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Why Don't They Just Leave?

A Stronger Me: Online Resources Dedicated to Support Survivors of Domestic Violence

Kori Davey, Paralegal Studies

01. Introduction

Approximately 6.2 million women aged 15 and older in Canada have reported experiencing some form of violence in intimate relationships (Government of Canada, 2025). However, domestic violence remains one of the least reported crimes to the police. Victims face significant barriers when trying to access the justice system and necessary resources, making it challenging for them to rebuild their lives after leaving their partners or while attempting to do so.

Reason Behind Our Logo

The Lotus flower represents strength and new beginnings. It has long been admired for its ability to remain unsullied and has become a symbol of remaining pure at heart and mind, regardless of its roots or context, and for striving to rise above it all. Despite its muddy and murky environment, the Lotus is resilient and continues to bloom.



02. Objective

My mission is to **Educate, Encourage, and Empower** survivors of domestic violence by offering accessible online resources to help them navigate the legal system within Alberta. Furthermore, I provide information for friends and family of domestic violence victims, enabling them to identify the signs of abuse and offer their support.

03. Types of Violence

- **Physical:** Any intentional, unwanted contact with you or something close to your body, or any behaviour that causes or has the intention of causing you injury, disability, or death. Examples include scratching, throwing items at you, or preventing you from leaving.
- **Neglect:** Failing to provide necessary care, assistance, guidance or attention that causes, or is reasonably likely to cause physical, mental or emotional harm or substantial damage to or loss of assets. It can be active (intentional) or passive through a lack of knowledge or experience.
- **Economic:** Economic abuse involves using money to control your current and future actions and your freedom of choice, such as preventing you from obtaining or maintaining employment or using your good credit to take out loans in your name.
- **Spiritual:** Using faith, religion, or beliefs to gain control over you. For example, preventing you from practicing your religion of choice, insulting your spiritual beliefs, or using their religion or beliefs to manipulate and shame you.
- **Sexual:** Any actual or threatened sexual contact without consent, such as unwanted touching, rape, exposure of genitals or making you view pornography against your will.
- **Coercive Control:** A strategic form of ongoing oppression intended to instill fear. This can include isolating you, malicious and frequent criticism and reinforcing traditional gender roles.
- **Emotional:** The intentional use of words or actions to manipulate, hurt, or frighten you. They are intended to break down your self-esteem and self-worth and create a psychological dependency on the abuser.
- **Technology-Facilitated:** Involves the use of digital tools to monitor, stalk, control, or harass you. Examples include obsessively checking your location, monitoring your communications and installing surveillance and recording devices in your home.

04. Obstacles

- **Fear:** Research shows that a woman is most at risk for physical harm and death at the time of leaving an abusive partner, or in the short period after she leaves.
- **Finances:** The victim may have reduced income or financial dependency on the abusive person.
- **Children:** A person may stay in a violent relationship for the sake of their children, believing they are better off with both parents.
- **Lack of support:** Being in an abusive relationship can be very isolating, and the person may not feel they have the necessary support from family or friends to take steps to leave.
- **Manipulation:** The person causing harm may threaten to hurt themselves, the person experiencing abuse or their children if the relationship ends.
- **Normality:** Over time, the victim most likely has become accustomed to the violent and abusive behaviour, making this environment their "normal".
- **Love:** The person experiencing abuse may want the abuse to stop but not the relationship to end.

"It is only later [in the relationship], when the door to your home is locked, that you really start to learn what power and control look and feel like. That is when you learn that 'I'll always look after you,' 'I'll never let you go,' and 'You're mine for life' can sound menacing, and are used as a warning over and over again."

—MP Rosie Duffield during the second reading of Domestic Abuse Bill (October 2019)

05. Statistics

- Roughly 24 people *per minute* experience some type of intimate partner violence in Canada.
- Every 6 days in Canada, a woman is killed by either her current or former intimate partner.
- Up to 60% of intimate partner violence perpetrators also abuse children in the household.
- Women who live in rural or remote locations face a 75% higher chance of experiencing intimate partner violence than their urban counterparts. Of these women, 73% report they are at severe or extreme danger of being killed.
- From 2018 to 2023, police reported family violence cases rose 17% and intimate partner violence rose 13%.
- The highest rate of police-reported intimate partner violence in 2023 was among women and girls aged 12 to 24 years (752 per 100,000 population). This rate is nearly 7 times higher than that for men and boys of that age group (111 per 100,000).

Intimate Partner Violence Victims

