



West Cork Whisper

WEST CORK WOMEN AGAINST VIOLENCE PROJECT NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 70

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introducing From Surviving to Thriving a new course from West Cork Women Against Violence



Are you a woman
parenting alone because
of domestic abuse?

Are you having to deal
with access issues
because of your ex?

Are you concerned
about the impact on
your children?

Do you feel that your
children are torn?

Are you trying to cope
with your own feelings
and issues as a parent?

West Cork Women Against Violence are running a programme specifically for women who are parenting alone after domestic abuse. 'From Surviving to Thriving' will look at:

- Understanding children's behaviours and responses to their experiences
- Emotional manipulation and control of children by ex-partners
- Access issues
- Continued control by abusive partners through use of the courts
- Managing and looking after both your children's and your own emotions and needs.

The course will provide:

- Sessions from experts on child psychology and family law
- Expertise on the dynamics and aftermath of domestic abuse
- Tools and information to help you manage and cope with emotions and needs
- Peer support
- Ongoing support from WCWAV.

Participants should:

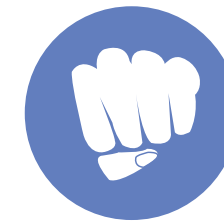
- Be living apart from their abusive partner
- Meet with WCWAV staff before enrolling in the programme
- Give a commitment to regular attendance to the programme.

WCWAV will:

- Support women to attend by looking at practical solutions to any childcare & transport needs
- Ensure that every woman who enrolls is given one-to-one support as needed to continue
- Endeavour to make the experience of working together on the programme a positive and empowering one for all involved.

If you think this course is for you and would like to know more, please contact 02753847 to speak to any of our staff or email admin@westcorkwomensproject.ie

digital and online abuse



WHAT IS DIGITAL AND ONLINE ABUSE (DOA)?

When we think of intimate partner violence, it is the traditional forms of abuse including physical, emotional and sexual that come to mind and we forget about digital and online abuse (DOA).

We now live in a world where technology forms a huge part of almost all people's lives. DOA is the use of technology such as texting and social networks to stalk, harass, bully or intimidate an ex or current partner. Abusers can vary this behaviour in severity and combine it with traditional stalking tactics including following, damaging property and abusive calls. It can also involve tricking either the woman or others into divulging information.

EXAMPLES OF DOA INCLUDE:

- Constantly texting you
- Stealing or tricking people into revealing passwords and other sensitive or security information
- Invasions of privacy like looking through your phone or social media
- Using online methods to monitor your behaviour
- Controlling who you can have contact with online
- Coercing you to send explicit images or videos and/or sending unwanted images to you
- Sending unwanted gifts to you
- Fraudulently impersonating you (on social media profiles, or to get loans for instance)
- Sending negative or threatening online messages
- Using their own online platforms to create false, harmful rumours about you. Changing your mobile phone contract
- Posting provocative comments online and encouraging others to send abuse to you
- Contacting friends and spreading lies to disrupt your relationships
- Causing problems for you at work

HOW DOES DIGITAL AND ONLINE ABUSE IMPACT WOMEN?

Just like any other type of abuse, DOA can cause harm in numerous ways as your privacy is invaded. You might experience loss of control over your life and a sense of helplessness. This creates anxiety and fear, with vast amounts of energy being spent on changing your routines. Damage to your reputation could be caused which can have a professional impact on your work life.

WHAT WAYS CAN DIGITAL AND ONLINE ABUSE OCCUR?

1 Cyberstalking - This form of DOA involves using technology to stalk a person as opposed to stalking them in real life. This can cause individuals considerable stress, trauma and can result in Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and physical illness. If you are a stalking victim and a domestic violence survivor, it is important to take extra precautions. Often an abuser has much more information about, and insight into, the victim. They may also have greater opportunity to access the victim, for example they may still reside together, or they may be separated but share friends, financial assets, or children.

2 Account access or takeovers - All of our online activity; email, shopping, social networks, banking and taxes all require passwords and people tend to use the same password. It's very easy for a partner to get access to your online world using your passwords.

3 Digital footprints and social networks - Every person using technology leaves 'digital footprints' which includes personal and financial information; our location, details of friends and much more. A perpetrator can use social networks, work websites etc to keep informed about our activities. The reason why it is so hard to protect people on social networks is because information leaks from the profiles of friends and family. Also, perpetrators can create fake profiles to contact us or use public pages relating to interests/activities we have (such as a soccer team) to identify our location.

