



West Cork Whisper

WEST CORK WOMEN AGAINST VIOLENCE PROJECT NEWSLETTER | ISSUE 80 | FEB, MARCH, APRIL 2022

1996

1. Marilyn Rynn
2. Joyce Quinn
3. Mary Molumby
4. Sandra Tobin
5. Noeleen Cawley
6. Alison White
7. AnneMarie Duffin
8. Martina Halligan
9. Angela Collins
10. Patti Bainbridge
11. Patricia Murphy
12. Veronica Guerin
13. Margaret O Sullivan
14. Maura McKinney
15. Fiona Pender
16. Ms Shirley Cline
17. Janet Mooney
18. Sophie Toscan du Plantier
19. Belinda Pereira
20. Geraldine Diver
21. Miriam O'Donohue

1997

22. Ciara Breen
23. Mary Callinan
24. Sylvia Shields
25. Bernie Sherry
26. Kitty Gubbins
27. Mandy Wong
28. Elizabeth Troy
29. Catherine Doyle
30. Margaret Murphy
31. Sheila McDonagh
32. Gillian Thornton
33. Mary Cully
34. Mary Kelehan
35. Eileen Costello O'Shaughnessy

1998

36. Mandy Smyth
37. Fiona Sinnott
38. Joan McCarthy
39. Georgina O'Donnell
40. Sinead Kelly
41. Deirdre Jacob
42. Chantal Bergeron
43. Theresa Doherty
44. Christina Hackett
45. Marie Dillon
46. Siobhan Hynes
47. Sheila Lynch

1999

48. Catherine Hegarty
49. Layla Brennan
50. Marie Hennessy
51. Gertrude Dolan
52. Bente Carroll
53. Eileen Coyne
54. Bridget McFadden
55. Margaret Concannon
56. Raonaid Murray
57. Charlene McAulliffe
58. Catherine Mullins

2000

59. Rachel Sandeman
60. Nancy Nolan
61. Jennifer Donnan
62. Maeve Byrne
63. Rachel Keily
64. Dearbhla Keating
65. Jean Reilly
66. Jennifer Wilkinson
67. Sandra Collins
68. Susan Prakash

2001

69. Mary Whelan
70. Lui Quing
71. Teresa Joyce
72. Debbie Fox
73. Geraldine Kissane
74. Margaret Fahy
75. Linda Dunne
76. Bettina Poeschel
77. Lorraine O'Connor
78. Sr Philomena Lyons
79. Lisa Bell

2002

80. Grainne Dillon
81. Joan Power
82. Rosie Collinson
83. Nichola Sweeney
84. Niamh Murphy
85. Nora Kiely
86. Carmel Coyne
87. Mook Ah Mooi
88. Christine Quinn
89. Sasha Pimosieje

2003

90. Jean Scanlon
91. Marie Bridgeman
92. Cliona Magner

93. Natasha Gray
94. Lindita Kukaj
95. Georgina Eager
96. Xiang Yi Wang
97. Ann Flynn
98. Attracta Harron

2004

99. Dolores McCrea
100. Joan Casey
101. Janet Chaney
102. Lorraine Crowley
103. Ms Jamie Farrelly Maughan
104. Paiche Onyemaechi
105. Lynette McKeown
106. Mary Walsh
107. Elizabeth McCarthy
108. Rachel O'Reilly
109. Margeurite O'Dwyer
110. Colleen Mulder

2005

111. Celia Bailey
112. Irene White
113. Emer O'Loughlin
114. Mary Hannon
115. Catherine McEnery
116. Frances Ralph
117. Ann Walsh
118. Rosemary Dowling
119. Regina O'Connor

2006

120. Amy Farrell
121. Rebecca Kinsella
122. Siobhan Kearney
123. Donna Cleary
124. Karen Guinee
125. Sheola Keaney
126. Breda Ryan
127. Melissa Mahon
128. Meg Walsh
129. Baiba Saulite

