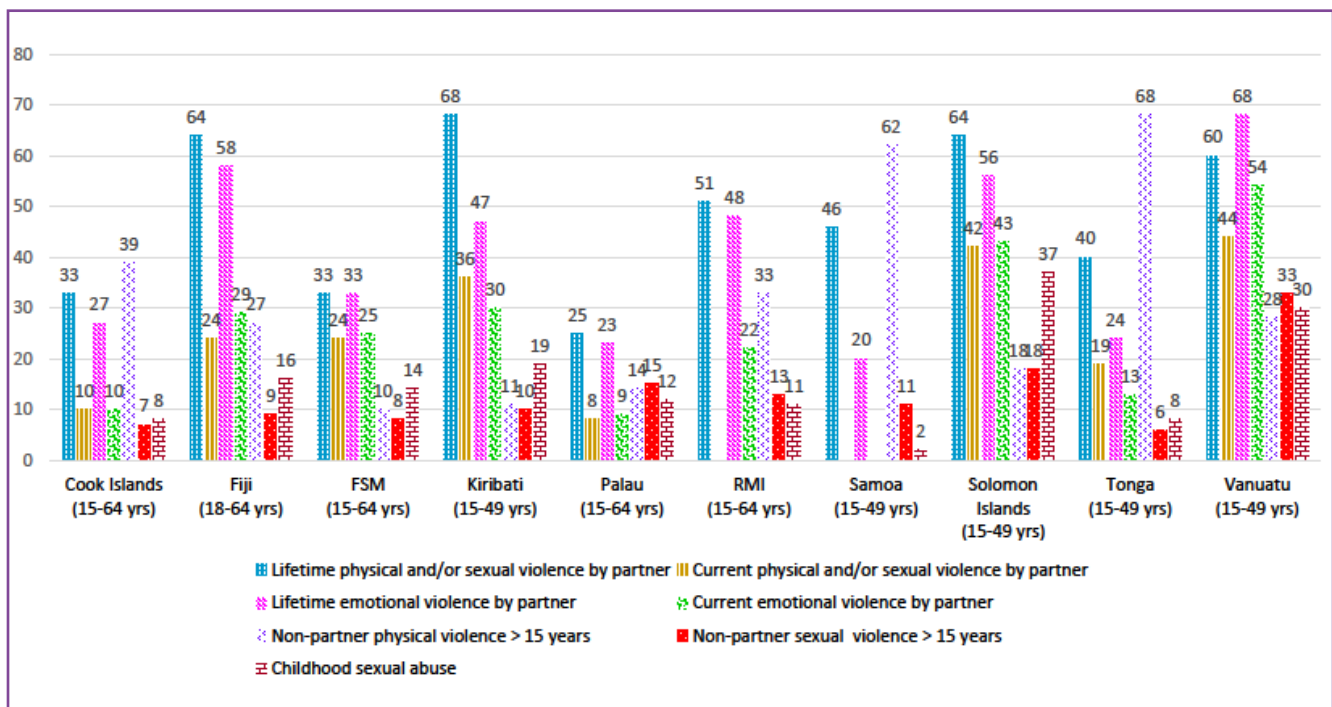
Violence against women (VAW), including domestic violence should not happen to anyone. Ever. There are no exceptions: Everyone in a relationship has the right to be valued, honoured and respected. Everyone has the right to feel safe living with the people in their homes, being at work or in the community.

Unfortunately, domestic violence does happen in every country and every culture of the world today. The Pacific is no exception and the ten national VAW studies conducted over the last 10/15 years in the Pacific show that on average, two out of three women experience intimate partner violence and/or sexual violence during their lifetime (compared to one out of three at the global level). Current levels of violence against women (over the last 12 months) in the Pacific are approximately one out of every three women. These levels are very high compared to global averages for a lifetime and current violence experienced by women. In addition, the studies show that women in the Pacific mainly experience the more severe forms of violence, and often for many, many years as few options exist to escape this violent life.²

From the studies, it is known that:

- In Kiribati, 68 percent of ever-partnered women experienced physical and/or sexual violence by an intimate partner, whereas this was 64 percent for the Solomon Islands, 46% in Samoa, 60% in Vanuatu and 64% in Fiji.
- In the Solomon Islands, one in two ever-partnered women reported sexual violence by their partners. One out of three women in Kiribati reported sexual violence by their partner; for Samoa this was slightly below one out of five women. Non-partner sexual violence (age 15 years and older) is very high in Vanuatu, Solomon Islands and Palau, whereas child sexual abuse is high in the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu.

Graph 1: Patterns of VAW in the Pacific Island countries, based on national VAW studies (percentages)



2 National Violence against Women studies have been conducted in Samoa, Solomon Islands, Kiribati, Fiji, Vanuatu, Tonga, Cook Islands, Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia and Palau.

The findings of these studies have often resulted in a wake-up call to governments who often responded by taking action to revise or introduce new VAW legislation, policies and national action plans.³

Pacific Island leaders, in 2012 also signed a specific declaration which acknowledged that the rates of violence against women in the region were “unacceptably high” and committed to addressing violence against women through the enactment of legislation and the implementation of services such as health, counselling and legal services.⁴ The 14th Triennial Conference of Pacific Women in 2021 further “acknowledged gender-based violence (GBV) as a continuing scourge of the Pacific” and reiterated the importance of “actions to end violence against women and girls and increase support and services to survivors.”

It is important to recognise that domestic violence is a global problem, not a Pacific one. It can happen to all UN staff, whether international or national, whatever their programming or operational role, and whatever their level of seniority within their organisation.

A NOTE TO READERS

Domestic violence can happen to anyone, and it concerns everyone. Maybe you are living with abuse; maybe you know your colleague, friend, neighbour or relative is being abused at home. This booklet explains what domestic violence is, what forms it takes, why it happens and how it affects women, people of diverse sexual orientation and gender identity, and gender expression (SOGIE), children, families and society. It offers basic information on how and where to get help in the Pacific. It is critical as a UN staff member to be informed, to understand the topic and to, when appropriate, assist others within your family, community and in the workplace.

If you are experiencing violence, please remember as you read this booklet that:

- **ANY FORM OF VIOLENCE IS UNACCEPTABLE**
- **YOU ARE NOT ALONE**
- **IT IS NOT YOUR FAULT**
- **HELP IS AVAILABLE**

If you are an offender (perpetrator of violence), this booklet will make clear that you need to seek help to address the problem⁵, and that your actions are unacceptable. Perpetrating domestic violence goes against everything that UN agencies stand for, as laid out in the Code of Conduct for all UN staff. For all staff, you need to note that in most Pacific Island countries, committing domestic violence in all forms (physical, sexual, emotional and economic) is a crime. In all Pacific Island countries, any form of violent assault is a crime. See the Resources Section (p.5-6).

If you are a manager or involved with staff welfare issues this booklet will provide supplementary information that can help you assist the individual in need. This booklet does not replace existing UN guidelines for staff welfare policies and procedures.

Note: This booklet mainly refers to survivors of violence as female, and perpetrators as male. This is because of the high rates of violence committed by men against women and girls. It is important to remember however that domestic violence can be committed against men and can be committed in all domestic relationships; regardless of gender identity, sexual orientation, or the nature of the relationship. This is why most domestic violence legislation defines a domestic relationship very broadly and includes, but is not limited to non-married partners, same-sex partners, domestic workers, members of the extended family and those living under a family’s care regardless of their relationship.

3 Countries where specific legislation has been passed include: Fiji, Tonga, Kiribati, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu, Palau, Kosrae in the Federated States of Micronesia and the Marshall Islands. Additionally, Niue, Cook Islands and Nauru are drafting legislation at the time of writing.

4 Pacific Leaders Gender Equality Declaration, 30 August 2012, Rarotonga, Cook Islands.

5 Check the Resource Section on (p.29) of these guidelines.

CHAPTER 1

WHAT IS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE?

Domestic violence occurs in a current or former relationship when one person treats the other in an intentionally violent or controlling way and uses the bonds of intimacy between the two people.

People often think of domestic violence as just physical violence. However, domestic violence takes many forms including psychological, emotional, sexual and economic abuse. All of these forms of abuse can have highly destructive impacts. And multiple forms of violence (physical, sexual, emotional and economic) can be perpetrated at the same time towards the same person.

