



Violence against women

Phenomenology and characteristics for Bulgaria

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- Violence as a primitive way to control public relations
- Violence as a relation
- Prejudice regarding gender violence
- Risk assessment and the hidden gender violence
- Effects on the witnesses of violence
- Leadership and prevention of problems of gender violence
- Politics and laws for prevention and regulation of gender violence in Bulgaria

Primitive way of regulation



- As a being driven by sexual urges, the man has used violence to solve his relations for a long time.
- A civilized choice for every society is to be intolerant of primitive forms of control over another human being.
- The capability of every individual to regulate the affect and to be able to recognize the choice and the individuality of another is definitive for his/her psychological maturity.
- The capability of the community to distinguish, regulate, designate and display unity when it comes to gender violence is a sign of its evolution.
- The challenges for individuals and the community related to the phenomenon of gender violence are identical. The impulse is for it to be denied, underestimated, marginalized, to label the victim. These are natural defense mechanisms associated with the traumas that violence breeds as an outcome.

Violence as a relationship



- What is violence between partners
- Emotional abuse
- Assault
- Escalation of violence and dynamics of development
- Difficulty of recognizing relationship violence in its early stages
- Effects of violence on the victims
- Specific character features of the perpetrator
- Trans-generational aspects of relationship violence
- Why is violence seen as a relationship of dependency
- Social and individual aspects as a form of dependent relationship
- Examples from practice

Prejudice related to gender violence



- Prejudice related to gender violence is often prejudice associated with femininity and protection against fears derived from it.
- “She provoked him.” She deserves it.
- The woman is inferior and obeys the man.
- The woman is incapable of doing things by herself and must suffer for the sake of the children.
- The woman “victim” is often more socially acceptable than the independent woman.
- The family is a private territory and whatever happens everything should stay there.
- The fake images of the macho man and the delicate, uncertain, quiet woman often hide the relationship violence, but they are acceptable social stereotypes about femininity and masculinity.
- And many more...

Risk assessment



- Which are the factors that identify the woman in risk of getting in a relationship violence.
- **Being born in a family in which there was violence.**
- Addiction to substances.
- Crisis, loss. Poverty.
- Dangerous behavior and involvement in gangs.
- Illness.
- Culture of ethnic groups, etc...
- Factors that make the recognition of violence so difficult.
- Women cannot define what happened as an abuse.
- The early stages are usually associated with constraints, which women think are acceptable and are part of being in a couple. Often they are part of past experience with her family.
- The emotional aspects of violence are hard to validate, but they have serious effects on the mental health of women. Confusion of the messages of the perpetrator.

Effects on witnesses



- The typical witnesses of gender violence are the children. The effects on their fragile mental structure are severe.
- A child which grows up in a violent environment cannot go through natural development processes of their mentality because it becomes a part of a family system, in which there is no space for that to happen.
- Often the child tries to prevent the violence by taking on the responsibility as a feeling of guilt or an attempt to resolve it in reality by protecting the mother or developing a symptom.
- Often children who grow up in a violent situation develop specific protective personality organization to protect them from the outside world and be a bunker where they feel protected. This specific personality organization later becomes a risk assessment factor for being into such a relationship.
- Violence is normalized. (another risk assessment factor)
- Violence is the only type of intimacy for a child who had earlier witnessed domestic violence.
- Trying to repair the trauma becomes a cause for its repetition. (compulsive repetition)

Leadership and prevention



- Leadership is a function the public exercise of authority in matters that require a clear concept of what is good and bad, true and false, acceptable or not for a community. The legislation is a regulator of social relations and forms of leadership.
- Civil society consensus regarding the rules for living and making it self-regulating in many aspects of living.
- The problem of violence on women and the way the problem is taken care of in the Bulgarian society is related to the forcing, coming from the institutions who accept rules (which formalizes them) concerning the EU membership, and the natural protective reaction, which the topic calls out because of the trauma it causes. In this sense, often in spite of the law, the NGO networks, services and operational law, violence remains hidden and unrecognized, even by the victim.
- Proclaiming violence in an authentic way can come from definite citizens' opinion for the issue.

Prevention policies



- In Bulgaria there are strong NGO's, who work on the problems with violence. There are psychological programs which help women, who have suffered from gender violence. NGOs conduct intensive training and media campaigns who work with the communities idea of what gender violence is.
- A network of services is created which spreads out to most of the country, but often out of reach for women who are victims of domestic violence in smaller towns or villages. There still are no developed programs to work with perpetrators.
- In recent years the government started to support the sustainability of practices related to domestic violence and support the creation of centers to help victims of domestic violence.
- Since 2005 there is an existing law for protection against domestic violence, but no funds provided to litigate against domestic violence for free .
- The Court and the Ministry of Interior are part of the organization working on issues of domestic violence.
- In March this year a national program for protection from domestic violence was accepted.