4 Digital devices and mobile phones - Mobile phones, cameras, computers or tablets are a necessity for most of us, but many people don't realise that our location can be tracked by an abuser through these devices. This location information can be accessed by an application or stored within a picture. To explain, Google Maps uses location information to give us driving directions but in order to do that it has to know where you are. If an abuser has had access to your mobile phone, then they can download tracking software on it and access this to observe our location. When using an app that allows a person to "check in" to a location we need to be aware that if this is posted to a social media site any person can be aware of our location. It is also easy to share information accidentally if the option to add geolocation information to photos is not turned off (some default settings on phone increase risk for victims).

5 Computer Spyware - This spyware allows stalkers to control our computer, giving access to e-mails/passwords/ chat messages and access stored information. The perpetrator just has to trick us into opening an e-mail. The software is then installed by stealth on to the PC. It is often undetected by our anti-virus software.

WHAT CAN I DO IF I AM EXPERIENCING DIGITAL AND ONLINE ABUSE?

This behaviour by an individual is a crime.

- Monitor your online presence and be alert to any changes.
- Change all passwords to something only you know.
- It is critical to properly document any type of abuse including DOA. Go to www.techsafety.org/ for a detailed guide on how to document any type of DOA abuse. Evidence needs to be over a timeframe, possibly not from a once off occasion but will depend on the abuse.
- West Cork Women Against Violence Project have support workers available to create safety plans around online abuse and any other forms you may be experiencing. They are available to explore your options and answer any questions you may have. They are specialised in the area of domestic abuse with local knowledge of services.
- Gardaí can support you around both the logging of and the prosecution of online abuse.

For more information on how to stay safe the following resources are very helpful:

- 1 <https://www.womensaid.ie/help/digitalabuse.html>
- 2 <https://www.techsafety.org/>
- 3 http://www.loveisrespect.org/pdf/What_Is_Digital_Abuse.pdf

revenge pornography

It takes just four clicks to upload a photo on Facebook, less time than it takes to breathe in and out.

Revenge pornography (also known as non-consensual pornography) is the sharing (or threat of sharing) of photos or videos of a sexual nature of another person without their consent.

To quote Margaret Martin of Women's Aid "... *It's not revenge, it's not porn. It is abuse and this type of abuse is one of the deepest betrayals of trust by a boyfriend or ex.*"

This type of abuse can be a very upsetting experience for a woman, she may experience feelings of embarrassment guilt or shame. It is yet another example of power and control and is something we are seeing more of as part of the gendered abuse narrative.

Today the internet has made explicit photos easier to share and to a wider audience. Sexting (sending explicit photos) is now more common in relationships, sometimes people are pressurised or tricked into taking or sharing intimate photos which are then used for leverage or when a relationship breaks down. These could even be taken without a person's knowledge. Abusive partners or ex partners have also been known to advertise their partners on escort sites. If someone has distributed sexual images of you without your permission, your options include:

- Reporting it to Gardai
- Un tagging yourself if tagged
- Reporting it to the social media platform it is posted on and requesting they remove it
- If safe to do so, requesting that the person who posted it takes it down
- You may want to deactivate your social media accounts.
- Seek support for yourself from friends or family
- Contact a domestic violence agency for support
- Seek legal advice as it may be a breach of any Domestic Violence Orders that are in place.

There is currently no specific legislation to address non-consensual pornography in Ireland. It is currently covered by the definition of harassment in the Non Fatal Offences Against the Persons Act 1997.

The Harassment, Harmful Communications and Related Offences Bill, which provides for a six month prison sentence upon conviction, has recently been debated in the Dail.

This legislative change would create two new criminal offences, including making it illegal to intentionally post intimate images of a person online without their consent.

It would also extend the offence of harassment to ensure it includes activity online and on social media. And it would expand the offence of sending threatening or indecent messages to digital forms of communication.

It also seeks to protect against online harassment by recognising persistent communication about someone as well as directly to that person, which is often the case with cyber-bullying.

If you would like support in relation to an experience of Revenge Pornography, please contact WCWAV on 027 53847 Or 1800 203 136....or your local Domestic Violence agency.

He says I'm stupid... he doesn't like me going out with my friends.... he doesn't want my family over, he controls all the finances....keeps an eye on my phone AND HE TELLS ME IF I EVER LEAVE HIM HE WILL SEND EXPLICIT PICTURES OF ME to my friends and family

article derived from various sources including
1. Revenge Porn: When domestic Violence goes viral. Goldberg (2017),
2. Revenge Porn: What to do if it happens to you (Spun Out.ie),
3. For survivors of Domestic Violence Revenge Porn is the awful new norm, Conger (2018),
4. Has someone shared sexually explicit images of you without your consent-Womens Aid.ie

We need a protective services unit in West Cork

West Cork Women Against Violence has wholeheartedly supported the initiative taken by the West Cork Garda Division to establish a Protective Services Unit in our region.

