

# 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Abuse



Gender Abuse:

## Zero Tolerance

from

Childhood to Adulthood

*Dedicated to the Memory of Estella Scott-Roberts*

*Estella was an extraordinary woman who with her kindness and generosity dedicated her life to empowering others and making the Cayman Islands a better place for women and children.*

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## What is 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Abuse?

The 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence is an international campaign originating from the first Women's Global Leadership Institute sponsored by the Center for Women's Global Leadership in 1991. Participants chose the dates, November 25, International Day Against Violence Against Women and December 10, International Human Rights Day, in order to symbolically link violence against women and human rights and to emphasize that such violence is a violation of human rights. In 1996, the Business and Professional Women's (BPW) Club selected this campaign as a special project and it has been organized annually with the help of other community agencies. This year's committee is comprised of BPW, the Women's Resource Centre (WRC) and Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS). The local campaign aims to encompass a broader perspective by renaming the campaign **16 Days of Activism Against Gender Abuse**.

This year's theme is **Gender Abuse: Zero Tolerance from Childhood to Adulthood**; brings public awareness to the wide range of abuse in our community, aims to show support and develop action to encourage and promote zero tolerance in the Cayman Islands.

### Message from 16 Days Chairperson

Gender abuse affects each and every one of us.

Some of us are affected personally through being the victim of gender abuse. Some of us are affected when we find out that the victim of gender abuse is a family member; a friend; a neighbor or a co-worker.

Gender abuse disrupts and destroys lives within our community. Gender abuse denies its victims their basic human rights. Gender abuse prevents its victims from fulfilling their full and God-given potential as human beings and their ability to function within and enjoy their community. Gender abuse devastates and destroys not only its victims but also families, friends, co-workers, neighbors and even the community itself, through ripple effect. In fact the terrible effect of gender abuse in our community is as evident today as it was when we launched the first campaign in 1996 when we based our theme on the slogan "When Someone Abuses Everyone Loses".

Gender abuse takes many forms including physical abuse; verbal abuse; sexual abuse; financial abuse; intimidation of others; controlling the life choices of another; instilling fear in another and the stalking and/or harassment of another.

Gender abuse is the abuse of a woman by a man; abuse of a man by a woman; abuse of a child by an adult; abuse of a girlfriend by a boyfriend or a boyfriend by a girlfriend; abuse of a parent by a child; abuse of a grandparent by a grandchild or abuse of a friend by a friend. To put it simply, gender abuse is the abuse of one human being by another.

There is no excuse for gender abuse. All of us would like to believe that there is no gender abuse in our community. We all want to believe that every home is a happy and peaceful place and a safe haven for every child to go to at the end of the school day; a place for every man and woman to return to at the end of a long working day; a place where the full-time Mother loves to see her husband return to at the end of his working day or vice versa; a place where the Grandparent who lives with one of their children or grandchildren does so in a happy and contented environment.

Unfortunately this is not always the case. Within our community

there is the Mother who dreads the 5 o'clock hour; the child who dreads going home; the child who is scared about bedtime; the working parent who wishes the day was longer and the grandparent who wishes that they had their own space. Gender abuse knows no boundaries. Its evil tentacles spread through the community regardless of gender, age, nationality or profession. It is for us as a community to stop this evil in our midst. As a unified community we can overcome gender abuse but, we must have the heart; the will; the intent and the determination to make it happen.

At the Silent Witness March on October 18<sup>th</sup> following the tragic murder of Estella Scott Roberts (R.I.P.) we witnessed the biggest public turnout since the First Silent Witness March in 2000. As painful as it is, let us never forget why the community came together on that fateful day as a unified body, crying out silently against the abuse of one of our own – one of the pioneers in the battle against gender abuse. Let us march again and again and for as long as it takes to stamp out gender abuse in our beloved Cayman Islands. Let us heed the cries for help and support from those Professionals, Workers and Volunteers who are involved daily handling the multitude of problems caused by gender abuse in our community. Let us offer our hands of support to all of these brave people so that they understand that they are no longer just "a few voices in the wilderness". Let us show them that we, as a unified community, are in full support of their efforts to stamp out the evil of gender abuse in these Islands and let us also show the Victims of gender abuse that we are there for them. This year we chose as our theme "Gender Abuse: Zero Tolerance Childhood to Adulthood". We ask you to support this theme and this campaign so that together as individuals and united as a community we ensure that the gender abusers in our midst know they have no hiding place.

Angela Doyle

**Gender Abuse: Zero Tolerance from Childhood to Adulthood**



## Message from the Cayman Islands Government

### Support UNIFEM's Say NO to Violence against Women Campaign

The *Say NO to Violence against Women* is an internet-based awareness campaign that aims to end gender-based violence. It was launched one year ago in November 2007 by the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM). Hundreds of thousands of concerned people have added their names to a global call to action to make the issue of gender-based violence a top international priority.

Given the Government's desire for a peaceful society for all women, men and children in the Cayman Islands, the Leader of Government Business, the Hon. Kurt Tibbetts, JP announced on 20<sup>th</sup> November, 2008 that the Cayman Islands would be joining other governments, organizations and individuals around the world by endorsing the UNIFEM *Say NO to Violence Against Women* Campaign. To date, the Heads of State or Government as well as Ministers of some 60 countries have added their names to the campaign on behalf of their Governments, thus expressing the political will to take action on the issue.

Global statistics paint a horrifying picture of the social and health consequences of violence against women. According to UNIFEM, violence is a major cause of death and disability for women aged 15 to 44 years. In a 1994 study based on World Bank data of approximately ten selected risk factors facing women in this age group, rape and domestic violence rated higher than cancer, motor vehicle accidents, war and malaria. Unfortunately, the Cayman Islands are not immune to this kind of violence against women, even though comparative data has not yet been collected.

