

Domestic violence causes, prevention, triggers and help: the law and life.

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“Domestic Violence Causes, Prevention,
Triggers, and Help: *The Law and Life*”

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Dr Mrs I.M.F. Solanke Memorial Lecture

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Highly skilled and experienced legal and academic professional with over 20 years' experience in a variety of corporate, management and administrative positions and 12 years experience in teaching, administration and research in UKHE. She is a qualified Solicitor and Barrister of the Supreme Court of Nigeria.

Dr Ezeani holds an LLB, LLM, and has a PhD in International Economic Law. She is a Senior Fellow, Advance HE. She has tutored on a wide variety of international law, business, corporate, dispute resolution, and trade related programmes. A keen eye for detail in complex situations, Dr Ezeani is astute in interpreting global markets and commercial trends.

Dr Ezeani is research active and has over 50 academic-related publications with a focus on law, international trade, economic growth, sustainable development, and governance. Her works are cited in internationally reputable academic and industry journals, print and online media.

A respected conference speaker, Dr Ezeani has participated in national and international conferences and programmes, has a track-record of intellectual and enterprise leadership and holds a consistently outstanding record of academic excellence, leadership, scholarship and honours.

She is a published author, women, lifestyle, and social writer and commentator, and enjoys a variety of pursuits including learning new things.

Discussion Outcomes

- What is Domestic Violence/Abuse (DV)?
- Types of DV
- Risk Factors
- Signs
- Prevention or Protection?
- DV under Nigerian Law
- Help
- Conclusion- Breaking the Pattern of DV: Solutions

What is Domestic Violence/Abuse?

- Also called intimate partner violence, domestic abuse, family harm, family abuse
- Affects 1 in 3 women globally ; 1 in 4 in Nigeria (UN; UN Women)
- A pattern of behaviour used to maintain power and control over another in an intimate relationship
- Anyone can be a victim: Affects people from all socio-economic, ethnic, faith or class backgrounds
- Perpetrators include spouses, family members, in-laws, parents, guardians – anyone in an intimate family setting
- Abuse can be physical, sexual, emotional , economic, psychological, threatening the victim or third party i.e. someone close to the victim
- Pervasive with weak legal and social sanctions
- Increases in episodes of family stress e.g. unemployment, financial hardship, infertility, pregnancy, and social isolation like lockdowns, Covid-19, living far from loved ones
- Can result in death, permanent disfigurement, sleep disorders, emotional and mental breakdowns, financial problems, psychological damage to children, social disequilibrium

Types of domestic violence



fact sheet

Nine Types of Violence and Abuse

Physical Violence Physical violence occurs when someone uses a part of their body or an object to control a person's actions.	Sexual Violence Sexual violence occurs when a person is forced to unwillingly take part in sexual activity.	Emotional Violence Emotional violence occurs when someone says or does something to make a person feel stupid or worthless.
Psychological Violence Psychological violence occurs when someone uses threats and causes fear in an individual to gain control.	Spiritual Violence Spiritual (or religious) violence occurs when someone uses an individual's spiritual beliefs to manipulate, dominate or control that person.	Cultural Violence Cultural violence occurs when an individual is harmed as a result of practices that are part of her or his culture, religion or tradition.
Verbal Abuse Verbal abuse occurs when someone uses language, whether spoken or written, to cause harm to an individual.	Financial Abuse Financial abuse occurs when someone controls an individual's financial resources without the person's consent or misuses those resources.	Neglect Neglect occurs when someone has the responsibility to provide care or assistance for an individual but does not.

Risk factors: Causes and Triggers

1. Lower social and emotional intelligence
2. Childhood abuse
3. Drug and alcohol abuse
4. Men who view women as inferior
5. Growing up in an abusive environment
6. Women who witness domestic violence as children
7. Infertility
8. Faith differences
9. Personality disorders
10. Men who grow up in homes of domestic violence
11. Unresolved incompatibility issues
12. Arranged or coerced marriages
13. Traditional or Cultural approaches to wife chastisement
14. Immaturity especially of women
15. Ill-health or disability
16. Social acceptance of violence
17. Women without obvious financial or social support
18. Financial difficulty / Unemployment