Under the Garda Siochana Modernisation & Renewal Programme, such specialist units are recognised as the way forward in more effectively and sensitively responding and investigating offences such as sexual and domestic violence, child abuse, sex trafficking and other related matters. The Protective Services Unit is a place of safety and support for the victims of such crimes providing specialist Garda interviewers with access to other specialist support services like ours which victims may require.

These types of units and their approach have been operational for more than 20 years in other European jurisdictions and further afield. Ireland is already lagging behind in this respect. Here in West Cork, the West Cork Garda Division has been determined in its efforts to establish such a unit in our region. In this, it has the full support of our organisation. All of the various processes and steps necessary were put in place last year with a view to having the West Cork Protective Services Unit operational by the end of 2017. All that remains is for the Minister for Justice to give the instruction to release funds for the rental of the building to house the Unit. No explanation for his inaction in doing so and the failure to have the Unit opened as planned has been provided by the Minister. Several attempts in recent weeks to obtain a response from the Minister by local TD, Margaret Murphy O' Mahony have met with silence.

Victims of the kind of crimes which the Protective Services Unit are tasked with dealing are amongst the most vulnerable in our communities; children and individuals subjected to levels of fear and abuse that require our immediate concern and attention. In West Cork, we have shown a unity of purpose across all the relevant agencies and services to establish this most vital of responses to that need. West Cork Women Against Violence believes the Minister must show the same sense of purpose and concern by making the necessary arrangements to allow the Protective Services Unit to become an operational reality in West Cork. We have heard enough rhetoric- it is time for this government to show commitment to the victims of sexual exploitation and abuse.

Shown here are some pages from **View**, an online magazine which, in this issue, focused on Domestic Violence.



Published by a community & voluntary sector based in Northern Ireland, the magazine features many great articles, interviews and case studies. If you are interested in reading more, the magazine may be accessed through the link below.

https://issuu.com/brianpelanone/docs/view_latest-issue_46_domestic_viol

wonder

women of west cork

We are delighted to introduce a new regular column - **Women of West Cork**. Our first guest is **Mary-Louise Lynch**



Where are you from? I am originally from Dublin, I live in Schull in West Cork.

Job Title: Women's Studies MA Student, Mum of Three Boys.

What does your work entail? My Thesis is on Women's experience of the Family Law system in Ireland

Why and how did you get involved in West Cork Women Against Violence?

I originally came to the Women's project as a client, I had a Domestic Violence situation which I needed support through. I was very grateful for the service being there for me and I understand just how much a highly skilled staff means to Women in Crisis. From the moment a call is answered in the office to assigning a support worker to help me work out solutions to my problem and on to for me what has been the most valuable support, that of court accompaniment. I wanted to give back and helped with deliveries of the Whisper, I went to Service User focus groups and attended training seminars. Then I was asked to join the Board of Management and it is a privilege to serve amongst such a knowledgeable and devoted group of volunteers.

Since your first involvement with WCWAV do you feel things have improved for women experiencing DV?

I think that the current climate in the media is bringing the prevalence of Domestic Violence into the public arena. Domestic Violence services have advocated on behalf of women tirelessly for years and I have hope that their hard work is paying off. Raising awareness of Domestic Violence is a positive in the sense that we need to talk about it, so we can address it. Investment is still needed to support the Gardaí in this specialised area of sexual and gender-based crime investigation and prosecution. An up to date SAVI report would also go a long way to help quantify the problem and properly resource a collective solution. The Whisper keeps the public informed of the complexities involved in dealing with client needs and publishes up to date information regarding the law and Domestic Violence.

My belief is that along with empowering women as a society we should be calling out abusers. The secrecy of Domestic Abuse is one reason why it can go on for so long. I think that the more women are encouraged to speak out about their situations and seek help the sooner abusers will lose their grip on the women they abuse. In my time on the Board the service has expanded, so funding has been put in place to meet the needs of service users which is great. However, it seems that funding is being poured into supporting women and while empowerment is essential to help women come out of abusive situations in my view equally the solution lies in diagnosing perpetrators of abuse.

In England there is a law known as Clare's Law and I would like to see it introduced here. If someone has a record of Domestic Violence, their name is placed on an offenders list. Any woman with a suspicion about a new partner could look up this register and perhaps we might save more women from femicide.