Domestic violence is also not limited to couples living together. Violence within a domestic setting includes violence between individuals; married or not, separated, dating, related or involving non-relatives such as other persons living within the domestic setting. Violence can occur across age groups – including violence towards children and the elderly, people with disabilities as well as between same-sex individuals.

The common thread of violence is that one person is exerting power and control over another – and this control can take on many forms. While exerting power over his victim, the abuser uses the bonds of closeness and intimacy built over time within that relationship. Bonds of intimacy can be bonds of love, friendship, any knowledge and information the abuser has over his victim which he can use to control and violate her.

Abuse can be infrequent, escalating at particular times or can increase over time. Patterns of abuse will vary and can be related to substance abuse or alcohol – although these are only one factor. What is known however, is that abuse normally escalates, and the situation becomes more dangerous for the survivor once they attempt to leave a violent relationship.

Studies on VAW indicate that physical abuse is almost always accompanied by severe psychological, emotional and verbal abuse. In 25-50% of all cases of physical abuse in the Pacific, women also experience sexual abuse.⁶ Domestic violence reduces a woman's ability to control her life, her health including her ability to raise concerns or make decisions about negotiating condom use, discussing family planning or raising concerns around sexual health and fidelity in general.

Domestic violence knows no boundaries. Anyone can be a survivor because abuse:

- Happens anywhere – large cities, rural communities – all countries, cultures or societies
- Happens anytime – at the start of a relationship or later on
- Happens across all social classes and income groups
- Happens regardless of education levels, social status, functional ability
- Happens across all age groups – from the very young to the elderly
- Happens regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity and expression
- Happens across all ethnic, religious, racial or cultural backgrounds

6 "Family Health and Safety Studies" (FHSS) in Samoa, Solomon Islands, Kiribati, Vanuatu and Fiji (SPC 2007; 2009 -2010, NSO Van and Fiji 2010-2011).

FORMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Intimate partner violence comes in many forms, including:

Physical abuse is characterized by the infliction of injury or injuries. It is often the most visible type of abuse, and also the most lethal. Sometimes referred to as battering, physical assaults often start small, maybe a small shove during an argument, or forcefully grabbing a wrist, but over time, physical abuse usually becomes more severe, more frequent, and can result in the death of the survivor. Examples include:

- Punching, hitting, kicking, slapping, pushing, throwing, pinching, biting
- Stabbing, breaking bones, cutting, threatening with weapons; using weapons
- Murder
- Threatening to physically harm others – including children – tying children / others up

Sexual abuse is any sexual encounter without a person's consent such as:

- Any unwanted touching, unsafe or coerced sexual activity, be it oral, anal or vaginal
- Forcing someone to perform sexual acts
- Painful or degrading acts during intercourse (i.e. urinating on survivor)
- Manipulating for sexual purposes
- Unwanted petting, fondling, beating sexual parts of the body
- Forced stripping, forced sex when the partner refuses/is sick or tired
- Taking unwanted sexual photos and/or videos
- Humiliating, criticizing, or trying to control a person's sexuality or reproductive choices
- Intentionally causing pain during sex
- Preventing the use of birth control
- Knowingly exposing the partner to sexually transmitted disease
- Sexual assault

Emotional or psychological abuse is when someone routinely makes unreasonable demands and/or intentionally inflicts anxiety, hurt, guilt or fear through verbal or nonverbal acts, emotional abuse serves to degrade and undermine an individual's sense of self-worth and self-esteem while rejecting their opinions and needs. It is designed to further control the survivor by instilling fear and ensuring compliance. It may include:

- Constant and/or extreme criticisms
- Humiliation in private and/or public
- Manipulation with lies and contradictions
- Using religious beliefs as a pressure tactic to continue abuse

- Isolating the survivor from family members, friends, or regular activities (prevented from seeing or talking to others, not allowed to go out)
- Denying the abuse ever happened, shifting responsibility for abuse, or using the statement “It’s your fault.”
- Controlling behaviour – forcing one to ask permission to undertake normal activities
- Stalking – including harassing phone calls to place of employment, emails, or physically following
- Withholding medicine from the person (i.e. from persons with disabilities where family members or carers withhold medicine)

Economic abuse is the control of a person’s financial resources, as well as educational and employment opportunities. It can take many forms, from denying a partner all access to funds, to making the partner solely responsible for all finances (i.e. putting all the bills in the partners’ name) while handling money irresponsibly himself. It may include:

- Preventing access to money
- Stopping a partner from getting or keeping a job
- Making major financial decisions without consultation
- Controlling all access to money earned
- Undermining partners’ attempts to improve education, training or employment
- Withholding physical resources such as food, clothes, medications and health care or shelter

CHAPTER 2

WHAT CAUSES DOMESTIC VIOLENCE?

The primary factor leading to domestic violence is gender discrimination, which results in inequality between men and women. Inequality fuels both a sense of entitlement for men as “heads of the household” as well as the fundamental need that an abuser has to exert power and control – with women and others as the targets of this need. Women are not alone; children and other groups such as persons with disabilities, and persons of diverse SOGIE are also targeted for violence within homes and communities. Violence becomes a way to exert power and entitlement as well as manipulate and control another person, to extract privileges, to mask insecurity and to dominate decision making within the family. The studies in the Pacific found that men feel the need to “discipline” women for behaviour they do not approve of in several countries.

“It’s Tabu - We Can’t Talk About It”

Secrecy, social norms, and beliefs that women and girls are inferior to men (gender inequality) perpetuate violence against women.

All over the world, women’s subordinate position within the home and society is deeply entrenched in aspects of traditional, legal, religious and social structures in particular when these intersect with gender. Women and men may be taught that violence is an inevitable part of a relationship, or in some way sanctioned by cultural norms. There may be an emphasis on a women’s obligation to “submit to her husband”. A woman who complains about abuse may face being blamed for “causing” the problem, or be pressured into returning to a dangerous situation for fear of shaming her family. At the same time, many men report feeling pressure to uphold certain standards or harmful behaviors due to pressure in their families and communities which lead to harmful masculinities.

Domestic violence often flourishes in an environment of secrecy, where there may be strong taboos (tabu) about discussing a “family affair” with outsiders. Unconsciously or consciously, a woman may feel that she “deserves” to be mistreated for reasons such as refusing to have sex with her partner, or burning dinner. Through the Family Health and Safety Study (FHSS) and related surveys, women in the Pacific expressed that they felt the violence was justified or necessary as a way to “discipline” them and agreed with one or more justifications for a man to beat his wife. In Fiji, 43% of women surveyed agreed with one or more justifications for a man to beat his wife, and 60% agreed that “a good wife obeys her husband even if she disagrees”.⁷

Stronger laws specific to domestic violence have been passed in many Pacific Island countries, however implementing legislation will take time and will face many challenges with implementation remain; including the attitudes that perpetuate gender discrimination held by judicial officials, police and other service providers who may not respond adequately because of their own biases. One missing link has been the workplace. With the adoption and increasing ratifications of the International Labour Organization (ILO) Violence and Harassment Convention, some of these gaps will be closed.

An “ecological framework” can be used to understand how personal, situational and socio-cultural factors interact to produce violent behaviour.

7 FWCC National Research on Women’s Health (p. 21).

Individual

- The fact that one is a male and has a sense of entitlement or privilege
- Witnessing domestic violence and/or being abused as a child – learned behaviour
- The above factors can be exacerbated by drug or alcohol abuse

Relationship

- Poor communication skills – no learned negotiation skills
- Male control of wealth and decision-making in the family
- Influence of the extended family
- Economic problems
- Entitlement leading to multiple affairs/extramarital affairs

Society

- Norms granting male control over female behaviour and decisions
- A culture of “top down” hierarchical decision making in family, community, church and State
- Acceptance of violence as a way to resolve conflict
- Notion of masculinity linked to dominance, honour or aggression
- Rigid gender roles

WHY DOES SHE STAY?

