

France 3  
*Service de l'accès au droit et à la justice et de la politique de la ville*  
**Tribunal de grande instance de Lyon**  
**(Lyon's Higher civil court)**  
**VIFF Villeurbanne**  
**(Villeurbanne Information Femme Famille)**

**Title: Experience helping women victims of domestic violence**

**Type of involvement: Psychological support and legal assistance to victims of domestic violence.**

**Locale of the involvement: Villeurbanne ( 69)**

**1) Context of the involvement**

**Organizations involved in general victims support; meaning those organizations that are not focused on women, do not always devote specific efforts toward conjugal violence issues.**

**They may, however, develop partnerships with specialized associations involved in the provision of lodging, housing, support groups...etc.**

**Associations specialized on women victims focus on two types of activities in relation to victims of domestic violence.**

**-Certain ones have failed to develop any specific program on the issue, since measures focused on the issue are too restrictive and it is preferable to develop a general approach in dealing with the problem of violence against women;**

**- Others, however, undertake specific efforts focused on the following areas: material support, lodging and housing, psychological treatment, recovery assistance, re-adaptation to work-life, women's and children's support groups, removal of violent men, and men's rehabilitation groups.**

***Four particularly active victim's aid associations operate in the TGI of Lyon (Lyon's Higher civil court) and focus on two general areas in accordance with the priorities set by the Chancellery:***

- Putting into place reception centers located in proximity to the victims;**
- Efforts focused on specific groups.**

**Among them, the VIFF Villeurbanne association operates very often, on request from the Public Prosecutor, in difficult, emergency, situations. Its activities are carried out by Madame Liliane DALIGAND, professor of legal medicine at the *centre hospitalier Lyon sud*, and an expert psychiatrist operating at the courts. She is president of the *société française de victimologie* and a member of the board of directors of INAVEM (national institute of victim assistance and mediation).**

This association instituted specific procedures in the area of support for women victims of violence, in particular, a greeting service at the headquarters of the association supported by follow-up meetings.

## **2) Mode of operation of the process**

### **- A place for receiving and treating the victim**

The lodging centre takes in mothers and their children-victims of family violence, who are forced to leave their homes.

Founded in 1979 as a public institution, and approved and financed by public authorities, the lodging centre has 22 units (60 beds), located in Villeurbanne.

Each furnished apartment is provided to one single family for a period of several months.

The purpose of the service is to open a new chapter, to allow mothers and their children to breath, and to break the cycle of violence and allow them to reflect on their future.

Services are also provided for the children, according to need, in locales close to their home: day care, nursery, maternal assistance, schools, colleges, high schools.

Family support services are aimed as much at promoting social re-integration as at personal rehabilitation. The multi-disciplinary approach is geared toward providing an attentive ear, support, and follow-up for adults as much as for children in a variety of vital areas:

- legal and administrative,
- health,
- schooling of children, work-place re-adjustment for adults,
- leisure, vacation for children and adults,
- lodging,
- counseling related to the parent/child relationship,
- etc...

These efforts are centered on group time, with a focus on exchanges, and an overall emphasis on the talents and creative abilities of the participants.

Family services are aimed as much at social re-integration as on assistance for personal rehabilitation.

### **- Individual treatment with support for people and their difficulties**

The association has also developed a service for the reception and support of young victims of violence to the *Maison de Justice et du Droit* of Villeurbanne (legal advice and justice center), in order to provide these teenagers, who are generally in difficult situations (dropouts, drug-addicts, petty criminals...etc.) a means of expressing themselves about the violence which they are subjected to (gangs, bullying, sexual abuse...etc.)

It would appear that 90% of the youth treated are young girls, most often victims of sexual abuse.

VIFF maintains an office at the *Commissariat de Police de Villeurbanne* (3 half-days per week) where a victims help department was established, and it also takes part in the training of police, CRS (Companies for Republican Security)...etc.

#### **- The institution of support groups**

A number of victims express interest in taking part in support groups in order to share their experiences with other similar victims.

It is, therefore, a matter of providing psychological counseling to victims of conjugal and family violence, other forms of violence, and sexual assault.

In 2004, the association, with the intention of experimenting with a new program related to conjugal violence, arranged a partnership with another victim's assistance association, of the Lyonnais jurisdiction, (MAS INFO VICTIMES, in Lyon). It involves the putting into place of victims support groups (VIFF) and, at the same time, support groups for violent men (MAS INFO VICTIMES), sent to the association by order of the Prosecutor. Therefore, efforts devoted to providing services and support to women victims is compounded by an effort aimed at following up on, and rehabilitating, violent men.

Criminal mediation, often employed by the Prosecutor in such matters, does not appear to be appropriate so long as advance work has not been undertaken aimed at ensuring that the transgressors are not in denial about their violent behavior.

### **3) Contact people**

- Ms. Liliane DALIGAND , President of the Board of Directors, university professor, public hospital doctor, 156 , cours Tolstoi , 69100 VILLEURBANNE , 04-78-85-76-47 ou 04-78-03-93-37

- Ms. Isabelle BOUCLON, Director, 156, cours Tolstoi, 69100 VILLEURBANNE, 04-78-85-76-47 ou 04-78-03-93-37

- Minister of Justice, access to law and justice service, Office for victim's aid and organizational policy, Ms. Marielle Thuau [marielle.thuau@justice.gouv.fr](mailto:marielle.thuau@justice.gouv.fr).