UNIFEM's goal is to obtain 1 million or more signatures before 25<sup>th</sup> November 2008. Therefore, the Cayman Islands Government urges individuals in the Cayman Islands to also let their voices be heard during this campaign by signing the electronic petition on [www.sayNOtoviolence.org](http://www.sayNOtoviolence.org) and passing the information on to other interested individuals wherever they may be. All signatures to the *Say NO* campaign, along with a list of governments that have joined the initiative, will be handed over to the United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon at a high-level event on the 25<sup>th</sup> November, 2008 which is the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women.

## Message from H.E. the Governor's Wife, Mrs. Mariko Jack, BPW & WRC Patron

Throughout the world, hundreds and thousands of women and children and sometimes men are subjected to domestic violence, sexual abuse, stalking, and sexual harassment every day. Without proper help and courage to come forward, they can become chronic victims and the suffering can be prolonged and repeated.

Sadly we are not immune from those savage acts in Cayman Islands. In particular, recent violence such as the brutal murder of the advocator and leader of Women's Rights activists Estella Scott-Roberts and the subsequent incident of the rape of a 5 year old girl by her relatives disgusted us and emotionally shattered us. The perpetrators must have thought that they would win by destroying the lives of these innocent victims, thus hindering our activity against them. However, Estella and the girl's attackers have been arrested and Estella's spirit has not been killed.

Through her tragic death, Estella's lifework has been invigo-

rated. She has brought us together as we witnessed at the candle light vigil and silent walk. She has given us the courage to stand up against such savage acts. We have been empowered and motivated in our quest to eliminate violence and to help victims to get back on their feet.

We are fortunate in the Cayman Islands to have the momentum to move towards building a society that does not tolerate such criminal activity. The Government is backing us and the public is behind us. We are all united - Caymanians and foreigners alike. We have all been affected and are prepared to react in the immediate aftermath of a tragedy. What I would like to convey to you now is that it is important to maintain this momentum and keep moving forward until one day we achieve a society with zero victims of such violence in these beautiful islands. This would be the best tribute to Estella, the little girl and the many other victims.

## Silent Witness March 2008

*"While we struggle to cope with the loss of Estella, we must not let this atrocity change who we are as a people. I implore every one of you to treat each other with compassion, understanding, respect and love; for the more we are compassionate, the more we are understanding, the more we respect and love one another, the more we will succeed in building communities in which violence cannot take hold."*

*Hon. Anthony Eden, OBE, JP  
Minister of Health &  
Human Services*



Photo Courtesy of Cayman Free Press

*"We are the voice to the silent witnesses, The women who have been murdered, the children that continue to live in fear and those men and women that are afraid to speak out at all. Ultimately we are now Estella's Voice, she would always speak out especially to violence against women and child sexual abuse."*

*Cindy Blekaitis  
WRC Counsellor &  
Educational Facilitator*



Photo Courtesy of Cayman Free Press

**On 18 October 2008, more than 2000 people marched silently through George Town to pay tribute to the silent victims of domestic violence and the memory of Estella Scott-Roberts. After the march, a short ceremony was held outside of the Legislative Assembly. The Hon. Minister of Health and Human Services, Anthony Eden, OBE, JP, President of BPW, Velma Hewitt, Chairperson of the Cayman Islands Crisis Centre Board, Len Layman, and Counsellor & Educational Facilitator of the Women's Resource Centre, Cindy Blekaitis gave impassioned speeches before the biggest crowd since its 2000 inception.**



Photo Courtesy of Cayman Free Press

*"I want to make one thing perfectly clear to all of you and I hope that each of you is listening carefully. As long as we have violence in our homes we will never get rid of it on our streets.*

*We cannot expect to raise non violent adults in violent homes.*

*To tolerate domestic abuse and violence is to passively accept the violence that exists in our community. Let me repeat: As long as we have violence in our homes we will never, never, get rid of it on our streets."*

*Len Layman  
Chairperson of CICC Board*

*We must do as Estella did.  
Reach out to those in need.*

*Do not let fear or intimidation soften your voice against wrong. Take an active stand against domestic abuse and gender violence. One person can make a difference. Estella showed us by example the 'power of one'. Look around you...see the crowd here today? ...that is the 'power of one'.*

*Velma Hewitt  
BPW President*

## Message from BPW President

**In** communities around the world and here in the Cayman Islands, gender violence has been a subject that most citizens preferred to ignore. The general attitude amongst many was that if it didn't affect them personally or indirectly, it had no other effect.

For far too long, the subject of gender violence was not one that was openly discussed, but rather, it was talked in hushed tones and behind closed doors, and in doing so caused further victimization.

This year's 16 Days of Activism has a heavy pall as all citizens are affected to some degree by the gender violence that occurred on the weekend of Oct 11<sup>th</sup>, 2008. That loss thrust gender violence to the forefront of each citizen's mind and is now, sadly, a painful and lasting reminder of its effects.

It brought to fore that when *one* citizen is denied the right to live free of violence, that when *one* citizen is hindered from rising to their full potential, we all feel the consequences.

Gender violence is an issue that must be dealt with at all levels of our society in order for any change to occur. To do otherwise puts our country at risk of becoming a violent society which will have a devastating impact on all areas of our lives.

BPW recognises that resources are limited especially now with the economic downturn, but wishes to emphasize the importance of the effects of violence in any community.

It is therefore incumbent on us all to ensure that the effects of violence never becomes overly prevalent as it will have an adverse effect on the lives of all citizens here.

Programs that work specifically with gender violence must continue to have governments support, as well as support from the private sector and of each citizen in our community.

BPW encourages all citizens to take an active role in teaching alternate solutions to conflict so that dialogue can begin and the propensity to violence can change.

There are many programs available and it is incum-

bent on us all to assist and encourage those who need those services most to take full advantage of them, and likewise, it is each citizen's duty to report occurrences of gender violence.

