Preventing Secondary Victimisation in Domestic Violence

Dace Kavasa
Irina Frolova
Resource Centre for Women MARTA
Who are we?

• MARTA - since 05/2000

• To:
  – Promote gender equality, particularly protection of women’s rights and interests;
  – Support women participation in government and NGO processes,
  – Support women in vulnerable situations, including prevention of violence, support for trafficking victims etc.
Economic Factors

- My mom was drinking; we were neglected; our hair was never braided...
- There was never money, no toys; we went to school as ugly ducklings.
- I always thought – when I grow up I will have everything, and I will be independent!
- Poverty
- Debts
- Low status job
- Siblings need financial support
- Sense of responsibility for children/family
- Debts of family members
- Husband's debts
- Low wages
- Satisfaction of basic needs
- Earn to satisfy addictions – alcohol, drugs
- Satisfaction of need for luxury – jobless
- Loss of home

Psychological Factors

- Social outcasts
- Bullying
- Effect of violence
- Lack of self-confidence
- Re-victimization
- Low self-esteem
- Neglect, indifferent treatment in childhood
- Dependence on a man
- Mental illness

Cultural Factors

- I seemed to know it early from the childhood. Everywhere I looked there was sex. From the early childhood I knew that many things can be accomplished through sex; that you allow others to subject yourself to a lot of abuse and that much can be achieved this way.
- Objectification of a woman
- Value of a woman = presence of a man
- Influence of friends

Family Factors

- Usual happy childhood of a Soviet child or "if we had fried potatoes with bread – it was heaven!"
- Unloved child
- Bullying
- Hunger
- Sexual abuse
- Child cold
- Runaway from home
- Mutuality of violence of adults
- Outcast in childhood
- Dysfunctional family
- Gambling
- Violent treatment

Social Factors

- No support
- No support from social system
- Poverty
- Social rejection
- Living conditions
- Drugs
- Inability to develop relationship
- Dependence on a man
- Alcohol
- Gambling
- No support from family

Personal Factors

- No education
- Serious crisis
- No skill necessary for a job
- Husband's debts

Why vulnerability?

marta
RESURSU CENTRS SIEVIETÊM
Where is Violence in Latvia?

39% of women suffer from physical and/or sexual abuse

Reporting intimate partner abuse? = 17%

Trust? = reporting will not change the situation
Who says what? - Police

your case is not severe enough to report

if you know where the abuser is, go and find him

she is again back to her abuser

you are not telling the truth

she is again back to her abuser
Who says what? - Prosecutor’s Office

The victim was not dressed properly/was using alcohol

Punishment should be less severe because the victim provoked the conflict
Who says what?
Victim Support Services

she is again back to her abuser

please tell me your story... again

bureaucracy is primary, client - secondary
Court / Custody Court

Long and insensitive criminal proceedings

you are not able to protect your children

she just wants to revenge her ex
Objectification & attitude = Society

it is shameful to speak about your family problems

it is her fault

she got what she deserves

prostitutes are garbage of society
Consequences of Secondary Victimisation in Domestic Violence

- Additional trauma for survivor
- Distrust in legal and support system
- Refusal to report abuse
- Continuous trauma for children
- Future risks for children to become abusers or victims
Good Practice

Police
• Protection Order
• Information about MARTA and other support services
• Investigation

MARTA
• Psychological and legal support
• Rehabilitation
• Involving other institutions

Custody Court
• Parental skills and personality assessment
• Report for court
How to Prevent Secondary Victimisation in Domestic Violence (1)

• Critical and holistic analysis of the system
• Creating a safe reporting environment
• Victim centred services and network
• Cross-institutional communication
• Education
• Constant monitoring and evaluation
• Supervisions
How to Prevent Secondary Victimisation in Domestic Violence (2)

Whenever possible, involve the victim in the decision-making process regarding his/her case.

Considerate and sensitive communication.

Take into consideration victim’s needs and expectations.
SV impact?

- SV in domestic violence results in refusal to report the problem and continuous harm to victim and children
- SV mainly is a result of personal attitude
- SV prevention – victim oriented services, creating a safe reporting environment and excluding blaming attitudes
Thank you for your attention!

Irina.frolova@marta.lv
dace@marta.lv