

THE DIFFERENT FORMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Each year, thousands of women living in Quebec are exposed to physical violence and this, at the hands of their partners. In addition to physical acts of violence, women can also be subjected to the following forms of violence: economic, psychological, verbal, and sexual. Because all forms of violence are destructive, the following article will explore this very important subject.

THE DIFFERENT FORMS OF VIOLENCE:

- ***You spend too much money. I'll take control of the finances.”
“Your job takes up all of your time. You should just stay home.”***

Through various means, the male aggressor will restrain a woman's financial autonomy as well as her capacity to make her own financial choices concerning herself and her children. He will place limits and constrain reasonable spending habits. In certain situations, he may even plot to place his victim in debt or make threats to do so in cases where she refuses to submit to his will. Women who are faced with the reality of economic violence may indeed hesitate in leaving their partners for fear that they and their children, will find themselves in a financially unstable or even impoverished situation.

- ***“When I met you, you were nothing. And still today, you are nothing without me.”
“Look at how you're dressed, you look like a prostitute.”***

When making humiliating as well as degrading statements, such as those mentioned above, the male aggressor will attack and demean a woman's physical appearance, intelligence, capacity as a mother, etc. Because psychological violence transmits a message of incompetence, a consequence of such violence is that a woman's self esteem and self confidence will be seriously compromised.

- ***“If you leave me, you'll never see the children again”
“No one will ever believe you”***

Such statements, whether they be shouted or expressed in a sarcastic tone, are made by the male aggressor with the intention to establish a climate of tension where he can achieve in creating and maintaining a state of fear, insecurity and helplessness within his victim. The occurrence of verbal violence paralyzes a woman and can lead her to modify her behaviours in hopes of avoiding violent episodes.

- ***The following, are just a few examples of sexual violence: refusing to wear a condom, being obliged to view pornographic films, being forced to submit to sexual act(s), etc.***

Of all the different forms of violence, sexual violence is the least denounced. It is only in recent times, in 1983 precisely, that a wife being raped by her husband was recognised to be a criminal offence. According to a 1998 study conducted in Quebec, 128 000 women declared being victims of at least one occurrence of sexual violence during a period of twelve months.

- ***The following, are just a few examples of physical violence: spitting in one's face, pulling one's hair, biting, shoving, punching, etc.***

Physical violence and threats of such violence have the same intention as all the other forms of violence, which is the intention of the aggressor to control and maintain power over his victim and this at all costs.

**You can also contact the following organisation for referral services:
SOS Violence Conjugale: 1-800-363-9010**

**And, if there is a threat of, or an actual occurrence of violence:
Please contact 911.**

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