The business and professional women's clubs, both here and in Cayman Brac, have been active for many years in raising awareness and in bringing educational programs to offer alternate solutions.

Some of those programs are, but not limited to:-

- . Establish the Legal Befrienders Programme
- . Bring changes in legislation to deal with domestic violence and abuse.
- . Help establish counselling networks
- . Lobby for the establishment of the Women's Resource center.
- . Bringing experienced and trained professionals to speak on gender violence and their effects
- . Establish a working relationship with the National Parenting Programme
- . Offering tertiary scholarships to further the empowerment of women

The BPW club asks that our partners continue to work with us and offer their support for programs and education to combat the effects of gender violence.

The Business and Professional Women's Club earnest plea is that all citizens of the Cayman Islands will join with them to continue to work thru this difficult issue, so that help is available to those who need assistance.

Each person that suffers thru gender violence has a face and we must never tire in giving them hope for despair, ease from pain and viable solutions so that each woman, man or child can reach their full potential and live in peace, free of violence.

On behalf of the members of Business and Professional Women's Club, I therefore urge each citizen to join BPW in the activities offered Nov 25-Dec10.

These days are set aside for 16 days of Activism Against Gender Violence, so that we can all do our part to eradicate gender violence from our society.

Velma Hewitt



## Legal Perspective on Marital Rape

### Marriage considered a partnership of equals in the Cayman Islands

#### The misconception that sexual abuse is acceptable or legal within a marriage.

In an abusive relationship, a man will often consider a woman to be his personal property. He will regard her as subservient to him and to be exploited for his needs and demands. When such abuse occurs within a marriage, a man will often consider a woman's married status to justify and excuse his abuse of her. In his view, any rights or opinions that a woman may have had were revoked upon her commitment to marriage with him. The implication of this in relation to sexual abuse is that a man has the right to rape or sexually assault his wife. The man may believe, and often encourage, ill-founded stereotypes that rape is a one-time event that is committed by a stranger, and that because a married couple has been sexually intimate, forced sexual intercourse or indecent assault in marriage is not as traumatic as rape by a stranger. He may even demean his wife, telling her that her marriage to him makes his sexual abuse of her acceptable, even "legal".

#### The actual position

There is no question that rape by a stranger is highly disturbing, leading to trauma and physical disability. However, it is important that we do not lose sight of the fact that married women may also be subject to rape and indecent assault by their husbands. Such abuse is likely to occur repeatedly, with disastrous consequences

for a woman's physical, psychological and emotional well-being. This is the position, not only from an ethical point of view, but also from a legal one. The Courts of the Cayman Islands have made it clear, in line with well established English law (which is highly persuasive to the Courts of the Islands' when deciding legal issues) that any view that a man may commit marital rape is unacceptable and marriage will not save him from a criminal prosecution brought by his wife for rape or sexual assault. Marriage is considered a partnership of equals and not as a label entitling a man to treat his wife as a subservient chattel.

#### What this means for married women in the Cayman Islands

In light of the legal position in the Cayman Islands, any holder of the belief that by marriage a wife gives her irrevocable consent to sexual intercourse with her husband under all circumstances and irrespective of the state of her health or how she happens to be feeling at the time is plainly wrong. The Cayman Islands are one of over 100 states in the world where a man cannot rape or perform sexual assault upon his wife. Recent countries to criminalize marital rape include Turkey (in 2005), Mauritius (in 2007), and Thailand (also in 2007). Women should know their rights: a husband does not have the right to commit sexual abuse on the grounds that he is married to you or otherwise. You are the owner and keeper of your body. No man can change this whether you are a single or married woman.

Marit Hudson  
Attorney

## Rights for Persons in Intimate Relationships

- The RIGHT to share equally with partner in all decisions and responsibilities in all aspects.
- The RIGHT to grow and explore personal potential without feeling guilty, selfish, or afraid.
- The RIGHT to express opinions and have them given equal consideration.
- The RIGHT to hold your mate responsible his/her behaviour rather than blaming one's self.
- The RIGHT to NEVER be physically/psychologically attacked and terminate relationship if it occurs.
- The RIGHT to not blame yourself if the relationship in which you've invested love and effort ends.

# Messages from Cayman Islands Crisis Centre

## Talking with Children about Community Violence

As the Cayman Islands comes to terms with the horrific death of Estella Scott –Roberts, parents, teachers, and church leaders are faced with the challenge of discussing the tragic incident of community violence with children. Although these may be difficult conversations, they are also essential for the emotional stability of our youth. There is no "right" or "wrong" ways to talk with children about such traumatic events. However, the following suggestions from Dr. David Fassler may be helpful: *David Fassler, M.D., is a child and adolescent psychiatrist practicing in Burlington, Vermont. He is also a clinical professor in the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Vermont College of Medicine.*

- An open and supportive environment where children can ask questions without feeling forced.
- Give children honest answers. Otherwise, it may affect their ability to trust you in the future.
- Use words and concepts children can understand.
- Be prepared to repeat information and explanations several times. It may be hard to grasp.
- Acknowledge and validate the child's thoughts, feelings, and reactions.
- Remember that children tend to personalize situations. For example, they may worry about their own safety or that of friends and relatives, especially those who

## Preventing Child Sexual Abuse

In the last few weeks the Cayman Islands has been shocked by the sexual abuse cases of young children in our community covered in the media. Unfortunately these few cases are only a drop in the bucket compared to the actual sexual assaults suffered by the children of this society. Child Sexual Abuse is not new here as evidenced by the number of adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse encountered by those of us whom assist with prevention, advocacy and healing.

We need to address the root of the problem. We need to break the cycle of child sexual abuse by preventing it from happening in the first place!