2007

130. Rose Patterson
131. Ciara Dunne
132. Anne Marie O'Neill
133. Sara Neligan
134. Mary Sleanor

135. Jean Gilbert
136. Sharon Coughlan
137. Amanda Jenkins
138. Manuela Riedo
139. Joanne Mangan
140. Marion O'Leary
141. Ciara Ni Chathamhaoil
142. Sylvia Roche Kelly

2008

143. Marioara Rostas
144. Lorraine Flood
145. Nicola Vonkova
146. Kezia Gomes Rosa
147. Carmel Breen
148. Noeleen Brennan
149. Yvonne O'Shea
150. Celine Cawley
151. Rebecca Hoban
152. Sharon Whelan

2009

153. Anne Corcoran
154. Joan Vickers
155. Tracey O'Brien
156. Carmel Marrinan
157. Eugenia Bratis
158. Brenda Ahern
159. Lisa Doyle
160. Rebecca French
161. Joselita De Silva

2010

162. Loradena Pricajan
163. Catherine Smart
164. Breda Cummins
165. Helen Donegan
166. Sarah Hines
167. Alicia Brough

2011

168. Breda Waters
169. Marie Greene
170. Katarzyna Barowiak
171. Noreen Kelly Eadon
172. Deirdre McCarthy
173. Diane Burroughs
174. Ann Henry

2012

175. Veronica Vollrath
176. Rudo Mawere
177. Melanie McCarthy McNamara

178. Sarah Regan
179. Mary Ryan
180. Siobhan Stapleton
181. Elizabeth Duff
182. Jacqueline McDonagh
183. Elaine O'Hara
184. Anna Finnegan
185. Aoife Phelan

2013

186. Olivia Dunlea O'Brien
187. Deirdre Keenan
188. Jolanta Lubiene
189. Aleksandra Sarzynska
190. Patricia Kierans
191. Susan Dunne
192. Sara Staunton

2014

193. Sonia Blount
194. Mary Dargan
195. Mairead Moran
196. Lynn Cassidy
197. Antra Ozolina
198. Carol McAuley
199. Marie O'Brien
200. Kathleen Cuddihy
201. Angelique Belling
202. Valerie Greaney

2015

203. Jane Braidwood
204. Anne Shortall
205. Marie Quigley
206. Natalie McGuinness
207. Brigid Maguire
208. Marian Horgan

2016

209. Clodagh Hawe
210. Kitty Fitzgerald

2017

211. Nicola Collins
212. Samantha Walsh
213. Amy McCarthy
214. Saoirse Smith
215. Rita Apine
216. Patricia O'Connor
217. Linda Evans (Christian)
218. Antoinette Corbally
219. Anne Colomines
220. Rose Hanrahan

2018

221. Joanne Ball (Lee)
222. Natalia Karaczyn
223. Anastasia Kriegel
224. Jastine Valdez
225. Giedre Raguckiate
226. Ingrida Maciokaite
227. Amanda Carroll

2019

228. Elzbieta Piotrowska
229. Jasmine McMonagle
230. Cathy Ward
231. Skaidrite Valdgeima
232. Valerie French Kilroy
233. Nadine Lott

2020

234. Jean Eagers
235. Neasa Murray
236. Seema Banu

2021

237. Urantsetseg 'Urnaa' Tserendorj
238. Mary O'Keefe
239. Sharon Bennett
240. Jennifer Poole
241. Eileen O'Sullivan
242. Fabiole Camara De Campos
243. Zeinat Dashabsheh

2022

244. Ashling Murphy

Join the resistance

Fiona Pender was 25 years old and 7 months pregnant when she went missing from her home in Tullamore in 1996. She has never been found. A canal walk in her home town is named in her memory, Fiona Pender Way. Ashling Murphy was murdered there at 4pm on the afternoon of January 12th 2022.



