House Sarah Resources

…..transforming the lives of those who come seeking help… 6 Desvouex Road Suva 679 3100665

Of

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**2. What is Family Violence**

**Family Violence** can also be referred to as Domestic Violence, Gender Based Violence; Intimate Partner Violence; Domestic Abuse

**Definitions of Family Violence**

From the United Nation’s ‘Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women 1993’ *“any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.*

**Domestic Violence and Family Violence**

Domestic Violence is usually used to refer to that violence which occurs between intimate partners. Family violence is used as a broader term to include violence between other family members, such as sibling, parents and children or grandparents and grandchildren. It is also sometimes referred to as gender based violence (GBV)

**House of Sarah uses the following definition:**

**Family Violence**

Family violence involves behaviour that creates fear and is repeated, controlling, threatening and coercive. Violence in relationships and families can take on a variety of forms. These can include:

**Physical abuse:** includes slapping, pushing, punching, kicking, choking, throwing objects or use of weapons against a person to inflict injury. All acts of physical assault are criminal offences.

**Sexual abuse:** includes a range of sexually abusive and exploitative behaviours including rape (even if you are married) – with or without use of threats or other violence being inflicted, and forced viewing of pornography.

**Emotional/verbal abuse:** when a person constantly puts you down or criticises you,

threatens to stop you from seeing your children, or threatens to commit suicide if you leave the relationship.

**Social abuse:** may include preventing you from seeing your friends and family, making you feel guilty about going to work or socialising, and constantly checking up on your whereabouts.

**Financial abuse:** is when your partner/relative takes control of your financial affairs, or checks and rules your spending, or prevents you from having access to money for essentials.

**Spiritual abuse:** when a person’s faith is used as a weapon to control them for the abuser’s personal pleasure or gain, using religious teaching to justify abuse or compel forgiveness.

Also, the prevention a person worshipping in their desired faith community.

**Cultural abuse:** when cultural practices, relief systems, food etc., are imposed on partners or family members in order to control, abuse or manipulate.

**Who experiences Family Violence?**

There is no particular profile for a victim or perpetrator of family violence. People experience family violence regardless of their social group, status, age, race, disability, sexuality or income level. Most abuse is carried out by men against female partners, but abuse can be inflicted on men by women and can also occur in same sex relationships.

**Who are the perpetrators of Family Violence?**

Just as there is no particular profile for someone who experiences family violence, there is also no particular profile for someone who perpetrates family violence.

Doctors, lawyers, police officers, doctors, teachers, taxi driv­ers, road workers, clergy and soldiers have been found to be abusing their partners. Perpetrators of family violence are from every part of society and although they may present well to the outside world, the disclosure of their partner should be taken seriously and believed.

People who abuse their partners make a choice to do so; to gain power and control over them. Other factors such as childhood issues, alcohol, yagona, drugs, mental and other health problems are not the cause of domestic abuse, they may be factors in the situation, but they are not the cause.

**Family Violence and the Church**

Family violence also happens within the Church community. Church leaders and prominent members of local churches have been found to be abusers, and there are many more still perpe­trating abuse against their partners on a daily basis. The reality for someone married to or in a relationship with an abusive perpetra­tor who is a church leader can be horrific. On top of the terrible abuse they are suffering, they feel a responsibility to the church their partner is leading to stay quiet and continue to suffer.

**Adapted by the House of Sarah** [**www.houseofsarah.org**](http://www.houseofsarah.org) **for the Pacific context from the Restored Church Kit** [**www.restoredrelations.org**](http://www.restoredrelations.org)