This is the question that most people want to understand without acknowledging that it places the blame on the survivor of violence and abuse. The reality is that the majority of abused women make heroic efforts at leaving, but many are unsuccessful because they can face one or more huge obstacles:

Fear: The number one reason for not leaving is fear. A woman may have been told repeatedly that if she leaves the relationship, terrible things will happen to her or her children. The abuser may have convinced her that no matter where she goes, he will find her and never leave her alone. He may threaten her life, children, possessions and/or livelihood.

NOTE: The reality is that the most dangerous time for a survivor/survivor is when she leaves the abusive partner; 75% of domestic violence related homicides occur upon separation and there is a 75% increase in violence upon separation for at least two years.⁸

Gender roles: Women are often taught to be passive and dependent on men. With this socialization, women are taught to bear responsibility for their relationship, knowing they will be blamed by their family, or society in general if the relationship fails or they decide to leave. Women are often socialized to “respect and obey” their husbands/partners and failure to do so is viewed as a failure in the individual woman.

8 <http://stoprelationshipabuse.org/educated/barriers-to-leaving-an-abusive-relationship/>

Religious and cultural values and beliefs: These may reinforce the commitment to marriage. Interpretations of some faiths hold that the husband is the head of the family, and it is a wife's duty to submit to his wishes. This rationale can be so powerful that a woman will refuse to leave an abusive relationship.

Lack of a support system: A major component of abuse can be isolation, even in extended family households. The survivor may have no support system because the abuser has undermined her family ties and friendships, leaving her psychologically and financially dependent on him. Poor economic conditions and long distances between the survivor and friends/family can feed isolation.

Lack of resources: A survivor may simply not have the financial resources to leave, or the means of obtaining money, shelter, transportation and/or a livelihood, especially if she needs to relocate to get away from her abuser.

Feelings of guilt: The survivor may believe that her partner is "sick and/or needs her help". The abuser may fuel this idea making her believe that he needs her to become better again. The idea of leaving can produce feelings of guilt.

Promises of reform: Often the abuser promises it will never happen again; the survivor wants to believe this is true.

Responses from family members, friends and colleagues: The survivor may not be believed or taken seriously. She may also be blamed or judged as a bad wife, partner or mother, or told that she should just put up with the abuse.

Love for partner: Many people enter a relationship for love. That emotion does not simply disappear when faced with difficulties. After violence has occurred, the abuser will often apologize. Because her self-esteem is so low following the incident, a survivor may perceive the apologies and promises of reform as the end of the abuse.

Multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination: For people with disabilities, and people of diverse sexual orientation or gender identity and expression, it may be difficult for them to leave violent relationships due to the multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination they face.

WHY DOES HE ABUSE?

This is an important question, but it is equally important to remember that the psychological roots of violence in an individual can be very complex. Though overall, the most common element is the abuser's need for power and control over someone else/the family. Many will continue to repeat patterns of abuse in their present or future relationships.

A survivor of an abusive relationship may have a strong desire to understand "why" and spend many hours trying to figure this out. This can be extremely difficult to do within the context of the relationship itself and perhaps even be self-defeating. If you are a survivor, it is more important to understand that the first thing you must do is protect yourself, and not to blame yourself.

Some common excuses for abusive men include:

- It is his right as the head of the household
- It's his way of showing how much he loves you
- He has to discipline you
- His previous partner hurt him

- He abuses those he loves the most
- He holds in his feelings too much
- He is mentally ill
- He has an aggressive personality
- He is afraid of intimacy and abandonment
- He has low self-esteem
- His boss mistreats him
- He has poor communication skills
- He grew up with abuse in his family

None of these reasons justify hurting another person. There is no justification for violence, which are not valid reasons to perpetuate domestic violence.

The impacts of violence touch every member of the family and ripple out to harm society at large. Violence scars children for life.

CHAPTER 3

THE EFFECTS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Domestic violence affects every member of a family; the impacts can be serious and long-lasting. The fallout from abuse also ripples out to harm society at large.

Children who have experienced violence during their childhood are more likely to be either perpetrators and/or survivors of violence as adults. Studies in the Pacific have supported the cyclical pattern of violence revealing a strong link between children's exposure to violence and Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) in their adult lives.⁹

EFFECTS ON SURVIVORS

Impacts on survivors vary by individual, but the most common include:

- Physical injuries, resulting in a physical disability
- Isolation
- Chronic depression and other mental health concerns
- Low self-esteem
- Health problems, including STIs and HIV/AIDS and unplanned pregnancies
- Sleep disorders
- Suicide attempts
- Chronic fear and uncertainty
- Poor work performance, loss of income and even job loss
- An inability to adequately respond to the needs of others including children
- Death

All these effects can build on each other, spinning a web that may make a survivor feel trapped in her situation. Without steps to stop the abuse, however, domestic violence often becomes more violent and frequent. In too many cases, this leads to serious injury or the death of the survivor and/or abuser.

EFFECTS ON CHILDREN

Within families, abusers who target other adults are also often violent towards children. Even if the abuse is not targeted at children, studies have shown that children witnessing violence also suffer from the effects of the abuse. As targets, children may suffer:

9 <https://stoprelationshipabuse.org/educated/barriers-to-leaving-an-abusive-relationship/>

- **Physical abuse:** beating a child with a belt, shoe, hose pipe, broom or other object; hitting; kicking; shaking
- **Sexual abuse:** fondling, touching or kissing a child's genitals; oral sex; forced intercourse
- **Emotional/psychological abuse:** threatening, intimidating, criticizing, humiliating and frightening a child
- **Physical neglect:** inadequate provision of food, housing, or clothing; lack of supervision; denial or delay of medical care; inadequate hygiene
- **Emotional/psychological neglect:** refusal or failure emotional support and love

Harmful Connections, UNICEF, UNFPA 2015 (p.11)

Figure 3.7.1. Symptoms of children reported by women who experience IPV

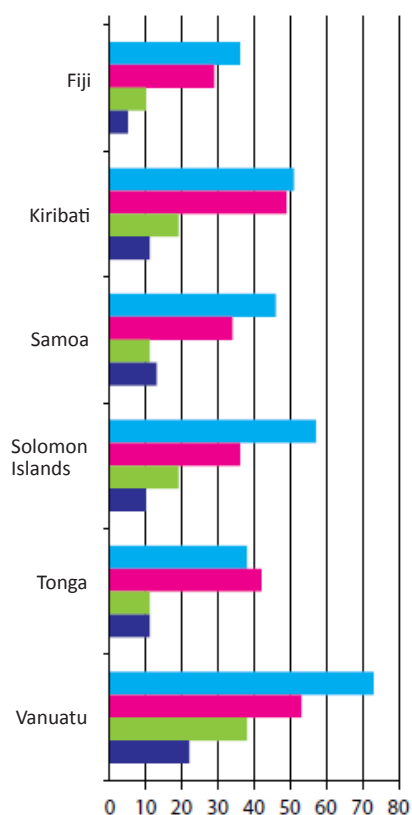
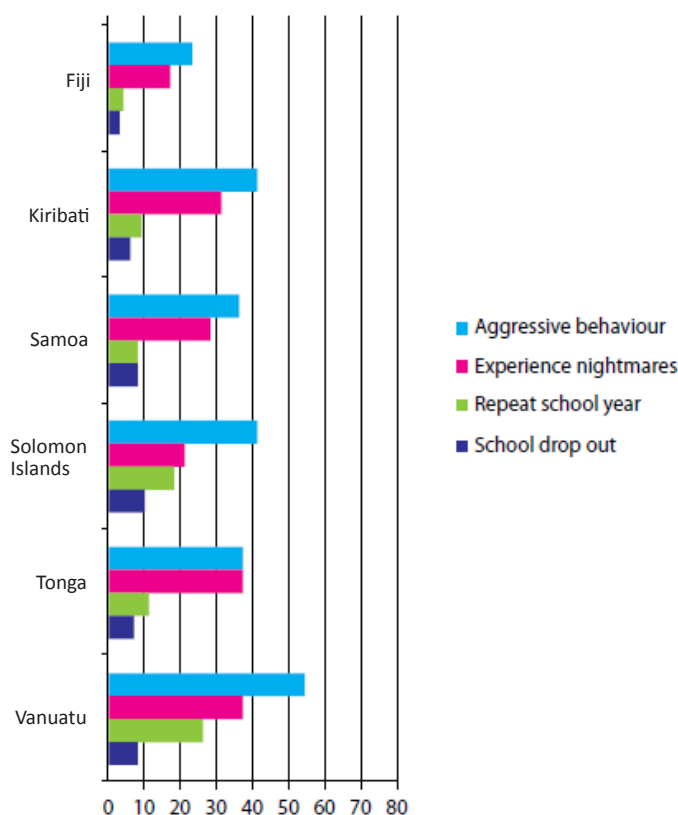


