

Breaking the Cycle of Violence

Who are you?

Who are we?

- MGRM has been around for just over seventeen years. As an organisation, MGRM's main aims were to bring about change that could be translated in the equality of civil rights and opportunities for the LGBTIQ community in Malta. The organisation's lobby for such changes can be witnessed in the changes in legislation that happened in the span of the last four years
- Over the years, MGRM felt the need to support individuals from the community and the Rainbow Support Service was initiated
- What happened since?

Why are we here today?

- Breaking the Cycle of Violence is a project being done in collaboration with the Human Rights and Integration Directorate within the Ministry for EU Affairs and Equality. The aim of the project is to reach out to vulnerable individuals in the community who identify as women. Other participating groups are people with disability, migrant women and Scouts. The project aims to reduce the risk of gender-based violence towards women who might find themselves in a more vulnerable position because of the intersectionality from which they operate. In our case, the project is aimed to engage women from the LGBTIQ community and support them in becoming better able to support others in accessing services, recognising patterns of abuse and prevent violent episodes.

What's happening in these four sessions of this training?

Session 1: Introduction: The Cycle of Violence and Other Basic Concepts	19th June 2018	16:00 – 17:00
Session 2: Case Studies	26th June 2018	16:00 – 17:00
Session 3: Case Studies	3rd July 2018	16:00 – 17:00
Session 4: Services available and pathways to care	10th July 2018	16:00 – 17:00

The four criteria

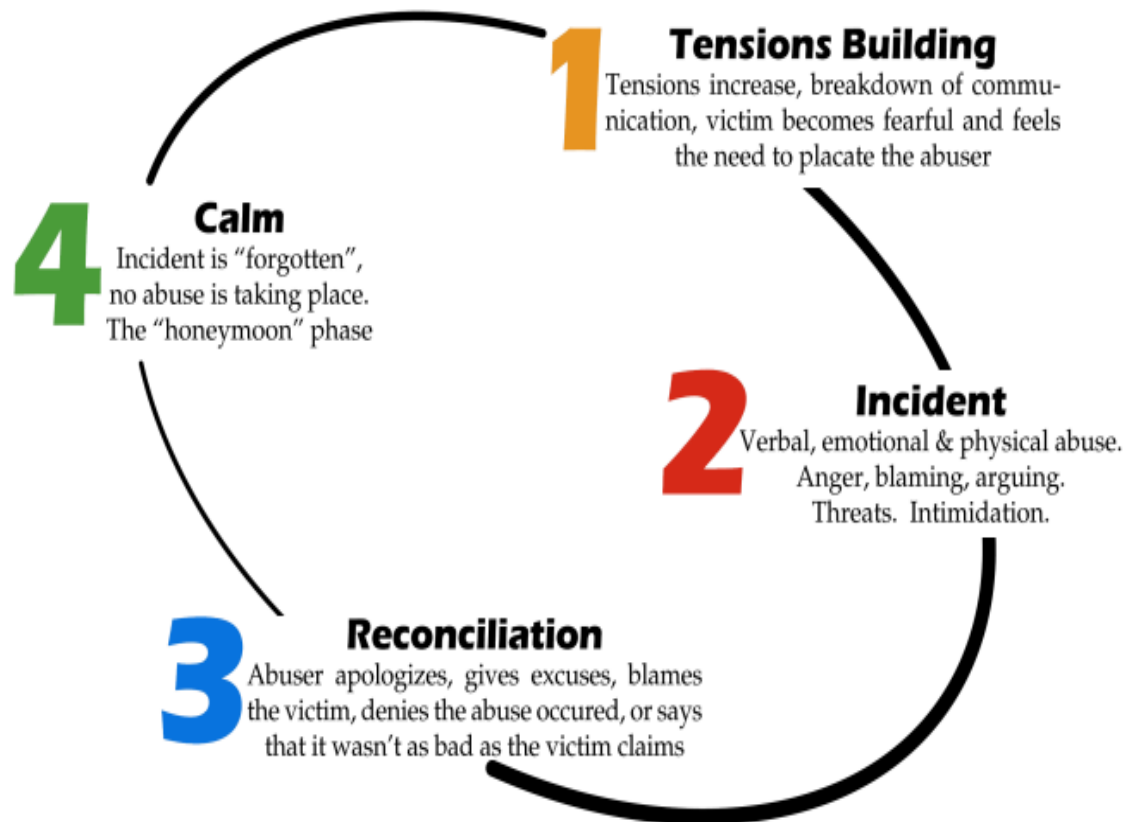
- Gender stereotype
- Sexual harassment
- Sexual assault
- Domestic violence