How do you relax? Time with my family outdoors. Walking in general. Yoga. Meditation. I love a good film and never say no to nice food. Dreaming about all the things I'd love to do if I had more time. Reading, usually about inspirational women or strange relationships.

What changes would you most like to see for women? I would like to see dramatic changes in how we handle crimes against women as well as changes to the criminal justice system. I would like to see bodily autonomy for all women and girls recognised under Irish Law and implemented by our health services. I would like to see girls in Ireland encouraged to use their voice to be controversial and challenging as opposed to being good and subordinate. I would like to see women given the same rights as Fathers and Children in Irish Family Law and it is past time we women were removed from the domestic role enshrined in our constitution. I would like to see a revolution in the Irish Family Law system which is not fit for purpose. I do not agree with the In-Camera rule, I am a firm believer in transparency. I would like to see less women and children coming through domestic violence and homelessness services and more accountability for the abusers and systems that create these situations. I would also like to see women in sport and adventure pursuits rewarded with the same dignity and financial gain as their male counterparts. The more role models we have for our girls the less chance they will accept small lives or put the pursuits of men above their own.

At the seventh World Congress on Women's Mental Health held in Dublin in 2017, Dr. Dainius Puras, the UN special rapporteur on Mental Health said the main issue with women's mental health "Is not a chemical imbalance but a power imbalance." This is precisely the change I would like to see for women especially victims of Domestic Violence.

We all have
Wonderwoman
inside us

Diane Von Furstenberg



NEW CLONAKILTY OUTREACH SERVICE

From April 2018, West Cork Women Against Violence will be operating a weekly Outreach Service in Clonakilty where women in the area can arrange to meet with one of our support workers to talk through their situation and receive information and support.

Anyone wanting to avail of the Clonakilty Outreach Service should call our Bantry office 02753847 to make an appointment with the Support Worker in Clonakilty. This service is by appointment only.

Our Skibbereen outreach service is open on Fridays from 11:00 am to 2.00 pm.



cork

West Cork Women Against Violence
Freephone 1800 203 136

Cuanlee Refuge, Cork
021 427 7698

Free Legal Aid Clinic
Locall 1890 350 259
Information and referral

IRD Duhallow Domestic Violence Support
Helpline 087 7733 337
from Monday to Saturday 10am - 10 pm or
office at 029 60633

Legal Aid Board, Cork
021 455 1686 / 021 427 5998

Mná Feasa (Domestic Violence Project)
021 421 1757

OSS, Cork Freephone 1800 497 497
(Domestic Violence Resource Centre for men
and women)

S.A.T.U. 021 492 6100

Sexual Violence Centre
Freephone 1800 496 496

Domestic Violence Social Work
021 492 1728

Y.A.N.A. North Cork
022 53915

kerry

**Kerry's Women's refuge and Support
Services (Adapt)** 066 712 9100

Kerry Rape & Sexual Abuse Centre
Freephone 1800 633 333

Legal Aid Board 066 712 6900

Tralee Women's Resource Centre
066 712 0622

national

Women's Aid Freephone 1800 341 900

West Cork Citizens' Information Service

West Cork Citizens' Information Service can provide you with information, advocacy and advice on all your rights and entitlements. The service is free, confidential and independent. Open daily, please call for times.

Bantry The Square, 076 107 8390
Daily from 10am - 5pm
(Fridays until 4pm, closed 1pm-2pm Mon,
Tues & Thurs)

Macroon South Square Macroon,

0761 078 430
Mon, Tues, Weds, Thursday (Closed Friday)

Bandon, c/o St Michael Centre,
South Main Street, Bandon
*Every Thursday from
10am - 1pm & 2pm- 4pm*

Dunmanway, Ross House, The Square,
Dunmanway *Every Monday 10am-1pm*

Clonakilty, c/o Employability Service,

16 Rossa Street, Clonakilty
*Every Wednesday from
10am - 1pm & 2pm- 4pm*

Free Legal Aid Clinic Monthly
on 1st Tuesday 6pm - 7pm
For an appointment please contact West
Cork Citizens' Information Service by either
dropping in or phoning 076 107 8390.

HELPLINE

FREEPHONE:

1800 203 136

Office: 027 53847

Mon to Fri: 9 am to 5 pm

If you'd like to find out about making a donation, you can visit our website
www.westcorkwomensproject.ie or call or visit our office in Bantry on 02753847

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TÚSLA
An Ghníomhaireacht um
Leanaí agus an Teaghlach
Child and Family Agency