Figure 3.7.2. Symptoms of children reported by women who did not experience IPV



Even when children are not the direct targets of abuse, witnessing domestic violence can cause them grave harm. Children who hear or see the abuse of a parent by another parent or partner may:

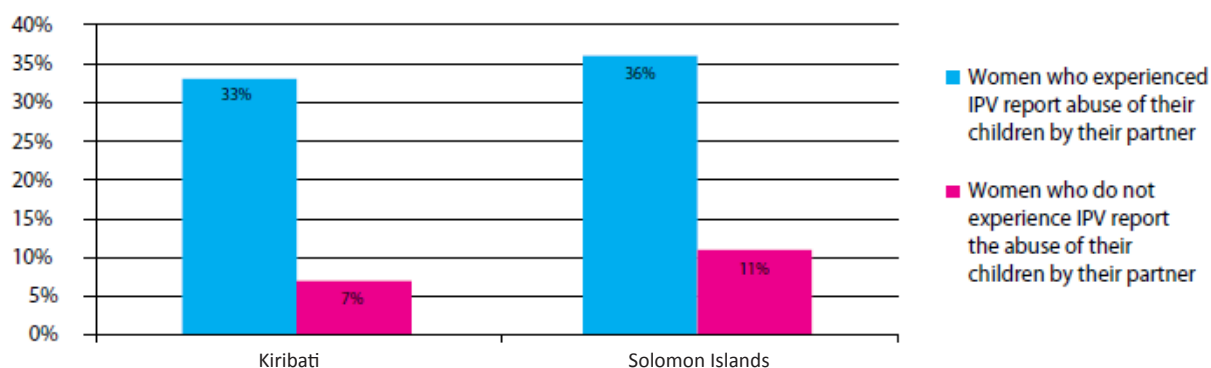
- Develop social, emotional, psychological, physical and/or behavioural problems that affect their development and can continue into adulthood
- Grow up believing violence is a normal part of family life
- Be more likely to be abusive as adults if they are male, and more passive and withdrawn if they are female, increasing the risk that they, too, will enter an abusive relationship
- Live in daily fear of what to expect at home, and can be filled with confusion, chaos, anger and tension that can lead to lifelong fear and an inability to trust others
- Be isolated by an abusive parent who shuts off the family from outside help or support

- Feel responsible for the abuse and powerless to stop it
- As they develop, be more likely to use violence, commit crimes and be abusers of alcohol and drugs

The Fiji Women’s Crisis Centre’s national research found that individual children blame themselves for the violence they witness against their mother, or they blame themselves for not being able to stop the violence. More worrying, however, is that 36% of the children surveyed respond to domestic violence by being aggressive towards their mother and other children.¹⁰

Harmful Connections, UNICEF, UNFPA 2015 (p.9-10)

Figure 3.6.1. Co-occurrence of violence against women and children in the same household



EFFECTS DURING PREGNANCY

“In Vanuatu, a third of women reported that the violence started during pregnancy and continued at about the same level or got progressively worse.”¹¹

A recent survey on domestic violence in nine developing countries around the world also found that women being abused are more likely to have unwanted pregnancies, and suffer miscarriages, stillbirths and premature deliveries. In many cases, abuse actually increases during pregnancy. Their children are more likely to die before the age of five.

In the Pacific, violence towards pregnant women is a great concern. Rates of women experiencing violence during pregnancy are very high with 23% in Kiribati, 11% in the Solomon Islands, 15% in Fiji and 15% in Vanuatu.

EFFECTS ON WORKPLACES

Domestic violence can have significant costs for workplaces, including absenteeism, high staff turnover and reduced productivity. One recent study of GBV in Papua New Guinea found that 68% of survey participants experienced GBV, leading to significant staff time lost. The study found that on average, each staff member loss 11.1 days of work per year as a result of the impacts of GBV. Of these, 2 days were lost to ‘presenteeism’ (being at work but unable to perform as expected due to injury, fatigue or being unable to concentrate); 5 days were due to not attending work, and 4.1 days were due to helping other survivors of GBV.¹²

This highlights that while employers must address domestic violence from an ethical and human rights-based perspective, there will also be economic benefits from investing in responsive and preventative measures.

10 FWCC National Research on Women’s Health (p.100).

11 Harmful Connections, UNICEF, UNFPA 2015 (p.9-10).

12 Overseas Development Institute (2015), Gender Violence in Papua New Guinea, (p. 19)

EFFECTS ON SOCIETY

The high prevalence of domestic violence drains national expenditures on physical and mental health care, courts and police and cuts into educational achievement and productivity. Economic costing exercises vary, but generally measure costs to: the justice system, health care system, social services, care and counselling, shelter support, individual women's costs of health care, shelter and legal fees, loss of income for the individual /family and nation through decreased productivity, trauma and suffering and the consequent decrease in revenue to the State and potential future, "second generation" costs on children and human capital. Accurate cost calculations are not possible since most incidences of violence continue to go unreported. In addition, it is extremely difficult to assess the cost of the impacts of violence on survivors in the long-term as well as their children, noting the evidence that domestic violence witnessed as a child is repeated in adulthood.

The first attempt at costing the economic impact of violence in the Pacific region was made in 2002 by the then Governor of the Reserve Bank of Fiji, Mr. S. Narube, who at the time estimated the cost to be FJD \$200m to the nation's economy. This estimate was based on a 1994 model used in New Zealand. The model looked at the costs of the justice system, police, welfare, prison services and medical treatment. In 2011, Professor Biman Prasad used the same model to calculate the economic costs of family violence in Fiji; which he estimated to be \$498 m or 6.6% of the economy for that year.

Numerous studies have been undertaken globally, which examine the cost of violence to individuals, families and nations' economies. These studies cannot be directly compared as many of them have used different methodologies. A sample of these is listed below:

Country	Year	Study Outcome
United States	2003	Costs of intimate partner violence exceeded USD 5.8 billion each year, USD 4.1 billion of which was spent on direct medical and health care services. Centres for Disease Control and Prevention, 2003. 'Costs of Intimate Partner Violence against Women in the United States', Atlanta.
Australia	2009	Cost to the Australian economy of violence against women was estimated at 13.6 billion. Australian Government, Department of Social Services, Economic Costs of violence against women and their children, available www.fahcsia.gov.au
Canada	2012	The 2012 Justice Canada report: <i>An Estimation of the Economic Impact of Spousal Violence in Canada</i> identified the total cost of intimate partner violence in Canada as \$7.4 billion per year. The report includes estimates for pain and suffering as well as direct costs such as medical care costs and lost productivity. The direct costs of intimate partner violence in Canada total \$1.9 billion per year.

This section is an excerpt from: Mapping Paper: Private Sector Responses to ending violence against women in the Pacific. <https://pacificwomen.org/research/mapping-paper-private-sector-responses-to-ending-violence-against-women-in-the-pacific/>

CHAPTER 4

STOPPING THE ABUSE STARTS WITH RECOGNIZING THE SIGNS

The first step towards ending a violent relationship is to identify what is happening. This may seem logical, but for many survivors, it can feel overwhelmingly difficult. A survivor of domestic violence may have terrifying experiences. She often has very confused thoughts and feelings brought on by fear and uncertainty.

Even if she knows that something is very wrong, she may be unable to acknowledge it. She may deny, minimize or find reasons to explain her situation, all of which are common psychological defenses. Unfortunately, her abuser is probably skilled at using these same techniques to convince her that what she is going through is not abnormal or wrong.

Abusive relationships generally do not happen overnight. They can build gradually over time, drawing on one person's need for control, and the slow breakdown of another person's sense of self. Recognizing the early signs of domestic violence is not always easy. These may involve hard-to-define forms of emotional or psychological abuse, such as the occasional use of a demeaning nickname. But this kind of behaviour reflects certain feelings or attitudes. Unchecked, it may eventually escalate into more severe emotional, psychological or physical violence.