Ashling is the 244th woman to be killed at the hands of a man since records of femicide have been kept from 1996 by Womens Aid. Like Fiona, there are women who have never been found, abducted, disposed of somewhere with no marker to their lives. However, the vast majority of the dead women were murdered in their own homes by men they knew intimately.

Men who kill women are the inevitable outcome of a pyramid of male abuse. Each level increases in danger and threat until the top of the pyramid is reached where murder, rape and domestic violence sit comfortably supported by the actions & behaviour of catcallers, dick pic senders, flashers, gropers, sexists- misogynists all. Demeaners of women and girls who think they are entitled to use women's bodies however they please, who denigrate women in their whatsapp groups, in the locker room, in the pub, in the workplace. At the base of the pyramid propping up all of this poison and violence are the men who let it happen, who laugh, sometimes uncomfortably at the rape jokes or listen to the offensive descriptions but who fail to call it out, to check their mates' language or counter their views on women. It is not all men who perpetrate the worst offences against women but it is all men who, unless they are actively challenging sexist behaviour, prop up the pyramid of hate against women.

We may have reached a watershed moment in recent weeks. Finally, a great number of men have woken up to the realisation that they can no longer remain passive in a culture that relies on their silent collusion. They have also begun to notice that the same culture works really hard to drown out women's attempts to tell their realities and it does this by responding



with insulting and irrelevant mantras like “Not All Men” or whataboutery such as detouring the conversation on to male focused concerns. These self-serving distractions have the same aim, to avoid addressing the harsh truth of what men are doing to women every day by both their actions and their inaction.

However, in recent weeks there has grown a chorus of men objecting to abusive behaviour towards women. Men actively opting out of the sexist ‘club’, refusing automatic membership. They are trying to listen to women and the literal hard truths of our everyday survival strategies.

To make a real difference, all of us need to commit to working together, in our communities, in our sports teams, in our schools, in our workplaces, in our homes to change the reality, to break the cycle of male violence, to declare ZERO TOLERANCE of violence against women and girls. Join the Resistance to Violence Against Women take the next step- be brave and call it out. Women's lives depend upon it.

#1 Start at the bottom

Things like objectifying women, rape 'jokes' and victim blaming contribute to a society that views women as lesser. This in turn results in the normalisation of violence against women, which escalates to extreme violence.

What can you do? **Speak up.** Call out your friends when they joke about rape. Challenge your friends when they discuss women in a negative way, or when they treat women badly. Remember **that silence is affirming** - when you choose not to speak out against male violence, you are supporting it.

VICTIM BLAMING



What is victim blaming?

Victim blaming is where victims of crimes or tragedies are held accountable for what happened to them. Blaming the victim is known to occur significantly in cases of violence against women including rape and sexual assault cases.

Where does victim blaming come from?

Victim blaming is not a new phenomenon. It stems from centuries of patriarchal social norms that have created a culture where the violence inflicted on women by men is somehow our own fault.

Victim blaming occurs on multiple levels; by institutions like the media, churches, judiciary and by individuals. Many women talk about the sense of shame and embarrassment they feel. A shame promoted by the societal messages they receive daily. Even family and friends can often imply that she is in some way responsible because she had a drink or because of where she was or how she was dressed. She can be further diminished when those she confides in, minimise the abuse she has experienced and tell

her she will soon get over it or it wasn't so bad. Normalising attitudes create self-doubt and guilt for survivors of abuse when they victim blame and concerningly, in instances of domestic violence when agencies and individuals encourage the woman to stay in potentially dangerous situations.

Victim Blaming

One reason people blame a victim is to distance themselves from an unpleasant occurrence and thereby confirm their own invulnerability to the risk. By labelling or accusing the victim, others can see the victim as different from themselves. People reassure themselves by thinking, "Because I am not like her, because I do not do that, this would never happen to me." We need to help people understand that this is not a helpful reaction.