Individuals who are sexually abused as children are at far greater risk than their peers for a whole host of psychological, sexual and emotional problems. Common consequences of child sexual abuse include drug and alcohol abuse, promiscuity, a range of sexual problems, depression and suicide. These problems can follow the victim for his or her entire life.

are living somewhere else.

- Children learn from adults and are interested in how they respond to tragic events.
- Don't let children watch too much television with frightening images, it may disturb them.
- **Children who have experienced trauma or losses in the past need extra support and attention.**
- Children who are preoccupied with questions or concerns about safety should be evaluated by a trained and qualified mental health professional. Other signs that a child may need additional help include: ongoing sleep disturbances, intrusive thoughts or worries, recurring fears about death, leaving parents or going to school. If these behaviors persist, ask your child's pediatrician, family physician, or school counselor to help arrange an appropriate referral.
- During these times, children just want to be children. They may not want to think about or discuss violent events.

Fortunately, most children -- even those exposed to trauma -- are quite resilient. However, by creating an open environment where they feel free to ask questions, we can help them cope with stressful events and experiences, and reduce the risk of lasting emotional difficulties.

Carol Graham  
CICC Community Outreach Coordinator



The cure is awareness and common-sense proactive prevention steps that every adult can take. Every concerned adult can learn how to better protect children. Tragedies such as these are preventable, but only if communities will actively embrace the reality of sexual abuse

become empowered to change the social norms surrounding the shame and blame attached to this horrific crime.

There is an excellent child sexual abuse prevention program available to the public and organizations that serve children. This highly-acclaimed program, named Stewards of Children, was developed by Darkness to Light, an international non-profit organization dedicated to reducing the incidence of child sexual abuse.

**The Cayman Islands Crisis Centre has many facilitators available to provide the Stewards of Children, 7 Steps to protect your children workshops. Please contact us at 949-0366 to schedule a workshop for your organization or find the location of a workshop being held in your district.**

Carol Graham  
CICC Community Outreach Coordinator

**Gender Abuse: Zero Tolerance from Childhood to Adulthood**

# Messages from Department of Children & Family Services

## What is Child Abuse:

Any act that does (or can possibly) harm a child, or failure to protect a child against any such harm.

## Impact of Child Abuse on our Society:

The use of physical punishment as a means of disciplining children is well documented throughout history. Statements such as "spare the rod and not the child" has been used as a scapegoat for parents to re-enforce the use of physical punishment.

The current Juveniles Law, 1975 makes reference to cruelty to juveniles stating that "whoever, having attained the age of seventeen years and having the custody, charge or care of any juvenile willfully assaults, ill treats, neglects, abandons or exposes such juvenile, or causes or procures him to be assaulted, ill-treated, neglected, abandoned or exposed, in a manner likely to cause that juvenile unnecessary suffering or injury to health including injury to or loss of sight, or hearing, or limb, or organ of the body and any mental derangement is guilty of an offence."

Case studies have demonstrated that child abuse is not unique to any race, class, nationality or professional sector within any society and it is rooted in cultures.

## Implementation Strategies to address the issue of child Abuse in Cayman

The Department of Children & Family Services in collaboration with joint departments and other agencies work toward effectively managing all aspects of child abuse and neglect investigations. In the Cayman Islands, we encourage parents to use appropriate discipline methods with their children and advocate that children are not exposed to any significant harm that will jeopardize their ability to reach their full potential.

It is the responsibility of joint Departments (DCFS, Police, Health Services and Education) to conduct an investigation into the circumstances of any child where information is received that the child maybe exposed to danger or harm.

The purpose of the investigation is to:

- protect the child & prevent further abuse
- prevent further abuse to the child

## Elderly Abuse in our Society

Elderly persons are just as vulnerable to abuse as children. Abuse against the elderly person may consist of a single act or repeated acts. It may be physical, sexual, verbal or psychological, it may be an act of neglect or an omission to act.

In providing protection to the elderly person:

- The first priority should be his/her safety and protection.
- Ensure to provide respect, dignity and privacy.
- All persons who may be aware of and or have reason to

- assess child's physical and emotional state
- assess the risk of further abuse to the child
- evaluate the need for a further social and medical assessment

Over the years, we have received referrals and carried out investigations for the following:

- children beaten with cable wires, tree limbs, sticks and brooms;
- children locked into a room/closet without any food
- children burnt with irons/stoves
- children kicked and punched;
- children left unsupervised while parent parties or travels
- children sexually abused by a parent/relative
- children denied sleep or unable to complete homework until household chores are completed.

## Growing Areas of concern:

- Increase in promiscuous behaviour amongst school aged females;
- Juveniles being involved in the drug trade by older adults
- Children are victims of early drug usage
- Sexual exploitation in the form of incest and defilement

## Conclusion

We encourage parents to use appropriate discipline with their children and be prompt (the child will associate the misbehaviour with the consequences); avoid making empty threats; state the reason why a punishment is being given; tell the child how long the consequences will last; think before you act; adapt your methods of discipline as the child grows older; discourage negative behaviour; reward the child for good behaviour; try to understand the child's needs and always communicate love to the child; never hit your child when you are angry; be angry at what the child did and not at the child for who he/she is; let your "no" be no; teach children self respect and respect for other and spend quality time with children.

Deborah E. Webb-Sibbles  
Research & Programme Development Manager



suspect that an elderly person is being exposed to harm and or risk must report such concerns to the relevant agencies, namely the police and the Department of Children & Family Services.

In circumstances, where the elderly person do not have the mental capacity and is unable to make an informed decision about their circumstances, consideration should be given to appoint an independent person who have the mental capacity to act as an advocate on behalf of the elderly person.

Deborah E. Webb-Sibbles  
Research & Programme Development Manager

# Myths & Facts

## Childhood



### Bullying

**Myth:** Bullying does not harm children.

**Fact:** It is associated with physical and mental problems.

**Myth:** Children grow out of bullying others.

**Fact:** Without addressing this antisocial behaviour, youth who bully will continue to use their power negatively through adolescence and adulthood.