The questions on the following pages may help you decide if you or someone you know is being abused.

Does your partner:

- Call you names, yell, put you down, or constantly criticize or undermine you and your abilities as a wife, partner or mother?
- Behave in an overprotective way or become extremely jealous?
- Accuse you of having an affair for no reason?
- Always insist he is right, even when he is clearly wrong?
- Blame you for his own violent behaviour, saying that your behaviour or attitudes cause him to be violent?
- Externalize the causes of his behaviour by blaming his violence on stress, alcohol or a “bad day”?
- Threaten to commit suicide, especially as a way of keeping you from leaving?
- Make it difficult for you to see family or friends, or “badmouth” your family or friends?
- Prevent you from going where you want to, when you want to, and with whomever you want to?
- Or insist on following you / coming with you?
- Humiliate or embarrass you in front of other people?
- Destroy personal property or throw things around?
- Control all of the finances, force you to account for what you spend, or take your money?
- Prevent you from getting or keeping a job?
- Use intimidation or manipulation to control you and your children?
- Threaten to expose any personal aspect of your life – such as sexual orientation, your HIV or other health/ personal status?
- Prevent you from taking medications or getting medical care?
- Deny you access to food, drink or sleep?
- Hit, punch, slap, kick, shove, choke or bite you – or physically harm you intentionally in any way?
- Force you to engage in sexual acts or have unprotected sex against your will?

These are some of the common tactics used by abusers to control their partners, but are certainly not the only ones. If you answered “yes” to any of these questions, you may be a survivor of domestic violence.

Remember!

You are not alone, it is not your fault, and help is available!

See the “RESOURCES SECTION” on page 29

THE CYCLE OF VIOLENCE

If you are in an abusive relationship, you may also recognize the following pattern:



The cycle of violence can happen hundreds of times in an abusive relationship. The total cycle can take anywhere from a few hours to a year or more to complete. Typically, each time the abuse occurs, it worsens, and the cycle shortens. Breaking the pattern alone without help is difficult.

You may need outside support from professionals working with survivors of violence.

As you confront your situation, start defining what forms of behaviour are acceptable to you. You may or may not be able to convey these limits to your partner, who may or may not respect them. Regardless, this exercise will help you clarify your own rights and expectations, and build the determination to say “no” to additional harm.

In the end, leaving the abusive relationship, temporarily or permanently, may be the only way to stop the cycle.

You can get the support you need. In many countries, laws have improved and more services are available. See “RESOURCES SECTION” on page 29

CHAPTER 5

GETTING HELP

If you are a survivor of domestic violence – or any other kind of GBV, you may have more than one way to get help. Appropriate options vary considerably across countries and cultures. In the Pacific, health, police, legal and social services are available but not necessarily in every district, town and community. Not all service providers might be trained or experienced in addressing the needs of VAW survivors. Often, women's organizations, including NGOs, are much more experienced in working with women and supporting survivors of violence and have built up extensive support systems over the years. Their presence varies from country to country; however, in most countries special VAW services, including the public services exist. It is essential to remember that while legal responses to domestic violence are steadily improving in the Pacific region, in some places, legal solutions may not be an option just yet. While laws in the Pacific recognize a woman's right to file a case against her husband/partner; some individuals within legal systems may not recognize this and may create barriers or block a woman from doing so. Even in these situations, however, you may be able to work out equally effective solutions using other resources for support, such as family and friends.

The number of women who never seek help is high. In fact most women who experience physical and sexual violence in the Pacific never report this to the police, local and other authorities. Women suffer silently because they feel embarrassed, believe no one will believe or help them, are afraid of divorce or further beatings or even worse, or think that what they are experiencing is simply part of life and part of marriage. People with disabilities may find it particularly difficult to seek assistance if they require assistance from their partner, spouse, family member or carer to seek services and this is the person who abuses them. Women living outside their country of origin may have more limited support networks and face additional barriers to accessing existing services due to language and other factors.

Women who do seek support are much more likely to turn to friends and family than to the authorities. Women do go to health services, mainly to have their injuries taken care of, but they seldom report the cause of the injuries to the attending health workers. This reflects in part the longstanding taboos (tabu) against speaking up against domestic violence and the lack of support services.

SOME BASIC CHOICES FOR SUPPORT

Relatives, friends, neighbours, UN Department of Safety and Security, UN Head of Agency or colleagues: Identify all the people who might be willing and able to help you. It can sometimes be hard to ask for help, but remember that you do not deserve to be abused, and the risks involved in staying in your situation could be life-threatening to you or your children. People in your office who may be able to help, including through the provision of basic information, include peer support volunteers, an ombudsperson, staff association officers, senior managers, UN Department of Safety and Security or trusted colleagues.

Health services: are among the most common services sought by women who have experienced violence as the cause of repeated broken bones, concussions and other typical consequences of violence. Still, many nurses and doctors in the Pacific do not feel comfortable asking about the cause of the injury or have the mistaken belief that this is not of the concern of the health system. Women who have experienced sexual violence urgently need to seek health services to address their needs, prevent pregnancy (by using emergency contraceptives), sexually transmitted infections, HIV infection and have forensic evidence collected. This

should be done within 72-120 after sexual violence. If more than 120 hours have passed, a medical referral may still be required if the survivor has injuries or is in pain. Across the Pacific, more and more medical staff are being trained to provide quality care to survivors of physical and sexual violence.

Women's organisations/social services: In the Pacific, women's organisations have taken a lead on the provision of support and services in the area of domestic violence in many countries. Women's organisations have been at the front line of changing laws and attitudes about domestic violence, and providing services such as free counselling, legal advice, shelter and medical referrals from trained professionals. Even if they don't directly offer services, some of these organisations will be among the most supportive and sympathetic, and will often know where women can go to find assistance. Please see the Resources Section for a list of services in the Pacific region.

Counselling: Counselling with a therapist or psychologist can help survivors of abuse regain their self-esteem and self-confidence, clarify their options and make decisions about the abusive relationship. As noted above, it is always preferable that counselling and support be provided by those who understand the nature of domestic violence and GBV and have had experience and training to support those going through domestic violence situations.

Lawyers and the police: In almost all countries and states in the Pacific, domestic violence is a crime, and you can report it to the police. Even where domestic violence is not a specific crime, any form of physical assault is a crime and can be reported in all Pacific countries. Some countries, recognizing the sensitivities of this issue, now offer special services within police stations to help survivors. You can also consult a lawyer to understand your legal options for stopping your abuser.

Religious leaders: If you follow a religion, you may consider approaching people affiliated with the religion that you trust. Where a family attends religious activities together, there may be a chance of getting help for both partners. However, this will only be successful if both partners respect religious authority, and where the religion supports and recognizes the need for interventions in domestic violence situations. Some religious leaders place reconciliation of a relationship and maintenance of the family unit above the safety of individuals within that relationship. Many religious leaders in the Pacific understand the nature of domestic violence and provide support and in some cases counselling. It is always preferable that counselling and support is provided by those that understand the nature of domestic violence and GBV and have had experience and training supporting those going through domestic violence situations.

Persons with disabilities: It is known that persons with disabilities suffer higher rates of domestic violence. Persons with disabilities need specific assistance from Organisations of Persons with Disabilities and disability support groups such as sign language interpreters, peer support, counselling, accessibility of information and communication and other forms of assistance. The Pacific Disability Forum based in Suva, Fiji has a list of organisations that provide support resources for persons with disabilities suffering from violence. Please contact: **Pacific Disability Forum** – <http://www.pacificdisability.org/>.

MAKING A SAFETY PLAN

If you feel you are in danger, you may want to develop a plan to leave the house and take some or all of the following precautions:

- Have important phone numbers nearby (neighbours, relatives, friends, police, women's organisations, shelters, UN Department of Safety and Security, etc.).
- Think about how to get out of the house safely. Practice ways to go out during an emergency.
- Prepare an emergency bag with items you will need when you leave, such as extra clothes, important papers, money and prescription medications. Hide the bag in the home or leave it with a trusted neighbour, friend or relative. **Do not do this if it may put you at further risk – just leave if that is the best option. Remember that your safety, and that of your children is the most important consideration.**
- Know exactly where you will go and how to get there, even if you have to leave in the middle of the night.