Institutions continue to perpetuate victim blaming attitudes, especially in the courts. A survivor's sexual history, state of mind, how much they were drinking and even underwear can be used against them as a line of defence. Another attempt to move the focus onto the victim and their behaviour, not the person causing the abuse. Women are blamed for not pressing charges, but no consideration is given to the fact victims face being re-traumatised by the very system that is meant to protect them. That if they don't come forward with charges, the abuser could do it to someone else. Again, placing responsibility on the victim of abuse to somehow be responsible for the actions of others.

Media also has significant role in the continuation of victim blaming. Movies, TV shows glamourise violence against women and confuse love bombing and

harassment with desirable male attention. Common messages on TV include women lying about rape, rapists being strangers, women being responsible for the attack and more. Newspaper articles and headlines contain myths around sexual assault, rape and domestic abuse. The tone of the media coverage can minimise, undermine victim's stories, and sometimes shift the focus back to "it's not all men". All these media messages impact the readers beliefs, attitudes and behaviours towards women.

What can I do?

In the wake of Aisling Murphy's tragic death, opening discussions around victim blaming is as important as ever. Soon after the news broke of Aisling's murder #shewasjustgoingforarun starting trending throughout social media.

It does not matter what she was doing. Going for run, a walk, meeting friends; she should have been safe. The nation seemed in shock at what had occurred, is that because there was no way to shift blame to the victim in Aisling's case? Women before Aisling and most probably in the future, have been blamed and will continue to be blamed for the violence, assault, or coercion that they, themselves, are victims of. Aisling went for a run, in running attire, in daylight, in a public and populous place, it's very difficult to turn that around to be her fault.

Sr Philomena Lyons on the other hand, who was raped and murdered in 2001 in Monaghan while waiting for the 8.30am bus to Dublin was a 'victim of her own purity,' according to the Irish Times (15/07/03).

The blame comes in many forms, she had been drinking, dancing provocatively, she was promiscuous, (she was more or less asking for it) she's over-reacting

and so on. Particularly in domestic abuse and coercive control the victim is usually asked why did she not leave? Or if the victim returns to abuser "she deserved it". While responses such as creating safe spaces for women are well intended, ALL spaces should be safe for women. This response shifts the attention back on to women having to change their behaviour to feel safe, not men. The blaming needs to stop and we all have a role to play in stopping it. Some of the main actions people can take are:

- Get informed- understanding what victim blaming is and prevalent rape myths is important. If you are supporting someone experiencing domestic abuse or sexual assault it's even more important to understand these complex issues to give appropriate support.
- Know if you are victim blaming- A helpful gauge can be assessing if your words or actions are shifting responsibility from the person choosing to be abusive and moving this to the victim.
- Hold people accountable- challenge behaviour of those around you that normalises victim blaming or gender-based violence. These include physical expressions of violence (murder, sexual assault, exploitation), removal of autonomy (groping, sexual coercion, non-consensual photo sharing) and normalisation of violence (slut-shaming, objectification, rape jokes, "boys will be boys")

Challenging victim blaming plays an important role in ensuring men do not think it's acceptable to be violent or abusive in any form, that they must own their actions. All victims are worthy of empathy, not to be blamed, humiliated or shamed for the actions of others.

The Cost of Domestic Abuse

Safe Ireland and NUI Galway published a research report this year to assess the economic and social costs of domestic abuse in Ireland. It is the first domestic abuse costing study conducted in Ireland, looking at the range of direct and indirect costs for survivors and observing women's help-seeking pathways. Direct costs relate to accessing services (NGOs, health, legal) and indirect related to forgone income, property damage, relocation. Interviews with over 50 women were completed and the findings in this research span three specific phases, including:

Phase One: Abusive Relationship
(spanning on average 15yrs)

Phase Two: Sanctuary and Interim Period
(spanning on average 1.5yrs)

Phase Three: Relocation and Recovery
(spanning on average 4yrs)

FINDINGS:

- Aggregate cost of domestic abuse over a woman's journey to safety €113,475 per woman.
- €5,673,732 for 50 women in this study.
- National estimated cost of domestic abuse over a woman's journey (average 20.5 years from this study) €56 billion.

