

S P R I N G 2 0 1 8

# Inside Trauma

Spring 2018 Edition

## A Word from the Editor

Since 2015 when Rosie Batty was announced Australian of the year, and even before that, Australia has been campaigning for awareness of Domestic Abuse. Awareness of Domestic Abuse has been seen on our TV screens with Ads such as 'Call it Out' and 'Stop it at the Start' aiming to educate the population through a short 30 second window. Helplines such as 1800 RESPECT being advertised for those who need it to provide counseling and support for those who are in a difficult situation.

This increase awareness has opened the eyes of Australian's to the extent of the problem that is Domestic Violence. Affecting 1 in 4 women and 1 in 7 men, not to mention the devastating impact it can have on children whether they are physically involved or not, psychologists need to be prepared to work with clients who have been exposed to such trauma in their lives. This edition aims to provide a little more insight into the effects of Domestic Violence on all involved.

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P: (03) 9205 9488  
E: [reception@traumacentre.com.au](mailto:reception@traumacentre.com.au)

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## The Effects of Domestic Violence



Domestic violence is one of the major health and welfare concerns currently burdening Australia's culture and praxis. Whilst domestic violence affects all groups of people, the more commonly affected groups of people are generally women who are either, young, pregnant, disabled, and/or Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islanders. Approximately 1 in 3 women in Australia have experienced domestic violence since the age of 15. Moreover, Research by VicHealth has found that domestic violence is the leading contributor to death, disability and illness in women aged 15-44. And whilst the effects can be wide-ranging and profound, they are most often long-standing and contribute substantially towards the overall daily function of those inflicted.

Notwithstanding the finding from National Data On homicide, that approximately 1 woman a week is killed due to domestic violence, it is also crucial to acknowledge, that domestic violence has a profound, yet less noticeable impact on the physical and mental health of many victims. Women who have been exposed to violence have a greater risk of developing a range of health problems including stress, anxiety, depression, pain syndromes, phobias and somatic and medical symptoms (WHO, 2000). For example, Access Economics has estimated that nearly 18% of all depression experienced by women and 17% of all anxiety disorders experienced by women are related to domestic and family violence. They also experience poor physical health, and heightened propensities to engage in practices that are potentially harmful. For example, women and children fleeing familial violence are among the most likely to be at risk of homelessness, and are at much greater risk of suicide.

The dire need for direction and support for victims of domestic violence in Australia therefore stands as an urgent concern. Given the severity of these effects, it is crucial to acknowledge the importance of developing working methodologies towards diminishing the effects of domestic violence.

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*Dillion Fourie*



## How Domestic Violence Influences Children

Children are exposed to Domestic Violence in the home both as witnesses and as victims. The impact this exposure has on them can affect their future behaviour, development, relationships, emotions, learning, cognition and physical health.

A study by the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence (NCADV) in the USA found that boys who are exposed to Domestic Violence are twice as likely to abuse their partners than boys who are not exposed to it. They also found that girls who have a history of sexual or physical abuse are more likely to engage in risky behaviour and are more likely to binge eat and purge.

Further studies into over 2000 children

who had been exposed to Domestic Violence found that Domestic Violence is a primary factory in predicting future violent behaviour. A meta-analysis found that 67% of children exposed to Domestic Violence were at risk of a range of developmental and adjustment problems (Kitzman *et al.*, 2000). Another found that exposed children were more at risk of cognitive and behaviour problems as well as poor academic outcomes (Crooks *et al.*, 2003).

This research demonstrates that Domestic Violence significantly impacts the lives of those exposed for years to come.

If you or someone you know needs help call 1800 RESPECT.

*Emily Clinch*



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## Men and Domestic Violence

In the light of the Me Too Campaign, and the increase in publicity on sexual harassment, much of the focus on domestic violence has been targeted to women. While it is warranted, and women make up the majority of Domestic Violence victims, another side has remained silent and has been neglected for too long and needs to be acknowledged. Men also have a story and there is little information about their incidents as they are often unreported.

To grapple with a definition sees current abusers coming from a life where they were themselves abused. Lenore Walker's Theory encapsulates the cycle of abuse. We can observe the cycle in four stages

1. An abusive incident occurs
2. As tension develops between the abuser trying to contain their outbursts and the victim trying to 'maintain peace'
3. The make-up is where the abuser says sorry and gives affirmation to not repeat
4. The calm where parties act as nothing as happened

This cycle can be a revolving door and continuously reenacting the stages to the point that the victims develop trauma.

Men find it hard to see themselves as victims, often feeling that bettering is associated with women. There appears to be no validated instruments to select male victims, but surveys raise the impact of psychological abuse being associated with PTSD.

The questions arise that women are more likely to perpetuate psychological than physical aggression. Are men able to cry for help or are they too culturally contained by their beliefs and models?

*Peter Horton*



“Do not look for healing at the feet of those who broke you”

- Rupri Kaur

“You’ve already done the hardest part; you survived the trauma. You are much stronger than you think you are”

- Sarah Newman

“Don’t judge yourself by what others did to you”

- C. Kennedy