**Myth:** Bullying does not take place within the family.

**Fact:** It occurs within families and takes the form of repeated aggression and abuse by a family member who believe that he/she has the right /power to disrespect and threaten others.

### Child Abuse: Physical, Sexual, Incest, Neglect

**Myth:** Child abuse rarely takes place.

**Fact:** Statistics indicate that child abuse occurs on a daily basis.

**Myth:** Abused children always come from poor families.

**Fact:** Child abuse occurs regardless of race, socioeconomic background and educational level.

**Myth:** Only girls are sexually abused.

**Fact:** Current research indicates that 1 out of 3-4 girls and 1 out of 4-6 boys will be sexually molested before their 18th birthday.

**Myth:** It is easy to know who is a child abuser.

**Fact:** A child abuser can be anyone!

**Myth:** Children are to be blamed for abuse occurring.

**Fact:** The child is always the victim and the responsibility for the abuse lies solely with the adult.

**Myth:** Strangers are most dangerous to children.

**Fact:** At least 95% of the victims know their abusers.

**Myth:** Abused children will tell someone that they were abused.

**Fact:** Children do not always tell or not right away. They may receive threats not to tell.

**Myth:** Incest only happens in poor families.

**Fact:** Incest occurs in all types of families regardless of their socio-economic status, race and cultural background.

**Myth:** Children are not seriously affected by sexual abuse.

**Fact:** Sexual abuse can be physically and psychologically damaging to victims. The emotional consequences are usually low self-esteem, depression and guilt; and the abuse can have a long term impact on relationships.

**Myth:** Young children can be left unsupervised for short periods

**Fact:** Children of all ages are placed at risk of harm and danger if they are left unsupervised by a responsible adult.

## Adulthood

**Myth:** Domestic violence is a "loss of control."

**Fact:** Violent behavior is a choice. Perpetrators use it to control their victims. Domestic violence is about batterers using their control, not losing their control. Their actions are very deliberate.

**Myth:** The victim is responsible for the violence because she provokes it.

**Fact:** No one asks to be abused. And no one deserves to be abused regardless of what they say or do.

**Myth:** If the victim didn't like it, she would leave.

**Fact:** Victims do not like the abuse. They stay in the relationship for many reasons, including fear and the threat of abuse to their children. Most do eventually leave.

**Myth:** Domestic violence only occurs in a small percentage of relationships.

**Fact:** Estimates are that domestic violence occurs in one fourth to half of all intimate relationships. This applies to heterosexual as well as same-sex relationships and all ages.

**Myth:** Middle- and upper-class women do not get battered as frequently as poor women.

**Fact:** Domestic violence occurs in all socio-economic levels. Because women with money usually have more access to resources, poorer women tend to utilize community agencies and are therefore more visible.

**Myth:** Batterers are violent in all their relationships.

**Fact:** Batterers choose to be violent toward their partners in ways they would never consider treating other people.

**Myth:** Alcohol and drugs cause battering behavior.

**Fact:** Although many abusive partners also abuse alcohol or drugs, this is not the underlying cause of the battering. Many batterers use alcohol and drugs as an excuse to explain their violence. Victims may use alcohol or drugs to numb the pain.

**Myth:** Once a battered woman, always a battered woman.

**Fact:** While some battered women have been in more than one abusive relationship, women who receive domestic violence services are the least likely to enter another abusive relationship.

# Message from WRC

## Violence Effects Everyone - Healing

Many people may be affected by a violent event. Whether it happens to you directly or indirectly - it is normal to feel it personally. How we react depends on the individual. This can depend on his/her personality, past experiences, and connection to the event.

### Mind – Thoughts and Feelings

- Difficulty remembering things and making decisions
- Confusion and racing thoughts
- Fear and safety concerns - Increased need to protect self
- Intrusive images, Replaying the event and/or revenge fantasies
- Feeling helpless, hopeless or powerless
- Emotional rollercoaster and/or numbness
- Feeling not yourself
- Triggering of prior trauma or losses

### Body

- Change in sleep habits – fatigue, insomnia, vivid dreaming
- Eating/appetite problems
- Stomach problems
- Sweating, rapid pulse, chest pains, dizziness, headaches
- Muscle tension
- Panic Attacks
- Nightmares

### Spirit

- Spiritual doubts
- Anger towards God
- Sense of the world being changed, out of balance
- Withdrawal from faith based community
- Denial

### Social

- Withdrawing or isolating from community Breakdown in trust
- Doubts about relationships
- Changes in sexual activity
- False or distorted generalizations about others

### **What can we do to help ourselves and others?**

Different strategies work for different people. In the aftermath of violence and other trauma, people sometimes find themselves at a loss for how to deal with their feelings and reactions.

- **Diet and Exercise** - Trying to eat regularly and engage in some form of physical activity is very beneficial in reducing stress and negativity. It can be tempting to eat sweets, comfort foods and use more alcohol or other drugs than usual. Alcohol and drugs may postpone some feelings or reactions, but they can actually make them worse.
- **Rest and Relaxation** - Sleep is crucial to the healing process. Our brain spends time problem solving and healing us physically and emotionally while we sleep.
- **Support System**
- You may sometimes want to be by yourself and that is fine. However, isolating yourself from those who know and care about you may make matters worse. You may also seek professional counselors.
- **Offering Support to Others**
- Many people find strength in participating in special events or community activities which honor victims or offer support to their loved ones.

### **When will I feel better?**

There is no exact time limit to healing. During the healing process we may experience a range of emotions that are at times one extreme to the other. It's important to be patient with ourselves and those around us as we all may be in a state of healing. It's easy to point the finger and expect others to heal the way we want them to, however, just like everyone is different in how they respond to violence we are also different in our recovery time.