KEY THEMES:

Emotional abuse as core to what we know and understand about coercive control.

Post separation abuse and its associated costs after a woman has left the abuser. Women in the study named the common misconception "that once a survivor escapes, 'it's all over and everything is fine'".

Lost income/productivity – identified as the largest economic cost. In the report it refers to reasons for unemployment related to illness/injury and trauma of domestic abuse, abuser prevented survivors from pursuing careers and absence of accessible childcare for lone parents.

Access to stable housing-as a significant problem for women. The report names "The ongoing national housing crisis exacerbates the vulnerability of victims in this context, where their vulnerable status is not formally recognised".

Cause and effect poverty-One of the key conclusions in this report is women at any stage of their journey in domestic abuse face an increasing and real threat of poverty. It also names that many women feel they cannot leave due to the threat of poverty. This creates what report calls a "hidden domestic violence/coercive control poverty threat/trap".

The themes mentioned in this research echo a lot of the experiences of women that are accessing our project. These include escaping an abusive relationship, that does not end the abuse; the difficulty in accessing housing; leaving work due to stress caused by the abuse; and emotional abuse being common in their stories of control. This research talks about post separation abuse in detail including continued financial abuse through unpaid maintenance. This is a significant issue experienced by many of our clients who have shared the difficulties they encounter having court ordered maintenance enforced.

This research further challenges the common question asked of domestic abuse survivors, 'why didn't she just leave'. The findings clearly show the huge cost borne by survivors in their journey to safety and the barriers that they experience in attempting to escape their abuser. To measure the impact (emotionally, psychologically, physically) on a survivor of domestic abuse seems like a hard thing to quantify. Survivors of any form of abuse have to carry the scars and impacts with them for life, a cost that is probably too great to measure.
"...it is women and the State who bear the brunt of the costs of domestic abuse and coercive control"

#2 Don't make excuses

If you find out that a friend of yours has harmed a woman - don't make excuses for them. Don't say things like:

'I know him - he would never do that'
'He's harmless, really'
'He was drunk/off his face/out of it'

The same goes for celebrities and or sportspeople. This can be difficult - you may lose friends, or people you admire - but it is a vital step in ending men's violence.

"The trauma of domestic violence translates into significant economic costs for women, and it is evident that these costs continue well after the 'end' of the abusive relationship."

Keeping Well, Not Just Keeping Safe.

I think it is fair to say that we are all struggling to make sense of the violent murder of Ashling Murphy. It could perhaps be bringing to the surface of our minds other violent murders that went before or indeed other acts of violence that we have witnessed or experienced.

It might be especially difficult for women and children who are living in or have lived in situations of abuse as it is 'very close to the bone'. We know that women who have experienced abuse are often triggered by reports in the media about other women's experience and it can bring them back in time to what they experienced themselves.

It has also raised the issue of safety again for many women, causing worry and fear. Women have spoken of it

being a struggle at times to manage these feelings of fear, upset, worry or anxiety. Some have described the experience as being like a tsunami of feelings all at once.

If you are feeling worried anxious, fearful or feeling overwhelmed, know that its OKAY to feel as you do, in fact its absolutely and perfectly understandable.

Some things to help

Try to Reach out or at least allow someone to reach in. Talk about how you are feeling with a friend, a trusted family member or a support service. If you have experienced abuse, talk to someone in your local DA support services. It is perfectly understandable that you may feel off balance (from time to time) and steadying oneself can often be easier than you think. We often receive calls from women who have been triggered by one thing or another (everyone's triggers are unique to them) even years after leaving a relationship and we welcome these calls. It's why we are here to offer support. So please don't think you are wasting anyone's time by calling.