Keep in mind that abusers may become more violent when “challenged” by a woman's decision to leave. Remember that the time of leaving is the most dangerous time for a woman in an abusive relationship. Even the discovery that she has read materials on domestic violence or contacted support services may trigger a response. It may be necessary to take extra precautions to prevent the abuser from knowing your plans in advance, or to ensure that you have the support of other people who can intervene to control the abuser's behaviour – such as supportive family members or the police.

If you decide to leave, even for a very short time, take your children with you, if that is possible and you can do so without exposing them to harm or risk of harm.

LEGAL SOLUTIONS

In many Pacific Island countries, there is not a sufficient number of lawyers or legal services which are well versed in domestic violence. Legal Aid offices provide support for domestic violence in some countries while some NGOs such as women's crisis centres also provide free legal aid. These are often the best equipped and trained to support you. For a list of available services, please see the Resources Section (p. 29).

Some typical legal means to stop domestic violence include:

A restraining order (RO), sometimes called a protection order (PO): Restraining or protection orders are issued by magistrates' courts, village or island courts, the Police, and in some instances are issued by community people who are appointed to issue short term orders. The orders have conditions which include prevention of: contact, further violence, removal of weapons and short-term maintenance and custody orders. You may need to explain that you fear serious results will come from the abuse, based on what has happened in the past. It can help to have evidence that you have been abused, including photos of injuries, and any past medical or police reports. You will be able to have an order issued if there is no evidence of harm, but the order will be for the short term. If the abuser violates the order, he may be arrested. This does not deter some: restraining orders/protection orders can be very helpful, but are not a watertight guarantee **against continued violence.**

Criminal charges: Some criminal justice systems punish abusers for committing a crime, and for injuring you, threatening to injure you, or committing other offences such as damaging your property. The abuser could go to prison, be fined or both. Under many legal systems, charges are filed with the police, who may then arrest the abuser.

Separation: For married couples, a legal separation, filed in court, is usually a temporary measure that may allow orders to be made for maintenance, and residence as well as contact when children are involved. Parties often choose separation orders when they are not yet ready to divorce which is called a “cooling-off” period. During this time, the couple can decide if it would be better to live apart permanently and perhaps seek counselling. In some Pacific jurisdictions, parties who apply to courts for dissolution of a marriage must show the court that they have attempted to seek counselling and it has not been successful.

Divorce: This permanently dissolves a marriage. If children are involved, apart from the divorce order, there may be orders for residence, contact, maintenance and distribution of matrimonial property. Divorce usually includes a legal decision about their custody and maintenance, as well as legal decisions regarding property and financial settlements.

Civil damages: Under some legal systems, survivors of violence may be able to sue the perpetrator for compensation for medical expenses, damaged property, income loss, and/or pain and suffering. The court may then order the perpetrator to pay money to the survivor. This option is probably desirable only if it is clear that the marriage or partnership is going to end or has already ended.

HELP FOR CHILDREN

No matter how caring a parent you are, at some level your partner’s violence may hinder your ability to do your best for your children. Sadly, in this situation, your children are likely to need your care and attention more than ever. Until you can get the help you need to make yourself safe, your children cannot feel safe or happy knowing that their mother or primary caretaker is being hurt. Remember your safety and children’s are connected – and violence has lasting impacts on your children’s health and well-being.

The following suggestions may assist you in caring for your children and making choices about your situation. Please note that in the Pacific, many women’s crisis centres also cater for children. In some countries, there are children’s telephone “help lines” and some countries have specialist care for children. Please see the resources pages for more information.

Seek the help you need – the resources page at the end of this booklet may offer some starting points. There may be organisations that support children that you or your colleagues know that also may be able to offer assistance.

Even though your children may not have been in the room when violence occurred, they will be able to sense the atmosphere, so if you can, **explain to them what is happening.**

- **Tell them the violence is not their fault.** No one deserves abuse.
- **Try not to make promises that you cannot keep,** such as “This will never happen again,” or “I promise no one will ever hurt you.”
- **Let them know it is not their role to protect you.** Tell them it’s not their job to protect anyone besides themselves in this situation. Discuss with them “safety” situations where they have the responsibility to each other and their friends.
- **Respect and accept that children may have conflicting feelings about their parents.** A child may love the abusive parent, resent the survivor for “being weak” or for not protecting them, or feel guilty for not protecting the survivor.
- **Help children make safety plans.** Brainstorm with them about exit routes, safe places to seek shelter and emergency phone numbers.
- **Give children the opportunity to talk** about their feelings with a trustworthy, sympathetic adult (for example a professional counsellor, relative or friend).

- **Seek counselling and support groups** for yourself and your children.
- If you plan on filing for a separation or divorce, **tell your children of your plans for the future** – if it is safe to do so.
- **If you leave your home, try and take some favourite toys** and some of your children's other treasured belongings – but only if it is safe to do so.
- **Seek legal advice** about the custody of your children.
- **Teach conflict resolution skills.** Show your children that violence is not the way to solve problems. Encourage your children to interact with other children.

HELP FOR THE ABUSER

A perpetrator of abuse can step outside the cycle of violence, but this requires a process of self-examination to understand why he reacts in such a way and to acknowledge how devastating his actions can be to other people. He will need to change patterns of behaviour based on relating to others through the exertion of power and control or violence. Most importantly, he will need to let go of his sense of entitlement.

Some perpetrators can benefit from counselling, which can help them understand why they are violent and teach them how to control their anger. Change does not come quickly or easily, however. Even when abusers say that they want to stop and they get help, it does not guarantee that they will stop abusing. Under all circumstances, the proof must be in actions, not just words.

In the Pacific, there are some counselling services for perpetrators of violence. Please see the Resources Section for services. It is critical when discussing violence that men and boys are engaged in these discussions. Addressing GBV is not the sole responsibility of women, – it will require positive actions from all family, community and society members to address violence.

CHAPTER 6

I THINK SOMEONE IS BEING ABUSED – HOW CAN I HELP?

Many domestic violence survivors either don't know whom to turn to or have had bad experiences when they've reached out for help.

How can you know if someone is being abused?

One of the common myths about abused women is that they don't want to talk about their experience. While many make efforts to hide the abuse, they often do so because they fear being embarrassed, their partner finding out, being blamed, not being believed, or being pressured to do something they are not ready or able to do.

If you are concerned about a friend or colleague, finding a private space to talk, in a non-judgemental manner and without pressure, about whether or not she is in danger and needs help is one option. However, you must keep in mind you have to be very careful in approaching colleagues regarding this matter at the workplace as this is a very private, delicate matter which most persons would not want to discuss with colleagues, as they might also fear that this information is shared with others at the workplace. In many cultural contexts, women may only feel comfortable being approached about this issue by another woman.

Please be mindful that the Pacific – which is a very close society where relationships are very critical and populations/communities are very small – that “closeness” may be an additional barrier to disclosing abuse. Fear of gossip, disclosure to relatives and family members (extended) and fear of judgement inhibit women from seeking help.

If specific observations are the source of your concern, such as visible bruises or frequent absenteeism, you might say something like, “I noticed ‘x, y and z’. I’m concerned about you, and wonder if there is something I can do to help.” Or, “It seems like you’re stressed out and unhappy. If you want to talk about it now or some other time, I’ll keep it between us.”

The employer can also assist by providing leaflets with information about available services, including counselling for survivors of VAW in the restrooms or have experienced women's organisations come to the office and organize sessions about various forms of VAW to the staff.

BE PREPARED TO RESPOND SUPPORTIVELY IF SOMEONE DISCLOSES

Educate yourself about domestic and other forms of violence. Read this booklet, and understand what domestic violence is, how you can recognize it and its impacts. Find out about what services are available to help survivors.

Let go of any expectations you have that there is a quick fix to domestic violence or to the obstacles a survivor faces. Understand that inaction may be her best safety strategy at a given time.

Challenge and change any inaccurate attitudes and beliefs that you may have about survivors of domestic violence. They are not abused because there is something wrong with them. Instead, they have become trapped in a relationship by their partners' use of violence and coercion. The better you are to recognize and build on the resilience, courage, resourcefulness and decision-making abilities of abused women, the better you will be to help them.