Cindy Blekaitis  
Counsellor/Educational Facilitator



## WRC Services Available

### **Counselling & Advocacy**

- Provide emotional support & guidance to victims of domestic violence and sexual assault.

### **Legal Advice**

- Free advice @ Walk-in clinics Tuesdays 5-6:30pm & Phone line on Fridays 2-5pm, 945-8869.

### **Monthly Newsletter**

- Full of information relevant to women and families, email [wrc@gov.ky](mailto:wrc@gov.ky) to subscribe.

### **Resource Library**

- Over 150 books available for free rental.

### **Educational Programmes**

- Facilitation of programmes aimed to empower and educate women and families.
  - Healthy Relationships Series
  - Clothesline Project
  - Owing Up
  - Honouring Women Month
  - Domestic Violence Intervention Training Programme (DVITP)

**Gender Abuse: Zero Tolerance from Childhood to Adulthood**

## Message from Legal Befrienders Service

There are a number of legal civil remedies which are available to victims of domestic violence through the courts.

Victims who are married to or live together as husband and wife with the perpetrator of the abuse can apply to the Summary Court for relief. The law which applied is the Summary Jurisdiction Domestic Violence Law and orders can be obtained for restraining the perpetrator from assaulting or threatening the victim. Orders can also be obtained to remove and/or prevent the perpetrator from returning to the matrimonial home. If the victim of the abuse does not fall within the ambit of the Summary Jurisdiction Domestic Violence Law so that an application can be made to the Summary Court then an application can be made to the Grand Court. Victims



who are not married or live together with the perpetrator can bring a suit under the Grand Court Rules where the relief which can be sought are

restraining orders or ouster orders or a non-molestation/non harassment orders.

The **Legal Befrienders** are available each Tuesday from 5:00pm at the Women's Resource Centre and each Friday from 2:00pm via the phone line, to offer advice on an individual basis to all victims of domestic violence. *The Legal Befrienders, are a group of attorneys who volunteer their time to offer advice to victims of domestic violence.*

*Zena Merren, Appleby*

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## Clothesline Project

This project brings together survivors of all forms of violence or supporters of victims/survivors to design T-shirts as a testament to their experience. These deeply personal expressions are then hung on a clothesline for public display to air the issue of violence in our homes and communities. We recognize that males are also affected by domestic violence (as witnesses or victims when they are boys and as victims when they are men). Therefore, we do welcome their participation should they wish to use this project as a medium to display their story and engage in the healing process.

For many survivors, making a shirt and finally seeing their story hang in unison with the stories of others allows them to own their pain and express their anger. The purpose of the Clothesline is:

- To allow survivors to heal with dignity through artistic expression and community support.
- To raise awareness of the impact violence has on women, families and society as a whole.
- To motivate action against violence.

**The Clothesline Project will be displayed at the GT Post Office and Hospital.**

### What Goes on the Clothesline?

Each shirt tells an individual story. The t-shirts are colour-coded for different types of violence. However, the codes are not mandatory should participants wish to use other garments that are significant to them.

- White - a memorial for a victims of murder.
- Yellow - the artist survived physical battery or abuse.
- Red - the artist survived rape or sexual assault.
- Green - the artist survived incest or child sexual abuse.
- Purple (child sized shirt)—the artist witnessed or experienced family abuse as a child.

### Do you want to paint a t-shirt?

Call the WRC @ 949-0006 to paint a t-shirt during the 16 Days Campaign and it will be displayed at the closing service on 10 December.



## Religious Perspective on Gender Abuse



**We** the Pastor and members of Faith Christian Church, 105 Kipling St. Bodden Town, want to take this time to let everyone know that we support the NO Tolerance towards gender violence and we will support the fight against gender violence with prayer, fasting, education, and counselling. Keep the fight against the demon active.

God bless and keep you all.

Yours truly,

James D. Jackson, Pastor

**The** issue of abuse has been an issue that has been ignored for too long. We must recognize this great plague and scourge on our society must be not only addressed on a continuous basis, but it must be eradicated totally from our land. Therefore, we can no longer be passive participants in this war, we must become proactive.

While there are many organizations and groups that need to become involved and have become involved, the Church must see the importance of leading the way in ensuring our society become free of gender abuse. I believe strongly this is an issue that Jesus would have made a priority to address.

The church can become proactive by preaching and crying out against this horrible crime. It can encourage marches and participate in marches against violence. It can create a zero policy against those that perpetrate this type of crime. This means not encouraging the woman to return to her abusive husband because the "Bible say so", but creating a safe place or help find resources for the victim. It also means not allowing any further abuse of the victim to take place, whether it is a child, woman, or a male.

The church must not accept or condone gender violence under any condition. Any member of a congregation that is an abuser should be reported to the authorities, be removed from membership of the church, and publicly exposed for their actions. This would send a very clear message where the church stands.

As a leader in the church I believe that any help to change should be offered to the abuser. However, the priority should be given to the abuse to ensure safety and protection from ; psychological, physical, financial, spiritual and other forms of abuse.

Let us continue to partner together to make our society a place of love, tolerance, and acceptance. A place where we can be a true model of what Christ intended it to be.

Conway King,  
Pastor & Counsellor

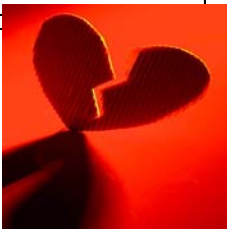
## Messages from Young Survivors

### "Through It All!"

My story is a story that no young girl would want to go through, but here it is:  
I once thought that nothing like this would ever happen to me, but it did.  
I was touched in places that I didn't know about at the time... more than once, and more than one occasion... then it got over all over as I got older.  
I tried to look for love but I was looking in all the wrong places. It was hard, for I made mistakes and I thought it was going to end, but it started again.  
My first pregnancy was all right, but the bad part was that I was only 15 years old. Then I went back and got pregnant again.  
Bad things started to happen - when I got pregnant he told me he didn't want it, so he left me. Then I moved on to try to find somebody who would love me for me, and I did.  
He didn't like that, so he beat me and held me up by my neck and he hit me in my stomach just because he didn't want to be a father, he said.  
But, I made it, and I am trying to live my life one day at a time... that's my story.  
...Someone that made it and stayed strong through it all!!