LGBTIQ Issues to keep in mind

- Terms
- Gender Identity
- Gender Expression
- Sexual Orientation
- Sex
- Others

The Cycle of Violence

Cycle of Abuse



Prevalence

- **bisexual women** seem to be at **greatest risk** both in heterosexual relationships (Messinger, 2011) and in lesbian relationships (Balsam & Szymanski, 2005). It is possible that this finding is related to the role jealousy plays in IPV. Because the partners of bisexual women experience more potential threats, there are more frequent triggers for violence.
- “There is an underlying feminist paradigm that propelled the domestic violence movement in which patriarchy and sexism are the root causes of violence towards women in relationships.” (Murray & Mobley, 2009).

Stigma

- A mark of **disgrace** associated with a particular **circumstance, quality** or **person** (Oxford Dictionary, 2018)
- Members of same-sex couples often feel the need to **conceal** their relationships from others in order to avoid stigmatisation (Frost, 2011)
- **Inverse relationship** between stigmatization and utilisation of health-care services
- Sexual minority individuals regularly encounter heterosexist hassles, such as derogatory comments and poor service, in their day-to-day lives

(Silverschanz, Cortina, Konik, & Magley, 2008; Swim, Johnston, & Pearson, 2009; Frost, 2011; Oxford, 2018).

Minority Stress

- “Victims’ reluctance to out themselves may hinder them from turning to family, friends, or the police for support, further isolating them in abusive relationships.” Ard & Makadon, 2011
- Meant to explain the production of mental health disparities between sexual minorities and heterosexuals
- **Stigma processes** for sexual minorities are dichotomized:
 - **Distal Processes** perceived stigma (i.e., perceived stigma)
 - **Proximal Processes** (i.e., internalized stigma)
 - **Internalized stigma** develops through exposure to perceived stigma as sexual minorities are acculturated in a society that openly devalues their sexual minority identities

(Meyer, 1995; Williamson, 2000)

Internalised Homophobia

- The gay person's **direction of negative social attitudes toward the self**, leading to a devaluation of the self and resultant internal conflicts and poor self-regard.”
- Internalised homophobia is directly related to physical and sexual IPV victimisation among lesbian and bisexual women

(Meyer & Dean, 1998; Balsam & Szymanski, 2005)

- There is an underlying feminist paradigm that propelled the domestic violence movement in which patriarchy and sexism are root causes of violence towards women in relationships (Murray & Mobley, 2009).
- If an individual doesn't fight back then they are weak, whereas if they fight back then they are no longer a victim but may be perceived as a perpetrator from a societal perspective.

Mutual Battering

- Self-defence?
- Intent to hurt?
- Mutual battering - is a misapplied and damaging concept: victims may fight back but this needs to be perceived as an act of self-defence and not abuse
- However, when victims fight back, they usually feel **guilty** for their own behaviour
- Many contingencies of SSIPV inhibit individuals from reporting abuse as individuals fear that it will not be perceived as a clear-cut case

(Peterman & Dixon, 2003)

Obstacles in accessing services

- Outing
- The perpetrator might threaten the victim that they will out them
- If the victim is not out as yet it would mean that no one can corroborate their story
- If the perpetrator is not out they might have isolated the victim from the community
- Homophobia
- Allows social tolerance and apathy towards the abuse
- Couples try to prove that stereotypes are wrong hence that a same-sex relationship can function like another relationship, so when violence happens they minimise it, hide it or deny it