Breathe - (I know, this sounds obvious, and of course you are hopefully breathing all the time), but focusing on your breathing can help you find calmness and stillness quite quickly. There are many variations of breathing exercises out there. The one I find useful is breathing in slowly (count 1 and 2 and 3) and then concentrating on the out breath (maybe count to 6) and repeating this four or five times. It

releases relaxing hormones and gives a message to our brain that all is well. Research shows that concentrated breathing and mindfulness can have a positive effect on our wellbeing.

Exercise - I'm not suggesting you run a marathon or swim the channel, but get up and get out if you can. Go to the beach or park or walk around the block. I promise you will feel the better of it. Exercise decreases stress hormones and releases feel good hormones. Being out beyond your four walls is also a great distraction and being in nature is known to be soothing for the senses.

Keep hydrated - Keeping hydrated enables you to think more clearly and multiple studies point to a link between dehydration and a higher risk of anxiety. And water costs nothing or very little.

There are of course many more ways of practicing self-care like doing yoga, journaling, mindfulness, meditation, having a hot bath or a cold swim, a coffee with a friend You will know best what works for you. Some of them are very simple and cost absolutely nothing.

None of these things may help you feel safer but they may help you to feel well, well in yourself and that is an investment in yourself and in your future.

And yes you are absolutely worth it!



Some New Developments:

In WCWAV we don't believe in resting on our laurels, as there is always more that can be done to improve the service we offer women in West Cork.

Clonakilty Outreach
From October, we now have an outreach presence in Clonakilty, having leased a room in the new Clonakilty Community Centre established by Cork Mental Health. We share the office with another service on a rota basis, but we will be able to provide an appointments service to anyone wishing to see a support worker in the Clonakilty and surrounding area without having to travel all the way to Bantry. If you would like to be seen at the Clonakilty Outreach office, just call our Bantry office number to make an appointment.

2022-2026

In October, the Board of Management and staff of WCWAV embarked on the process of producing a 5 year Strategic Development Plan for the service. The aim of which is to map out how best to grow and improve the quality of services and supports to women and children experiencing domestic abuse and of course how we can resource that growth over the coming years. This will be our road map for 2022-2026 and as with everything we do and plan, the needs of our clients and their well being will continue to motivate all of our work in the coming years.

We welcome referrals from Gards, GPs, social workers, CIS and all sorts of other agencies. We work with family resource centres, community welfare officers and other agencies to get our clients the advice and information they need

wonder women of west cork



Inspector Joane O'Brien DPSU

Where are you from? I was born and raised in Newbawn, Co Wexford but I have been living and working in Cork City and County since 1999

Job Title: I am a member of An Garda Síochána since 1998. I am a Detective Inspector with responsibility for the Divisional Protective Services Bureau for Cork West and Cork North Garda Divisions.

What does your work entail? It is my responsibility and the main priority of all members of An Garda Síochána to ensure that help and support is provided to all victims of Sexual and Domestic Violence. I have operational control over two Divisional Protective Services Bureau Teams based at Dunmanway and Fermoy Garda Stations. These Units serve the whole of Cork County. The Divisional Protective Services Bureaus are staffed by specifically trained Garda Personnel who deal with serious cases related to Sexual and Domestic Violence, including coercive control, Human Trafficking and crimes against children. I have additional responsibility as the Domestic Violence liaison Inspector for Cork West Garda Division which entails an oversight function for incidents of Domestic Violence, assessing the risk involved in such cases and ensuring best practice in terms of An Garda Síochána's pro arrest policy in respect of breaches of Domestic Violence Orders issued by the District Court. I am supported in my role by the Cork West Garda Victims Office, in particular in respect of Operation Faoiseamh, which is an on-going targeted Garda Operation, which commenced in April 2020 in response to the COVID 19 Pandemic.

