

Handouts

Case study 1 – Eszter

He started an argument with his wife, accusing her of not having done any washing, cooking and other housework. At the same time he kept beating her; he hit her head and face with his bare hands. He tore out handfuls of her hair and kicked her with his boots. Then he stripped the clothes from her upper body and threw her on the bed with the intention of beating her further.

All this happened in front of their 8-year-old daughter who begged him to stop. Then he did stop. He threw Eszter out of the bed and fell asleep.

Eszter died that night.

Case study 2 – Kati

Kati tried to escape from her fiancé who was becoming increasingly abusive. She found a flat to rent in another city but he kept phoning and harassing her. Kati's mental state deteriorated.

One day, the fiancé went to get her after work to make her move back. He took her to a nearby forest, where he tried to strangle her with her pullover. The next day Kati told her colleagues at work that she was afraid he would one day strangle and kill her.

Four days later the fiancé had a few drinks. Again, he waited for her after work and when she came out he started to beat her. In the evening, he decided that they should visit relatives. On the way they stopped the car several times. Kati, seeing the state he was in, agreed to have sex with him but he was too drunk.

Kati told her fiancé that she was not interested in him any more. This made him very angry. He grabbed a long leather belt and strangled her.

He then pulled her dead body into a ditch and covered her with tree branches.

Case study 3 – Maria

Maria was 70 years old. Her husband had died 10 years ago and she lived in a small house with her son, Philippe, aged 40. Her son was unemployed and sometimes he drank a lot. Maria knew that he stole money from her purse, but most of time she didn't say anything because she didn't want to create more problems. When he was drunk Philippe could be very violent and sometimes Maria had to shut herself into her room to escape from him.

One day, Philippe arrived home completely drunk and became upset because the dinner was not ready. When Maria told him that she had not made any because she was tired and sick, he started to smash up things in the room. Maria didn't have the time and strength to escape and her son threw a chair at her. Maria tried to protect herself, but she fell and banged her head. A neighbour arrived, but it was too late. Maria died in a coma before reaching the hospital.

Case study 4 – Leandro

Leandro was 8 years old. He lived in a small flat together with his younger sister aged three, his mother and her boyfriend, Jan. Leandro never knew his father. He liked school but he didn't like Jan. In fact, Jan could be violent and sometimes beat Leandro. Leandro was really afraid of Jan, had difficulty sleeping and had lost his appetite. Leandro's school teacher noticed that and wanted to meet the parents because she felt that Leandro was not doing as well as he should, he had difficulty paying attention and could sometimes be violent with his friends. The mother met the teacher but didn't say anything about the situation at home. When she got back home, she told Jan what the teacher had said. Jan got very upset and beat Leandro again, this time breaking his arm. At the hospital, the mother lied and says that Leandro fell.

Case study 5 – Banaz

Banaz had made several attempts to warn police that her life was in danger. In December 2005, her father attacked her and tried to kill her. She was really scared and went to the police. However her statement was not taken seriously enough by investigating officers.

Banaz fled but later went back to her family and tried to carry on her relationship with her boyfriend, in secret, but both were threatened with death if they carried on seeing each other. Banaz was urged to stay at a safe house but she believed she would be safe at home because her mother was there.

Banaz disappeared on 24 January and her decomposed body was discovered in a suitcase buried in a garden three months later. At the trial, her father and uncle said that they had ordered the murder because they believed she had shamed the family by falling in love with a man her family did not want her to marry. Banaz was just 20 years old.

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/6722699.stm>; 11 June 2007

Case study 6 – Amira

Amira was four years old when her family fled war-torn Somalia and settled in a city in Europe, where her early childhood life seemed immeasurably better.

Then one morning when she was eleven years old, Amira's mother suggested they visit her aunt, so Amira could play with her cousin, who was her own age. What Amira did not know was that her mother and aunt had secretly arranged for a "cutter" to travel from Mogadishu to circumcise their daughters. They believed that it was necessary otherwise the girls would never get husbands.

Suddenly her mother and aunt grabbed Amira. "They held me down, and then a woman I had never met before began cutting. I screamed, and my aunt put her hand tightly over my mouth," she says. "Promise no one will ever know that I've spoken to you," begged Amira, "if people in my community find out, they'll say that I've betrayed them and I'll have to run away. And anyway, I don't want my parents to be sent to jail."

Adapted from <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article505796> 3 January 2008 and www.fgmnetwork.org

Case study 7 – Denise

"I am a victim of incest; I was raped by my father when I was fifteen years old. It was not the first time, nor would it be the last. However, this time, I became pregnant.

One night, I became very sick and my parents took me to the hospital. The emergency room doctor discovered that, along with a very bad case of the flu, I was 19 weeks pregnant. The doctor informed me that I was pregnant and asked me what I wanted. In spite of the pain and guilt I felt, I refused to have an abortion. My father flew into an uncontrollable rage and demanded that I consent. The doctor refused because of my wishes.

My father demanded that an abortionist be found and within one hour, this man arrived at the hospital. I tried to get off the examining table but he asked three nurses to hold me while he strapped me to the bed and injected me with a muscle relaxant to keep me from struggling. I continued to scream that I didn't want an abortion. He told me, 'Shut up and quit that yelling!' Eventually, I was placed under general anesthesia."

Adapted from www.humanlife.org

Case study 8 – Hans

Antonia had been harassing and haranguing her husband, Hans, for several years. One time Antonia had said that she felt like running him over with a car. On another occasion she falsely accused him of molesting her children. Letters accusing Hans of pedophilia showed up in neighbors' mailboxes. Police did not believe the accusations but they did suspect that Antonia had something to do with the letters.

Three years ago they separated and a year later they divorced.

A few months ago, Antonia followed Hans home from work and threw a lighted ornament filled with kerosene at him. The ornament didn't ignite, but detectives later found kerosene on the door and walls.

One day Hans was walking his dog when a woman jogged up to him. A bang sounded. He screamed and scrambled toward his apartment and dashed inside chased by the woman. Police and medics found him dying on the floor of his dining room. The medics couldn't save him; the bullet had entered his right shoulder and ravaged his lungs, lodging in the aorta.

Adapted from: <http://www.seattlepi.com>

Guidelines for the group discussions**I - The analysis of the crime (20 minutes)**

1. What do you think of the crime as reported?
2. Where might such a crime have happened? Could it be in your neighbourhood?
3. Why has the crime happened?
4. Can such a crime be justified?
5. How could the victim have defended him / herself?

II – Transfer to social reality (40 minutes)

6. Do you know of, or have you heard of any cases of domestic violence recently?
7. What forms does domestic violence take in our society?
8. What can the victims do if they need help?
9. Should the police intervene if they hear of violence or could such intervention be considered as interference in people's private affairs and in breach of their human rights?
10. What power do the victims have in such situations? What power do the perpetrators have?
11. Have you heard of cases of domestic violence in which a man is the victim?
12. List some of the causes of domestic violence.
13. How can domestic violence be prevented and stopped?
14. What could/should be done by:
 - a. the public authorities?
 - b. the local community?
 - c. the people involved?
 - d. friends and neighbours?