- Intersectionality adds another dimension to homophobia
- Internalised oppression
- The perpetrator might use the victim's negative sense of self to exercise control
- Community Ties
- Some individuals formed ties with the LGB community as a result of their current relationship, hence if the relationship breaks down that individual might lose their new friends as well as ties with the community
- Since the LGB community is small, survivors might have a more difficult time to convince their friends that their partner is a perpetrator (especially if the person is an old and trusted friend of theirs)
- Re-victimisation

- Studies show that LGB individuals are reluctant to seek help. This is due to “invisibility, homophobia, and lack of understanding of the unique safety concerns in a close-knit community” (Duke & Davidson, 2009)
- Shelters are gender-segregated. Hence, victim and perpetrator can be given access to the same shelter
- Discrimination in the legal system
- Homophobia shown by police can be a further limitation to reporting violence
- Minimisation and trivialisation of the relationship as well as the abuse during reporting
- The shelters are mainly aimed at cisgender women victims

Intersectionality

- What do you understand by intersectionality?

A Patriarchal Assumption

- What other assumptions do we take as a given?
- Other social constructs

Session II

Case Studies

Outline of session

- In sessions II and III we will be looking at various case studies that will present us with scenarios of violence. We will be looking at four different case studies in each session allowing forty minutes for each case study. The exercise will be carried out as follows:
 - Introducing the scenario
 - Identifying theme and key persons in scenario
 - Reflecting team
 - Bystander approach – What would you do in that scenario?
 - Other options

Case Study I: Down Over

- Your friend constantly receives text messages from her girlfriend. She asks her where she is, who she's with, what she's doing. This isn't just a friendly chat; you get the feeling that she's obsessed and jealous, and always needs to know her every move. She has never told you that she's uncomfortable with this but you are concerned that this is an unhealthy relationship

Other options:

- Do nothing. It's none of my business
- Tell my friend that I'm concerned about her and ask if she feels uncomfortable about anything going on in her relationship
- Tell my friend that I'm concerned about what I see as her girlfriend trying to control her
- Talk to some of our mutual friends, let them know what I've observed, and ask them if they too have concerns about the relationship
- Talk to a person or a professional I trust, and ask them for advice about what to do
- Tell my friend that she should consider seeing a counsellor or another professional, because her relationship seems unhealthy and she could use some support and suggestions about how to make it better

Cased Study II: Dangerous Play

- You're at a party where people are drinking. Your friend has gotten drunk and a guy is trying to convince her to go into a bedroom with him. She seems reluctant.

Other Options:

- Do nothing. It's really none of my business
- Try to get my friend away from the guy and tell the guy that he has to be real careful dealing sexually with a drunk woman
- I should find some of his friends and try to convince them to get him to leave her alone
- Ask my friend how she feels and whether she wants help getting home
- Try to find another friend, the host of the party, or someone who seems responsible and ask them to assist me in defusing this situation, and warn them that they might have a legal responsibility to act
- Get a group of my friends together, female and male, and try to figure out a creative way to get them to go separate ways tonight, when she's obviously had too much to drink

Case Study III: Slap Shot

- You're in the hallway at the office. You see a couple you know arguing. At one point one of them pushes her girlfriend into the wall. Neither of them are close friend of yours, but you do hang around with the same group of people. Other colleagues have seen what happened but did not do anything about it

Other Options

- Nothing. It's none of my business
- Attempt to distract the couple somehow. Maybe by talking loudly, in order to defuse the situation
- Shout out something so that everyone in the hallway hears, like "Hey, what are you doing? Leave her alone!" and stick around to make sure the situation has "cooled" down
- Talk to the girl at some point and let her know you saw what was going on and am willing to help her. Find some literature about abusive relationships and offer to share it with her
- I shouldn't do anything immediately. But as soon as possible, that day or later, I should talk to the abusive partner or one of her friends -- and tell her that what I witnessed was not ok, and she needs to get some help
- Talk about the incident with a friend, colleague or professional I can trust, and ask their advice on what to do

Case Study IV: Foul Ball

- You're hanging out after school one day with some of your female friends. Guys in a group nearby start making sexual gestures and harassing remarks about one of your friends who is currently presenting as gender fluid. The guys are commenting about her body and clothing and teasing her that she is dressed as she is to attract the attention. You can tell your friend is getting upset, but no one else is saying anything.

