

Recovering from the psychological effects of domestic violence



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Breaking Free

The Players

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- Loaded Productions
- Sutton Women's Aid, Berkshire Women's Aid, Kingston Refuge, Bede House Association, Brent Domestic Violence Forum, Breaking Free

Agenda

- The effects of domestic violence
- The benefits of a DVD for workers
- Empowering women with information
- The series
 - Post traumatic stress
 - Self esteem
 - Etc.

Mental health

- How we think, feel and behave
- 1 in 4 people have a mental health problem at some point that affects their daily life, relationships or physical health
- Mental disorder: a clinically significant pattern of thinking, feeling &/or behaving that is associated with distress or impairment

Links between mental health & domestic violence

31% women say worst incident of DV caused mental or emotional problems

60% leave violent partners because of fears for their mental health

Domestic violence impacts for a long time on mental health, self esteem, self worth

Any women experiencing domestic violence deserves and needs support

4x more likely to suffer depression (38-83%, vs 10-21% general practice)

4x more likely to have PTSD (64% compared to 1-12% g.p.)

4x more likely to be suicidal (18% compared to 4% or less g.p.)

3x more likely to suffer anxiety (35-73%) compared to 5-10% in general practice)

Asking for help

Challenges for a woman

- Abuser's accusations
- Difficulty making sense of experiences
- Social stigma
- Difficulty in accessing mental health services
- DV advocates are not trained in mental health

There is a gap between mental health services and domestic violence services and neither meet the needs of women service users across both issues.

Benefits of a DVD

- Emotional support for women
- Reduce isolation of women with literacy problems
- Practical suggestions on strategies
- Increase awareness of signs and strategies within non-specialist services
- Improved signposting and partnership work

Not to undermine coping strategies

- Legal strategies
- Formal help-seeking
- Informal help-seeking
- Escape strategies
- Separation
- Hiding
- Appeals to abuser
- Compliance
- Resistance
- Self-defence
- Manages children
- Personal strategies

Starting a conversation

Not all women need or want special help

What do you need?

Would you like some support?

Might it help to watch a DVD giving some examples of women's experiences and what they found helpful?

Format for each hour long DVD

- 10 minutes directed at the worker
- Each DVD presents 6 therapy sessions

Each DVD is backed up by

- A written guide for women
- A written guide for workers

The first DVD is about PTSD

Hostages at home:

Exposure to a traumatic event

**A normal reaction to an abnormal
event**

Complex PTSD

- the trauma is caused by humans rather than natural disaster
- the trauma is caused by a known person and is personal
- the trauma is repeated rather than an isolated incident
- the trauma occurs in a 'safe' environment
- there has been rape or sexual violence
- there is little social support

Criteria for PTSD

- A. Exposure to a traumatic event (fear,horror)
- B. Re-experience of the trauma
- C. Persistent avoidance and numbing
- D. Persistent symptoms of arousal
- E. Lasts for more than one month
- F. Causes significant distress or impairs social, occupational or other functioning

Memories and flashbacks (Re-experiencing trauma)

What might help?

I see his fist...the knife

Keeping a diary

He pops into my head

Using the film technique

I have nightmares

Reading information

I can't sleep

Feeling numb (Avoidance & Dissociation)

What might help?

I don't want to talk about it

Ask about numbing

I don't feel anything

Agree how to notice & stop
if a woman 'go's

I've just gone blank

Set a time limit; warn 5-10
mins before the end

I just want to put it behind
me

Take 1 issue at a time

Ask about substance use

Stress, eggshells and red alert (Anxiety and arousal)

What might help?

I'm so scared... of him
...of what he will do next
...I wake up shaking
...why is it taking so long?

Safety planning
Information on fear
Relaxation, exercise
Breathing 'out'
Ask fearful thoughts
Set realistic goals

**Post Traumatic
Stress Disorder**

Depression

**Common
Issues**

**Managing Grief
and Loss**

Anxiety

**Sleeping
Difficulties**

Self harm

**Parenting
children in
a family
with DV**

**Substance
Use**

**Anger -
(not violence)**

**Less
Recognised
Issues**

**Relationships -
Coming to terms
with the past**

Assertion

**Making sense of
questions about
Justice, Safety,
Trust, Power,
Esteem**

**Self Esteem
including reclaiming
the body after
abuse**

Where is the Project now?

- The first DVD - 'PTSD' is available for purchase now
- The second DVD - 'Self Esteem' is being filmed this month - available at the end of the year
- The third DVD on 'Anxiety' is under way
- We are seeking partners and funders.....