On average a survivor of violence will attempt to leave a relationship 6-8 times before she is finally able to leave.

SOME IMPORTANT 'DO'S' WHEN PROVIDING HELP

- **Believe her** – and let her know that you believe her. If you know her partner, remember that abusers most often behave differently in public than they do in private.
- **Listen to what she tells you.** If you actively listen, ask clarifying questions, and avoid making judgements, you will most likely learn directly from her what it is she needs.
- **Help her build on her strengths.** Based on the information she gives you and your own observations, actively identify the ways in which she has developed coping strategies, solved problems, and exhibited courage and determination, even if her efforts have not been completely successful. Help her build on these strengths.
- **Validate her feelings.** It is common for women to have conflicting feelings – love and fear, guilt and anger, hope and sadness. Let her know that her feelings are normal and reasonable.
- **Avoid survivor-blaming.** Tell her the abuse is not her fault. Reinforce that the abuse is her partner's problem and his responsibility but refrain from bad-mouthing him.
- **Take her fears seriously.** If you are concerned about her safety, express your concern without judgement by simply saying, "Your situation sounds dangerous, and I'm concerned about your safety."
- **Offer help.** As appropriate, offer specific forms of help and information. If she asks you to do something you're willing and able to do, do it. If you can't or don't want to, say so and help her identify other ways to meet her needs. Then look for other ways that you can help.
- **Support her decisions.** Remember there are risks attached to every decision an abused woman makes. If you truly want to be helpful, be patient and respectful of a woman's decisions.

WHAT CAN A UN OFFICE DO?

The resources available in individual UN offices will differ by country. Senior managers; operations staff, including those working on human resources; and staff association officers should check their organisation's policies for details, and consider the options in the following general areas listed below. Additionally, the UN Department of Safety and Security has developed UN Aide Memoire: Immediate Response to GBV Incidents for Fiji, Samoa and Solomon Islands, which has guidance for how UNDSS and senior managers can support UN personnel and their dependents. Additional Aide Memoires are expected to be developed for other Pacific countries in the future.

Finding a secure and accessible location: If the survivor's and/or their dependants' safety is at risk then an immediate referral (based on the survivor's consent or the best interest of the child) may be necessary:

- If the survivor wishes to pursue police action, refer and accompany the survivor to the police. If it is a person with disability, and the person gives their consent, seek support from an Organisation of Persons with Disabilities for the additional appropriate support needed.
- If the survivor is in immediate danger, refer and accompany the survivor to a safe house/shelter for assistance and support. Options considered for safe locations may include the following: staying with other family members or friends, hotel, or the affected person/s residence.

Please check the resources page for a list of possible legal support in your country.

- **Financial support.** The cost of dealing with domestic abuse can be high for an individual. Expenses can include legal advice, counselling, a possible change in residence, and so on. Flexible salary advances or local staff association loan programmes may be sources of extra funds.
- **Flexible leave and Flexitime arrangements.** Staff may be called suddenly to their home, court, lawyers etc. They may need personal time off to spend with family/friends in coping with their situation. Flexitime arrangements might suit staff members who have had to relocate and need to be home for a short time. Working out a plan with staff for flexible working arrangements or leave where there is a mutual understanding of responsibilities is very useful in these situations.
- **Health and sick leave.** Staff members going through domestic abuse may need support with sick leave arrangements. Sick leave needs to also be considered for staff members going through emotional/psychological stress in order to address mental health issues. Domestic abuse is a health and safety issue, and should be treated as such when considering leave arrangements.
- **Workload.** A staff member suffering from domestic abuse will carry a huge burden of stress, may be distracted and emotionally depressed, and may not sleep or eat adequately. They will probably not be able to cope as effectively as usual in their work. This is especially true if the person becomes embroiled in a protracted legal battle or the relationship is particularly violent. The staff member may need to explore with her supervisor whether it is possible to lighten her workload or reassign her temporarily.
- **Personal and office security.** If a relationship has turned unpredictable and violent for either the staff member or one of their registered dependents, UNDSS can advise on personal security until the threat diminishes. (Note: per the Fiji Aide memoire, UNDSS should do this if requested by the staff member.)
- **Office security plans are also needed.** For all offices, there should be a security plan which ensures that all staff are safe. In the case of domestic abuse – being alerted to harassment at the office including constant telephone calls, visits and interruptions at work are part of the abuse cycle. The office can put in place a security plan that blocks out this form of harassment; ensuring that all staff are kept safe.

- **Counselling.** Most offices have established referral systems for basic counselling. Counselling options that focus specifically on domestic violence can be added, including those services that may have links to legal advice and law enforcement.
- **Access to transport.** Mobility can be an important component of dealing with domestic violence. Survivors may need transport to seek counselling or legal support, or to move to another location temporarily or permanently. Since transportation systems can be unreliable or costly as well as time consuming for the staff member (and organisation), the office may consider offering transport when it does not affect programme activities.
- **Information and awareness raising.** A referral list of resources for survivors of domestic violence can be made available and possibly posted on a staff bulletin board or in a common area. (Refer to Resources page of this booklet). Other documents in the office, including this booklet may also assist staff in better understanding the issue of domestic violence. Staff should be made aware of the UN Aide Memoire: Immediate Response to GBV Incidents that is mentioned in this document. These should be part of staff orientation programmes, and publicly pointed out so that all staff are aware of them.

The UN can also engage staff in UN learning events on domestic violence and other forms of GBV to continue to build their understanding and capacity of violence and what they can do to prevent it and take action when it occurs.

CHAPTER 7

RECOVERY

If you are a survivor of domestic violence who has begun to address your situation, you are on the road to recovery. The process of reorientation to life without abuse takes a different course for each individual. Most survivors can expect to pass through a period not only of physical changes, such as moving to a new home, but of strong psychological and emotional challenges as well. Some survivors experience flashbacks to traumatic events that they were not able to mentally integrate when they took place. There may be waves of anger, grief, shame and fear.

These are normal reactions. As long as they diminish over time, they are signs that healing is taking place and that you are leaving the past behind.

As you pass through this period, you can do many things to support yourself. Start or continue counselling, if that is appropriate, especially if you are feeling “stuck” and unable to move on. Look for a support group of other people who have had similar experiences, or read materials on domestic violence so that you can begin to understand the phenomenon and know you are not alone. Many resources are now available on the internet.

Try to maintain routines and structures in your daily life, including through regular hours for eating, sleeping and working. Set achievable personal goals and work towards them, in the process rebuilding your confidence and self-esteem. Nurture and care for yourself and give yourself time to sort through the many confusing and damaging messages your abuser may have left with you.

CULTIVATING NEW WAYS OF THINKING

The following list of reminders may help:

- I am not to blame for being abused.
- I am not the cause of another's irritation, anger or rage.
- I deserve a life free from violence, fear and pain.
- I can say no to what I do not like or want.
- I do not have to take abuse. I have a right to a life of security and dignity.
- I am an important human being.
- I am a worthwhile person.
- I deserve to be treated with respect.
- I have power over my own life.
- I can use my power to take good care of myself.
- I can decide for myself what is best for me.
- I can make changes in my life if I want to.
- I am not alone; I can ask others to help me.
- I am worth working for and changing for.
- I deserve to make my own life safe and happy.
- I can count on my creativity and resourcefulness.

~ Adapted from Stopping Wife Abuse by Jennifer Baker Fleming

RESOURCES SECTION

This section sets out resources that will be useful both for information, learning and training, as well as information about services available for the Pacific region.