Other Options:

- I shouldn't say anything; it's not worth the hassle
- Try to convince my friends as a group that we should tell the guys to stop being punks
- Tell the guys to quit the sexist talk, saying something like "I'm offended by how you're talking to my friend. Have you guys ever heard of sexual harassment?"
- Ask my friend if she wants to leave
- Say nothing now. Later talk to my friends about what to do next time if something like this happens
- Talk to a trusted professional and ask them for some advice about how to handle situations like this

Session 4

- In this final session we will be having a look at different services available. The services being presented directly work with clients who are or were victims of gender-based, domestic and/or intimate partner violence. Following this we will be discussing possible ways of how to empower individuals to seek support in moments of needs.

Domestic Violence Unit

- **MISSION STATEMENT**

The Domestic Violence Unit aims to provide quality social work service to adults and their children suffering abuse in family and intimate relationships. The DVU is committed to the promotion of a society with zero tolerance to violence.

- **THE SERVICE**

The Domestic Violence Service was set up in September 1994 with the aim of providing specialised social work services to victims of domestic violence. The service is made up of a team of professional social workers, who provide support to victims of domestic violence and their children. It aims at supporting victims at the time of crises by providing them with immediate assistance to meet their immediate needs, helping them develop a safety plan, as well as providing ongoing support.

AIMS & OBJECTIVES

- To support service users over 18 years who suffer abuse within intimate relationships, and to help them better understand and address their situation;
- to help service users understand that they do not deserve to be abused;
- to help service users develop safety plans;
- to encourage self-empowerment;
- to help service users find shelter when it is necessary;
- to link service users with other services or professionals;
- to enable service users take control of their lives;
- to help service users along with their children to overcome the effects of growing in a violent environment;
- to contribute to public education on domestic violence;
- to formulate inter-agency domestic violence procedures and to work in liaison with the concerned agencies towards negotiating these procedures and applying them;
- to work towards developing a society with zero tolerance to violence.

Managing Abusive Behaviour Services

- **MISSION STATEMENT**

From abuse to respect through awareness and responsibility.

THE SERVICE

- This service was set up in January 1999. It aims to assist men who are abusive in intimate relationships, to become aware of, understand and take responsibility for their behaviour, thus encouraging change. This is done through a group programme spanning over 22 weeks. Prior to acceptance to the programme, perpetrators have individual sessions with a professional who assesses their suitability for the group. Through attendance in the programme, perpetrators are helped to change from being abusive to start being respectful in their beliefs and, subsequently in their behaviour. The service also liaises with the Domestic Violence Unit so as to provide a feedback loop regarding the progress of the perpetrator. The service users are also provided with a social work service when required.
- Following the group programme, the participants are also encouraged to receive continued support through an open support group. Support on an individual basis is also provided in times of crises.

AIMS & OBJECTIVES

The main aims of the Managing Abusive Behaviour Services are to help abusive men:

- learn to stop the abuse
- learn to identify the danger signs
- learn to break out of isolation
- learn safer ways of expressing strong feelings
- learn to build healthy relationships
- take responsibility for their behaviour
- The Managing Abusive Behaviour Services are committed to:
- developing and contributing to services for the safety of women and children;
- contributing to public education on domestic violence;
- working towards developing a society with zero tolerance to violence.

Għabex Emergency Shelter

- **MISSION STATEMENT**

The Għabex Emergency Shelter is committed to provide a safe environment to women and their children suffering violence in family and intimate relationships as well as women victims of Human Trafficking.

THE SERVICE

The Ghabex Emergency Shelter was set up in October 2000. Its aim is to provide an immediate safe environment to female victims of domestic violence and their children, who require immediate protection. The shelter programme is based on the belief that women and children have a right to protection from violence and abuse and that any woman, regardless of socio-economic background, status and age may be subjected to abuse. The service offers a setting conducive to self healing to women and their children who suffer emotional, physical, sexual and any other form of domestic violence.

The women's stay at the shelter is aimed at a maximum period of three months, after which service users will move on to a second stage shelter, or to any alternative accommodation that would have been identified during their stay at Ghabex. During these three months, staff at Ghabex support the women in their daily needs, and will also work with them to draw up an action plan for their future.