### "My Story"

In the community around me everyone seems so happy.  
No one feels my pain and sorrow.  
I am afraid to give my heart to someone because of what happened.  
I feel so sad and unhappy.  
I was sexually abused by my own family member. I was changed by that... I felt more scared. I could not speak for days. I was hurt badly.  
I know that I could not go back and change what had happened.  
Be inspired by the words that I say: Parents, take care of your children!  
There are a lot of things going on right now around you - Take Caution of what is going on!  
Be very careful, watch your children.  
Come, help us put a stop to all of this.



### "Broken Hearts"

There are children, women and even men who are sexually abused, raped and even emotionally abused every day around the world. Their hearts are broken and having gone through this horrible experience, it changes who they are.  
I am the youngest child in my family, and never thought I would be sexually abused, especially at a young age. As I got older, my whole attitude towards life has changed.  
I was always shy around people and never made friends, and I constantly thought to myself, "Was I the only one?"  
As I reached my teenage years, my sister one day told me that she too was sexually abused. Not only she was sexually abused, she was raped more than once. It tore me up inside to know she was raped. She also told me our older sister was raped.  
We cried all night because of what happened to us. Now, my sister who told me of these events is in heaven with our grandparents.  
To this day I still cry because I miss her so much. I'm hoping that she would knock on my door just to check up on me, or even say, "Come smell my feet nah - they smell rosy."  
I hope that one day all this abuse and rape is stopped and our world can be a better place for us.

### Children's Speak Quilt

*Joint project with the National Gallery, the Crisis Centre, funded by Hedge Fund Cares (HFC)*

The goal of "The Children Speak" project is to provide awareness and education to children in Cayman with the ultimate goal of preventing child abuse and encouraging open communication with those who can help; to allow healing through the artistic process of creating a quilt; and to become a permanent visual reminder that the Cayman community will not tolerate child neglect and abuse.

Quilt will be on display at  
Books & Books, Camana Bay.

## Message from RCIPS-Family Support Unit

In 2000 the Royal Cayman Islands Police Service formed the Family Support Unit, which was headed by then Woman Chief Inspector Denzie Carter. At the time the Commissioner of Police Mr. Anthony Grey saw the need to have a sanitized unit to deal with the rising complaints of Domestic Violence within the Cayman Islands.

The Unit was incorporated with the Juvenile Bureau and was detailed to investigate matters of domestic violence, offences against young persons under the age of seventeen, elderly abuse and issues involving the mentally challenged. The team consisted of three Constables a Sergeant and the Chief Inspector and was housed at the George Town Police Station.

In early 2001 the Unit moved to Smith Road where it is still currently housed and has seen many changes.

The function of the FSU staff in addition to Domestic Violence and Juvenile investigations also carry out a function called the Family Liaison: officers are detailed to cases such as murder, rape and road fatalities and act as the liaison between the families of such victims and the investigating team.

The Unit maintains partnership with many agencies such as the Department of Children and Family Services, Crisis Centre, Women's Resource Centre, Legal Department, Education, Hospital Authority Services, Cayman Islands Counseling Centre National Parenting Program and Department of Community Rehabilitation; this is where all partnering agencies work together to investigate and address domestic violence and child abuse within our Islands.

Once a domestic matter is received at FSU; whether by a referral of the first responding officers or by a victim walking in, an investigation process begins. The case is then assigned to an officer who will sit with the victim/complainant and hear their complaint; once an offence can be established the gathering of evidence then begins to prepare a file for Legal perusal. The file may consist of relevant statements outlining what occurred to the victim, witness statements of persons who may have seen what

occurred and any medical evidence such as a doctor's report or photographs to support the allegation.

Investigations involving young persons are handled rapidly and the focus remains on obtaining a successful prosecution to the offending person/s. Child sexual and physical abuses are handled by way of team effort; HSA and DCFS immediately become involved and the interest of the child becomes priority, while the gathering of evidence is critical in the initial hours following such allegations the mental health and welfare of the young person must be part of the team's primary focus.

It should be noted not all matters are investigated with the intention of a prosecution; however it should be noted that the RCIPS has adopted a Zero Tolerance to Domestic Violence and once a written complaint detailing an offence is received an investigation in conjunction with the Legal Department must be carried out.

Matters that would not be investigated for the above purpose would be matters such as domestic disputes; these are handled by way of a meeting and the persons involved, during which they may voluntarily attend counseling by way of a referral to one of the Partnering Agencies. Matters such as Divorce Decrees, Restraining Orders, and Temporary Orders (when divorce is pending) are also enforced by the Unit and persons may be breached and taken before the Courts for Intervention.

Domestic Violence is a problem in our Community which can not be ignored and with the mentioned Partnering Agencies we hope to reduce the number of domestic instances that occur in our community. We all must however become responsible and understand that these insidious crimes not only effect the persons involved but the community on a whole, as such we must stand united infighting against these crimes to ensure that our families are afforded healthy lifestyles!



Members of the RCIPS Family Support Unit

Acting Inspector FSU  
Sgt. Dorris Morris-Herrera

## Remember White Ribbon Day

In 1999, the United Nations General Assembly declared November 25 the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women (IDEVAW) and the White Ribbon has become the symbol for that day.



Gender Abuse: Zero Tolerance from Childhood to Adulthood



## I Got Flowers Today

I got flowers today.  
It wasn't my birthday or any other special day.  
We had our first argument last night,  
And he said a lot of cruel things that really hurt me.  
I know he is sorry and didn't mean the things he said.  
Because he sent me flowers today.