Why and how did you get involved in West Cork Women Against Violence? Chief Superintendent Con Cadogan had been actively engaged with the WCWAV prior to my appointment to my current role and was actively engaged with the service as the only service available for female Domestic Violence Victims in Cork West. Through this initial engagement, I got involved in the service, and quickly assessed the great value and important work undertaken by all the project staff. I see huge benefits for the WCWAV project and An Garda Síochána working collaboratively to support and enhance each organisation in the difficult work that is supporting and helping victims of Domestic Violence and their children. There is a great working relationship between both organisations which is achieved by people being professional, empathetic and supportive to each other, including victims. .

Since your first involvement with WCWAV do you feel things have improved for women experiencing DV? I Simply put, yes. There has been greater emphasis and communication nationally and locally on issues and supports for victims of Domestic Violence since my involvement with the project. The upskilling of staff with the project, in terms of trauma informed care etc, and in terms of the project successfully opening a Safe House for Victims of Domestic Violence specifically for West Cork is a dynamic solution for a local issue and provides a great alternative to a Refuge. The addition of the safe house itself provides relief and support to the existing services available to victims in Adapt, Tralee and Cuanlee in Cork City. I am of the view that the excellent working relationships developed since my involvement with the project has helped to identify issues on the ground that can be resolved by communication and dialogue between the two organisations who share the common goal to support and help victims of Domestic Violence. The WCWAV project has proven extremely beneficial in highlighting and supporting the work of Garda Protective Service Units locally to the women they interact with during the course of their work.

How do you relax? I enjoy long walks with my dogs and try to practice yoga when time allows. I try to train and run most days, whilst not necessarily enjoyable at the time, both help me to unwind and relax after long days in the office. Never has exercise and enjoying the outdoors been so important given the extremely tough times the COVID -19 Pandemic has brought to everyone. .

What changes would you most like to see for women? From a Global perspective, I think Ireland fairs well in terms of women's rights in the main. The Covid 19 Pandemic has taught us the benefits of remote working, I would like to see true workplace flexibility for all which would create a greater work life balance that does not hinder any person in the workplace in advancing into leadership roles. I would like to see a change in the mindset whereby any person who has flexibility in their roles are not viewed as less committed to their careers.

West Cork Women Against Violence runs a support group once a month for women on their journeys from domestic abuse. While most people understand or have some idea what a support group is, these ideas can be varied. Below are some common questions that people ask:

What exactly is a domestic violence support group?

A support group is a group of people with common experiences or concerns who provide each other with encouragement, comfort, and advice.

What does a support group offer?

A support group can offer many things to different people, depending on why they are coming. It might help you to realise you are not alone and identify and express your feelings. Many people learn helpful information around concerns including practical tips, resources and strategies that have helped others to cope. By meeting other members who are further along their journey with domestic violence it can provide hope for the future. A support group helps reduce stress, knowing you have a space to be heard or just simply held.

I have never been to a support group before, I won't know what to do.

This is a common concern people have around attending a support group. Our group is run by a facilitator who can answer any questions you have beforehand and will be there on the day if you have any concerns. You don't need to have group work experience to attend a support group as it is a less formal type of group setting.

I'd like to come but I am nervous to share my story with strangers.

Again, this is a very natural feeling to have. Our facilitators can meet you one to one before the group to see how it feels to talk with someone about what you have experienced. Also, there is no pressure to share in the support group, everyone goes at their own pace.

I am in a good place; I don't need a support group.

While this may be a reality, a support group is a great therapeutic resource when you need it. Besides having a space to share, our support group has different sessions focused on ways to maintain your wellness (art therapy, Zumba), bonding with your peers (outings such as walks, lunch) and practical support (around budgeting, navigating courts with access). A support group can also increase self-understanding about how domestic abuse has impacted you.



Our support group runs in Skibbereen the first Tuesday of the month.

If you would like more information or are interested in attending
(you must register your interest in the group before attending)
please contact the project on 027 53847.



Not all men

Not all men,
trust me, I know.

And yet,
the person who masturbated
in front of me
when I was 7,
was a man.

