



Handout | The Impact of Gender-Based Violence

Stories

Story 1

Martha moves using an electric wheelchair. She lives with her partner in a small apartment, in a small town. They have been together for 6 years. Steven, her partner, has always been a great support to her in carrying out daily activities. However, recently he has been under great pressure to work very long hours. Martha is at home alone and there are days when she does not eat for more than 8 hours. Last Monday, Steven returned home in the morning after a night shift and found that she had been unable to put herself to bed and had tried to sleep in her wheelchair. When Martha asked Steven to work from home in the evenings, he said this was not possible. Martha has no relatives locally, so it is difficult for her to call on anyone else. She also has few friends, as the couple rarely go out. Once when Martha told Steven she was hungry he told her: 'Come on, you are a woman! Make an effort and cook something for yourself or call for a take-away!'

Which examples of gender-based violence can you identify in this story? Who is the victim and who is the perpetrator? What are the likely consequences of violence for the victim? What are the possible consequences for society as a whole?

Story 2

Bernadette works as an accountant in a large company. She has recently received numerous missed calls from an unknown number. When she tried to call back, there was no response. She did not worry until recently, when she received several text messages from a different number. These made her feel uncomfortable, as the texts were very explicit: they called her a slut, suggested that she loves sex and described her body in detail. The last message was even threatening: "I dream about raping you and I will do it one day. You'll love it!". She did not know what to do so she told her friend about the messages, but the friend suggested that she calm down. However, she did offer to drive Bernadette to and from work every day. Bernadette felt slightly relieved, but recently, she noticed an unfamiliar man near her block of flats, looking at her. The same thing happened on the next day.

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Story 3

Linda, who is 17, is a passionate online gamer. In her free time, she plays a lot and she has even made some good friends online. Gaming has always been her passion and she is very good at it, especially at strategic online games. Last time she played her favourite game, one of the male players commented on her avatar (containing her picture) saying: 'God, you are so f... hot! I wish I was near you to show you what a real man is'. Linda did not react, although she felt a little uncomfortable: after all, it was only a game, and just a stupid comment. Two weeks later, she did not do very well in a game she was playing, and some of the players started to send her private messages: 'Go to the kitchen and bring me a beer, woman', 'Get some sex and come back again', 'Playing in a team with women always ends up like this. Never again!'. She decided she would not play the game for the next month.

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Story 4

Jan and Ivan have been in a relationship for 2 years. They decided to spend New Year's Eve at their friends, in a town about 100 km away. After the party, at 6 o'clock in the morning, they were going back to the hotel holding hands. They were close to the bus stop when they saw a group of young men walking towards them. One of the men started shouting: 'Look at those fags! You deserve to die! You are a shame to our country'. Jan and Ivan were scared. Three of the men started to run towards them. They kicked Jan in the belly and punched Ivan in the face. Jan and Ivan cried out for help, but then the bus arrived and the three men got on. Jan asked the driver for help, telling him that those men had just violently beaten him and his friend. They shouted back: 'they are fags!' The bus driver refused to help and shut the door in Jan's face.

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Story 5

Martina (16) met Sasha (17) at school. She had always liked him, so she couldn't have been happier when he asked her for a date. After two dates, she was sure she was in love. On the third date Sasha invited her home and started telling her how beautiful she was, and at one moment he touched her leg. Martina said nothing, but when he started to stroke her, she removed his hand. He suggested that they should undress and make love. She said it was too soon for her and that she wanted to wait until they knew each other better. He insisted and started to undress her. She wanted to leave but he forced her onto the bed by force and started to undress her, touching her in between the legs. She screamed and tried free herself, but Sasha was too strong.

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Story 6

After the birth of her second child, Samantha decided to go back to work as soon as her maternity leave was over. She discussed it with her husband, who asked her to wait to make this decision until her maternity leave was coming to an end. As this time approached, she submitted a number of job applications and was invited to an interview, and was then offered the job. She was very happy and shared the news with her husband. He was less happy and started asking about the job, identifying difficulties and problems, such as that the children would need to go to nursery school, there would be problems with picking them up, the family would need to eat out more often, etc. After two hours of very intense discussion, he asked: 'Don't you have enough money? I always give you money when you go shopping. You don't need more. You are a woman and need to take care of our children'.

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