I got flowers today.  
It wasn't our anniversary any other special day.  
Last night, he threw me into a wall and started to choke me.  
It seemed like a nightmare.  
I couldn't believe it was real.  
I woke up this morning sore and bruised all over.  
I know he must be sorry.  
Because he sent me flowers today.

I got flowers today,  
and it wasn't Mother's Day or any other special day.  
Last night, he beat me up again.  
And it was much worse than all the other times.  
If I leave him, what will I do?  
How will I take care of my kids?  
What about money?  
I'm afraid of him and scared to leave.  
But I know he must be sorry.  
Because he sent me flowers today.

I got flowers today.  
Today was a very special day.  
It was the day of my funeral.  
Last night, he finally killed me.  
He beat me to death.  
If only I had gathered enough courage and strength to leave him,  
I would not have gotten flowers...today.

Paulette Kelly

## How to Get Help

**Cayman Islands Crisis Centre**  
**943-2422**

**24 hr Hotline**

Provides shelter and advice to victims of domestic violence.

**Dept. of Children and Family Services**  
**949-0290**

Personal advice & financial assistance.

**Department of Community Rehabilitation**  
**949-1693**

Help for perpetrators of abuse.

**Dept. of Counselling Centre**  
**949-8789**

Personal, Marriage, Family and Chemical Addiction counselling.

**Employee Assistance Programme**

Personal, marriage, and family counselling

**Legal Befriender Service**

Free legal advice @ Walk-in clinic on Tuesdays 5-6:30pm & Phone line on Fridays 2-5:00 pm, 945-8869, coordinated by WRC.

**RCIPS-Family Support Unit**  
**946-9185 or 911 (Emergency)**

Police Unit that deals with victims of crimes involving minors, domestic abuse, sexual abuse or child abuse.

**Women's Resource Centre**  
**949-0006**

Counselling, Advocacy, Legal Advice Services and Educational Programmes.



25 November  
2008

# 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Abuse

10 December  
2008

Gender Abuse: Zero Tolerance from Childhood to Adulthood

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	<p><b>24 Nov</b> Daybreak-Ministry of Health &amp; Human Services &amp; WRC</p>	<p><b>25 NOV</b> <b>Opening Ceremony for 16 Days Campaign</b> @ Lawn of Government Admin. Bldg. 1-1:30pm (open to all) <b>Legal Befrienders Clinic</b> @ WRC 5-6:30pm <b>Talk Today- WRC White Ribbon Day</b> International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women Clothesline Project*</p>	<p><b>26 NOV</b> <b>Healthy Relationships Workshop:Partnership &amp; Equality</b> @ WRC 5:30-7:30pm (open to all) <b>Youth Flex-WRC &amp; DCFS</b> Daybreak-Terry Delaney Clothesline Project* Children Speak Quilt**</p>	<p><b>27 NOV</b> Clothesline Project* Children Speak Quilt**</p>	<p><b>28 NOV</b> <b>Extended Legal Befrienders Phoneline</b> 945-8869 9-5pm Daybreak-WRC &amp; CICC Clothesline Project* Children Speak Quilt**</p>	<p><b>29 Nov</b> International Women Right Defenders Day <b>7 Steps to Protecting Children from Sexual Abuse</b> @ WRC 9-1pm Clothesline Project* Children Speak Quilt**</p>
<p><b>30 NOV</b> <b>Safe Harbour Community Lutheran Church Service</b> @ Ritz Carlton Conference Centre 10 am (open to all) Clothesline Project* Children Speak Quilt**</p>	<p><b>1 DEC</b> World Aids Day Clothesline Project* Children Speak Quilt**</p>	<p><b>2 DEC</b> International Day for the Elimination of Slavery &amp; Human Trafficking <b>Legal Befrienders Clinic</b> @ WRC 5-6:30pm Clothesline Project* Children Speak Quilt**</p>	<p><b>3 DEC</b> <b>Healthy Relationships Workshop:Problem Solving &amp; Conflict Resolution</b> @ WRC 5:30-7:30pm (open to all) Daybreak-DCFS Clothesline Project* Children Speak Quilt**</p>	<p><b>4 DEC</b> <b>Clothesline T-Shirt Painting</b> @ WRC 5-7pm Clothesline Project* Children Speak Quilt**</p>	<p><b>5 DEC</b> <b>Extended Legal Befrienders Phoneline</b> 945-8869 9-5pm Daybreak-WRC Talk Today- WRC &amp; BPW Clothesline Project* Children Speak Quilt**</p>	<p><b>6 DEC</b> <b>Clothesline T-Shirt Painting</b> @ WRC 10-1pm <b>7 Steps to Protecting Children from Sexual Abuse</b> @ WRC 2-6pm Anniversary of Montreal Massacre Clothesline Project* Children Speak Quilt**</p>
<p><b>7 DEC</b> Clothesline Project* Children Speak Quilt**</p>	<p><b>8 DEC</b> Clothesline Project* Children Speak Quilt**</p>	<p><b>9 DEC</b> <b>Legal Befrienders Clinic</b> @ WRC 5-6:30pm Clothesline Project* Children Speak Quilt**</p>	<p><b>10 DEC</b> International Human Rights Day <b>Healthy Relationships Workshop:Breaking Free or Rebuilding</b> @ WRC 5:30-7:30pm (open to all) <b>Closing Service</b> @ SMB Public Beach 6:30pm Daybreak- HRC &amp; BPW Clothesline Project* Children Speak Quilt**</p>			

\* Displayed at GT Post Office & Hospital, call 949-0006 to paint a t-shirt.

\*\* Displayed at Books & Books Camana Bay.

For more information or to register for events please call 949-0006 or email Miriam.foster@gov.ky.