

Violence Against Women

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Violence against women, also known as gender-based violence are acts primarily committed against women and girls, mainly because they are female. Violence against woman include violence that result in, or are likely to result in, physical, sexual, psychological or economic harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, whether occurring in public or in private.

Violence against women are a violation of human rights. Violence against women often keeps women from wholly contributing to the social, economic, and political development of their communities.

Here are a few examples of violence and the ages at which it typically happens:

- Pre-birth - Sex-selective abortion
- Infancy - Physical, sexual and psychological abuse
- Girlhood - Child marriage; female genital mutilation; physical, sexual and psychological abuse; child prostitution and pornography
- Adolescence & Adulthood - Dating violence; sexual abuse in the workplace; rape; sexual harassment; forced prostitution and pornography; psychological abuse; forced pregnancy
- Elderly - Sexual, physical and psychological abuse

Violent acts against women are happening on a a daily basis, it is therefore important to know what to do and where to go for help if one are a victim or witness to violence. Violence against woman are most often committed by someone that the woman knows.

Violence against women can come in different forms:

Domestic violence

Women are commonly victimized by someone that they are intimate with, such as a spouse. Domestic violence includes any kind of violence, such as physical, sexual, psychological, or emotional violence. Injuries can range from bruises, cuts and fractures to miscarriages and vision or hearing loss. It is extremely difficult to report this to the police, but very necessary to do so in order to protect yourself and get out of a toxic and potentially harmful relationship. Domestic violence can lead to serious injury and even death.



Violence affecting reproductive health

This is when you, as a woman, cannot make your own decisions with regards to your reproductive health. This can include various things like forced pregnancy, forced abortion, forced sterilization and genital mutilation.

Stalking

Stalking is the unwanted or obsessive attention by an individual or a group toward another person. Stalking can result in persistent harassment, intimidation and monitoring of the victim. Stalkers can be strangers or people that you know.

Harassment

Harassment includes any form of abusive, uninvited and unwelcome behaviour. Sexual harassment can include anything from comments to bullying and inappropriate promises of a sexual nature. It can be verbal or physical.

Human trafficking

Although human trafficking are not a very common subject of discussion, it is real and it happens in South Africa every day. Victims are usually taken to another country, without their consent, where they are forced into prostitution or labour. Human trafficking usually results in serious forms of abuse, such as physical or sexual violence, that affects their physical and mental health.

Genital Mutilation

Genital mutilation involves all procedures that partially or totally remove the external female genitalia. It also include any procedure that cause injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons. The procedure has no health benefit and result in severe bleeding, sepsis, urination problems, infections, complications during child birth, infertility and even death.

Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is when someone is intimidated or harassed through the use of social media. Never respond to these kind of messages. Most social media platforms have a 'block' function that will enable you to remove the person from your profile. It is furthermore extremely important to be cautious when it comes to giving out personal information via social media or meeting someone that you only spoke to via social media. Some profiles can be extremely miss leading. You can therefore put yourself in danger if you agree to meet the person.



Conclusion

The examples mentioned above are only some of the forms that violence against women can come in. Always be vigilant, find help and REPORT these crimes. Even if an officer of the law, like the police, commits these crimes, it is still a crime and should be reported!

You can report these crimes at a clinic or hospital to the social worker or at a police station to the police.

Victims of gender-based violence can also seek help at:

Safeline	0800 035 553 8am-3pm, Mon-Thurs 072 367 4588 24 hour, Crisis line	Abuse counseling, court preparation, group therapy.
Rape Crisis	021 447 9762 24 hour	Counseling and court support for rape survivors.
Stop Gender Violence	0800 150 150 24 hour, toll free	Support to victims of domestic violence.
Suicide Crisis Line	0800 567 567 8am-8pm Sms 31393 Counselor will call you	Any suicide related support.
Childline SA	0800 055 555 24 hour, toll free	Ages 0-16 years old who are in a crisis, abuse or at risk of abuse and violence.
Lifeline National Counseling Line	0861 322 322 24 hour, National helpline	Counseling for any life crisis and referral to relevant service.