Signs of Domestic abuse: Where this is a Pattern of Behaviour

Emotional Abuse	Threats and Intimidation	Physical abuse	Sexual Abuse
<p>Does your partner:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •belittle you, or put you down? •blame you for the abuse or arguments? •deny that abuse is happening, or downplay it? •isolate you from your family and friends? •stop you going to college or work? •accuse you of flirting or having affairs? •tell you what to wear, who to see, where to go, and what to think? •throws tantrums, creates tensions and drama consistently? •insult, abuse or mock you in private or public consistently? •body shame you? •Mocks your efforts like cooking, housekeeping, parenting? 	<p>Does your partner:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •threaten to hurt or kill you? •destroy things that belong to you? •stand over you, invade your personal space? •threaten to kill themselves or the children? •read your emails, texts or letters? •harass or follow you? •stalk you? •threaten people you care about? •control your money, or not give you enough to buy food or other essential things? •monitor your social media profiles, share photos or videos of you without your consent or use GPS locators to know where you are without cause? 	<p>Does your partner:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •slap, hit or punch you? •push or shove you? •bite or kick you? •burn you? •choke you or hold you down? •throw things? •beat your children? •force you to act as a slave? •Are you afraid of your partner? •Do you consistently change your behaviour because you're afraid of what your partner might do? 	<p>Does your partner:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •touch you in a way you do not want to be touched? •make unwanted sexual demands? •hurt you during sex? •pressure you to have unsafe, or dangerous sex? •pressure you to have sex? •has sex with you when you are not aware – sleeping, drugged, unconscious, sick? •forces you to have sex on demand? •refuses to have sex with you?

Prevention of DV or *Protection from* DV?

- Can DV be prevented?
 - Don't get into a relationship with an abusive person
 - Get out of a relationship if the other person is abusive
 - Fact-finding: Seek relationships only with people who do not show or have not been known to have, signs of abuse or violence
 - Don't think you can change an abuser – YOU CANNOT
 - Prevention/Protection/Restraining Order against the perpetrator or abuser is helpful but only where it is used.

Domestic Violence (DV) under Nigerian Law

- State laws are the main sources for prosecution
- Federal laws have limitations:
 - S182 Penal Code; S6 Criminal Code – Marital rape is (STILL) not a crime
 - S353 Criminal Code – Assault of a male=3 years; Assault of a female=2 years
 - S55 (1) (d) Penal Code – men can use physical means to chastise a wife as long as ‘grievous harm’ is not caused
- *Violence against Persons Prohibition Act (Nigeria) 2015 (VAPP):*
 - *Domestic cases include: abandonment/neglect (S16), forceful ejection from the home (S9), spousal battery (S19), protection orders (Ss27-31).*
 - *Other relevant offences: rape (not spousal rape – S1); forced isolation (S13), emotional, verbal and psychological abuse (S14), offensive sexual conduct (S5), stalking (S17), intimidation (S18) harmful widowhood practices (S15), forced financial dependence (S12), deprivation of liberty (S10).*
- VAPP applies to Abuja territory and domesticating states – Oyo, Ogun, Lagos, Osun, Ekiti, Edo, Anambra, Enugu, Ebonyi, Benue, Cross River, Kaduna, Plateau
- Urgent need for more awareness and greater support for women and girls - initiatives for the private and charity sectors

Protection from Domestic Violence: Help

Protecting Yourself	Legal Protections
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't accept isolation: Let trusted people know where you live/are. • Maintain friendships especially with old and trusted acquaintances. • Keep contact with your family. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Government/Police may be of help in cases of physical violence <u>depending on the political attitude</u> where you are. (Domestic and Sexual Violence Response Team DSVRT, Lagos – Tel: 08000333333) • FIDA offers free legal representation to indigent women and children: 0708 849 6115; fidanigeria@yahoo.com
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't argue violently if the perpetrator gets loud and violent. • Never accept beating – the first moment it happens, start thinking of how it should be the last. • Protect your children from beatings, abuse. • Take and keep evidence of abuse, cuts, bruises. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nigeria: The Police is not equipped to deal with the broad scope of DV but can help with escape plans where they are invited and where the State has domestic violence laws • Nigeria: Case law on domestic violence still in infant stages, depending on State.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not provoke violence - Express your hurt, not your anger. • Do not engage in or accept to be belittled, dismissed, mocked or criticised even in public. • Seek counselling, where possible and if supportive. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep records of abuse incidents or tell someone trustworthy to help you keep records should these be needed.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speak up as soon as abuse/violence starts. • Do not inform abuser on plans to leave. • Ensure you have trusted confidantes for your escape plan – Call a helpline, a help centre for women. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Police can provide assistance or arrest perpetrator (S 32 VAPP); courts can issue fines and imprisonment (See offences under VAPP); protection orders (S 27); privacy in court hearings and publications (Ss 35-39); compensation for rape (non-spousal- S1) and support for victims generally (S38)

Breaking the Pattern of Violence: Solutions



Domestic Violence is a Public Health Emergency:
Help Keep Women and Girls Safe
Thank you for listening!



References & Resources

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