AIMS & OBJECTIVES

- to provide 24-hour crisis intervention to women suffering violence in intimate and family relationships;
- to provide safe refuge to women and children requiring emergency and temporary shelter in a safe environment;
- to provide professional support that includes social work intervention, case reviews and other individual work;
- to women and children leaving abusive relationships so that they may begin;
- to deal with the effects of abuse and work towards making concrete plans for the future;
- to provide a non-judgmental service that respects women's right to self-determination;
- to help empower women and to support them in the decisions that they make;
- to increase women's and children's awareness of the dynamics and adverse effects of violence and to help them understand that abuse is neither acceptable nor justified;
- to help women establish links with other community resources;
- to join efforts with other agencies who address family violence to provide a more holistic service and coordinated response to persons suffering abuse;
- to network closely with other shelters so as to ensure the best utilisation of services for the maximum benefit of service users;
- to promote a society with zero tolerance to violence.

Dar Merhba Bik

- The Sisters of the Good Shepherd had been looking after girls and women in difficulty ever since congregation came to Malta in 1858. As times changed, bringing different ways of living in the community, it was decided to convert the Good Shepherd farmhouse into a shelter for abused women. The Sisters were realizing that the problem of Domestic Violence was a social problem that needed to be tackled immediately and with serious care. Extensive renovations were carried out on the former farmhouse and Dar Merhba Bik was opened in 1981. The mission statement focuses on the mission of reconciliation entrusted to the Sisters by the Church. That is, our relationship with those we meet is hoped to be a means of encountering the healing touch of Jesus the Good Shepherd, to help the person regain her sense of dignity and self-worth that may have been damaged by the hate experienced in Domestic Violence.
- Dar Merhba Bik offers shelter to victims of domestic violence and their children and to help them establish a way of life which best meets their needs and which best helps them to develop their potential.

Other shelters:

- Fondazzjoni Dar il-Hena
- Dar Qalb ta' Gesu
- Dar Tereza Spinelli
- Dar Emmaus, Gozo

The Commission on Domestic Violence

- The Commission on Domestic Violence
- The Commission on Domestic Violence was set up under Article 3 of the Domestic Violence Act (Chapter 481) on March 1, 2006. The main role of the Commission is that of advising the Minister responsible for social policy on all aspects of Domestic Violence.
- These aspects include:
 - (i) combating against domestic violence, especially by raising awareness on the problem.
 - (ii) suggesting areas for research, recommending policy amendments, and identifying training for professional groups.
- The Commission aims at increasing awareness and understanding about domestic violence by creating awareness raising campaigns based on specific themes. Such themes are generally aimed towards providing educational messages and information on how one can get help and at prevention.
- In its work, the Commission on Domestic Violence consults and liaises with various stakeholders. Through such consultations the Commission provides recommendations for policy, services and legislation based on evidence-based research.

Service Provision: Reprogramming and Advocacy

- Assess the service provision by
 - Being aware of the myths and barriers that exist about the LGB community
 - Evaluating the inclusivity of the organisation/ practice
- How can you show that your service provision is inclusive?
 - Advertisements/ advertising campaigns should for example: include same-sex couples, gender neutral vocabulary
 - Offer a more LGB affirmative approach, this would mean that the staff/ you would need further training in this area

- Duke and Davidson (2009) suggest a model of Advocacy Training which follows the following points:
- Aim:
 - Gain additional information about the LGB community in general
 - Learn about SSIPV
 - Be aware of the tools of abuse and unique barriers experienced by LGB individuals
 - Learn how to create a safe environment for survivors of SSIPV
 - Identify ways how you/ your organisation can outreach to survivors of SSIPV and promote awareness about SSIPV

- Challenge the stereotypes and myths about LGB individuals
- Create a more inclusive environment by:
 - Eliminating the ‘us versus them’ mind-set ...by using more inclusive language and visuals
 - Having a more inclusive environment benefits all your service users
 - Allow the survivor the define their relationship to the perpetrator
 - Encourage other team members to become advocates and to challenge their stereotypes/ heteronormative ideas