SERVICE RESOURCES SECTION – PACIFIC RESOURCES BY COUNTRY

Country	Type of service	Name of the organisation/ department	Details of the services provided	Contact Information
COOK ISLANDS		Punanga Tauturu Women's Counselling Centre	Opening hours: 9 am – 4 pm, Mon – Fri	Address: Behind the Dental Clinic in Tupapa Phone: 21133
FEDERATED STATES OF MICRONESIA				
Pohnpei State	Gender Lead	National State Government		Stuard Penias: SPenias@fsmhealth.fm
	GBV Referral Line Supervisor	Department of Social Affairs	GBV Referral Line	Noriekka Lekka: Imteteth@gmail.com
	Referral Line Lead and Gender Focal Officer	National State Government	GBV Referral Line	Katsandra Shed: katsshed@gmail.com ; kshed@fsmhealth.fm
	Women's Safe Space	National State Government	Pohnpei Women's Safe Space	Coordinator Lululeen Santos: pniwomeninterest@gmail.com
Chuuk State	Counselling Referrals	Chuuk Women's Council (CWC) Tongen Inepwineu Counselling Centre	Counselling & advocacy 24-hour counselling line Referrals and accompany	Address: Shinobu M. Poll Memorial Center Nepukos Village, Weno Island, Chuuk State Landline: +691 330-3657 Email: ticc.gbc.cwc@gmail.com 24-hour counselling lines: +691 9303495 / 9303492
FIJI	Crisis counselling	Fiji Women's Crisis Centre	Counselling, case management, referral, temporary shelter and legal information	Address: 88 Gordon Street Suva City, Central 24-hour counselling lines: 331 3300/920 9470 Website: www.fijiwomen.com Toll free domestic violence line: 1560 Email: fwcc@connect.com.fj

Phone: 21133	Type of service	Name of the organisation/ department	Details of the services provided	Contact Information
FIJI	Sexual Reproductive Health/Post Rape Care	Medical Service Pacific	Counselling, Sexual Reproductive Health/ Post Rape Care	Address: 355 Waimanu Road, Suva Phone: 363 0108/ 354 8062/ Website: info@misp.org.fj Child helpline: 1325
	General Counselling	Empower pacific	Counselling	Address: 2nd Floor Meghji Arjun Building, 157 Vitogo Parade, Lautoka City Phone: 665 0482/831 8515 Toll free line: 5626
	Protection and safety	Fiji Police Force	Assist in application for restraining order, Prosecute report and complaints	Address: Totogo Police station Suva central Phone: 338 4000
KIRIBATI	Crisis Counselling	Kiribati Women and Children Support Centre	Counselling, case management and referrals	Address: Bairiki, Tarawa Phone: 750-21000
	Protection and Safety	Kiribati Police Service	Domestic Violence and Sexual offences Unit	Address: Betio, Tarawa Phone: 26487
MARSHALL ISLANDS	Counseling Referrals	Women United Together Marshall Islands (WUTMI)	Counselling & advocacy 24-hour counselling line Referrals and accompany	Address: PO Box 195, Majuro Phone: +692 625-4296 E-mail: wutmi@ntamar.net 24-hour counselling lines: +692 455-1724 / 456-1724
NAURU		Nauru National Council of Women		Address: Healthy Island Promotion Center Public Health Building, Denig District Phone: +674 444 3883 ext. 115 or 444-3881
	Safe House	Women's Affairs and Social Development Affairs	Safe House	Livai Sovau: livaisovau@gmail.com
		Women's Affairs and Social Development Affairs		Safe House Counsellor Marjorie Karl: marjoriedada.sam54@gmail.com
NIUE				Emergency phone number: Police 999
PALAU	Gender Officer	Government		Tkaki Mekreos: tmekreos.mcca.rop@gmail.com
SAMOA	Safety and security	Samoa Police	Assistance in accessing protection and making formal report of crime	Address: Ififi St, Apia Police Headquarters Phone: 22 222
	Health service	Samoa Health Care Medical Clinic		Address: Mulivai, Apia Phone: 32630/32631

Country	Type of service	Name of the organisation/ department	Details of the services provided	Contact Information
SOLOMON ISLANDS	Crisis Counselling	Family Support Centre	Crisis counselling, case management, legal advice and representation	Address: Outback building on Rove Highway beside the children's park Phone: 26999/20619 After hours mobile: 20619 Email: fsc@solomon.com.sb
	Emergency shelter	Christian care Centre	Temporary shelter, Faith based pastoral counselling, and referral	Address: Tenaru, with small office in Point Cruz, at Patteson House Phone: 23363 Mobile: 7418842/7651223 Email: ccc@solomon.com.sb
	Health Service	National Referral Hospital		Phone: 23600 ext.313 or 244
	Protection and safety	Royal Solomon Islands police force	Assist in application for protection order, Prosecute report and complaints	Address: Police Headquarters, Rove, Honiara Family violence unit: 28275 Mobile: 7472126 Police call centre: 999
TOKELAU				Emergency phone numbers: Police: 111 Medical: 111
TONGA	Reporting Crime	Central Police Station	Assistance in accessing protection order, making formal report of crime	Address: Central Police Station Nuku'alofa Phone: 7401630 Toll free line: 922
	Legal information and representation	Family protection Legal Aid centre	Legal advice, Legal representation in court on FPA matters and other allied family laws including criminal and land matters for DV and gender-based violence eligible clients	After hours hotline number: +676 26388
	Health Services	Vaiola Hospital		Dr. 'Ana 'Akaula Medical Superintendent/ Radiologist Specialist Address: Vaiola Hospital. P O Box 59, Tofoa, Nuku'alofa Phone: +679 7400200 ext. 1465 (work) Email: akauolaana@gmail.com Toll free line: 933

Country	Type of service	Name of the organisation/ department	Details of the services provided	Contact Information
TONGA	Crisis counselling centre	Women and children's crisis centre	Counselling, case management, referrals and temporary shelter	Address: Ground Floor Tungi Colonnade Building, Taufa'ahau Rd, Nuku'alofa Phone: +676 22240 24 hour Toll Free line: 0800444
	Crisis counselling centre	Tonga National Centre for Women and Children	Counselling and referrals	Toll Free Domestic Violence helpline: +676 77856
TUVALU		Social Welfare Department		Director Ms Lanny Faleasiu: lannytv@gmail.com
	Counselling coordination	Social Welfare Department	Counselling referrals	Maryanne Togia: togiamaryanne@gmail.com
VANUATU	Crisis Counselling	Vanuatu Women's centre	Crisis counselling, case management and referrals	Address: Rue d'Aniou, Nambatu, Port Vila Phone: 25764 Toll free line: 161

* There are no specialized national hospitals in the Pacific which can provide medical services to VAW survivors. It would be the best option for UN staff to first approach emergency units of general hospitals or the UN physician when in need of medical services after having experienced VAW. This applies to Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru, Palau, Tokelau, and Tuvalu.

INFORMATION RESOURCES – PACIFIC

UNICEF. Caring for Us - Dealing with Domestic Violence, 2006

UNICEF. Regional Summary of the Kiribati, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and Fiji Child Protection Baseline reports, 2008.

UN Women and UNFPA. Essential Services for Women and Girls Subject to Violence, 2014. <http://www.unwomen.org/~media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2014/brief-essential%20services-web.pdf>.

WHO. Responding to intimate partner violence and sexual violence against women: WHO clinical and policy guidelines, 2013.

World Health Organization/London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. Preventing intimate partner and sexual violence against women: taking action and generating evidence. (World Health Organization, Geneva, 2010).

UNFPA. A Deeper Silence: The Unheard Experiences of Women with Disabilities and Their Sexual and Reproductive Health Experiences: Kiribati, the Solomon Islands and Tonga (Spratt, Joanna M / United Nations Population Fund Pacific Sub-Regional Office, Suva, Fiji, 2013).

UNICEF and UNFPA. Harmful Connections: Examining the relationship between violence against women and violence against children in the South Pacific, 2015.

FSM Department of Health and Social Affairs. (2014). Federated States of Micronesia Family Health and Safety Study.

Ma'a Fafine mo e Famili. (2012), National Study on Domestic Violence against Women in Tonga.

Ministry of Health, Cook Islands, (2014). The Cook Islands Family Health and Safety Study.

Nauru Ministry of Home Affairs, (2014). Nauru Family Health and Support Study.

Palau Ministry of Health, (2014). Belau Family Health and Safety Study.

Republic of Marshall Islands. (2014). The RMI Family Health and Safety Study.

Secretariat of the Pacific Community. (2009). The Solomon Islands Family Health and Safety Study.

Secretariat of the Pacific Community. (2010). The Kiribati Family Health and Support Study.

Vanuatu Women's Centre. (2011). The Vanuatu National Survey on Women's Lives and Family Relationships.



A RESOURCE BOOK ABOUT
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
FOR UN STAFF IN THE PACIFIC