Not all men,
but it was a man
who touched my breasts
and squeezed hard
when I was 12.


When I was 15,
they preferred my ass;
at 20, they went back to my chest,
and yes, there were those
who grabbed me by the pussy.

Not all men,
but the colleague
who tried to give me
a 'neck massage'
when he noticed we were
all alone in the room,
was a man.

The acquaintance who tried to
kiss me in the mouth
because he thought I looked cute
when I was 8 months pregnant
was also a man.

Not all men,
trust me, I know,
because I have also met
amazing men,
and yet,
whenever my body
has been violated
the hands touching me
against my will
have always been
those of a man.

Not all men,
it's true,
but...too many men.

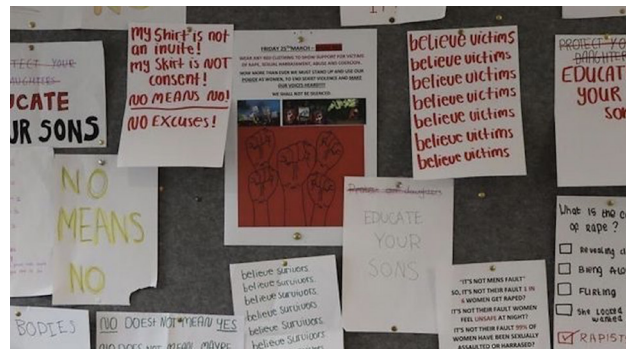


by gaby rogut

Question: When are we going to stop trying to educate girls to avoid being abused, assaulted or harassed and wake up to educating abusers, assaulters and harassers? At what point do children grow up into someone who might be capable of assault or harassment, and how do we prevent it?

Answer: start educating all children about respect, about bodily autonomy, about consent.

<https://www.hamhigh.co.uk/news/parliament-hill-school-pupils-protest-7856542>



Posters made by students at a London school in 2021, displayed in protest at a PowerPoint Presentation that suggested that girls should dress carefully to avoid sexual assault. Photo credit: Maya Chinnappa

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

Citizens Information

WE ARE OPEN FOR PHONE & E-MAIL QUERIES

PHONE (West Cork)
0818 07 8390
Email: bantry@citinfo.ie
10am – 5pm. Mon - Fri
National Phone Service:
0818 07 4000
9am – 8pm, Mon - Fri

We are open for a limited number of appointments BY PRIOR ARRANGEMENT
Vickery's Complex,
New Street, Bantry, P75 TV77
Ph: 0818 07 8390

for the most up-to-date information log on to:
www.citizensinformation.ie
www.gov.ie | www.hse

Citizens Information

jennydempseydesign.com

CONFIDENTIALITY

West Cork Women's Project assures all women contacting us that four core values underpin our service:

- Confidentiality
- To be listened to
- To be believed
- Respect for her choice

Speaking to someone, perhaps for the first time, about experiencing violence or abuse in the home is never easy. Placing your trust in a stranger on the end of a phone or meeting someone for the first time face to face takes courage. These first stages of seeking support can be a time of stress and fear for women.

It is important that women understand that they have the right to remain anonymous when contacting the service. If a woman is comfortable with giving identifying details, these details are not passed on to any other agency except at her request.

There are two exceptions to confidentiality:

- If a disclosure raises concerns with regard to Child Protection issues
- If a woman discloses that she intends to harm another person.

Still Here..

Lots has changed over the last while, but we are ... here:
Block 1, The Warner Centre, Barrack St, Bantry P75 YD43

Bantry Office: 027 53847 Mon to Friday: 9.00 am to 5.30 pm

Helpline: 1800 203 136 during office hours

www.facebook.com/westcorkwomenagainstviolence

www.westcorkwomensproject.ie **twitter:** @West_Cork_Women

email: admin@westcorkwomensproject.ie

Covid has limited our abilities to meet in person, but we are still offering phone support, peer group support, accompaniment and advocacy.