



FRIENDS, GOVERNMENT TURN BLIND EYE TO MALE VICTIMS: REPORT

The WA Government must establish specific services to support male victims of domestic abuse and invest in better training to help health and welfare workers identify abused men, according to the Men's Advisory Network (MAN).

The call follows the launch today of a ground-breaking report, *Intimate Partner Abuse of Men*, by researchers from Edith Cowan University's psychology department.

According to the report, embarrassment, the disbelief of friends and colleagues, and social welfare and justice systems that assumed men were the abusers were among the reasons many men did not report abuse.

Even if they were believed, male victims had nowhere to go for appropriate support and counselling as existing services were set up to cater for female victims of male abuse.

MAN executive officer Gary Bryant said the community could not go on turning a blind eye to male victims of domestic abuse.

"MAN says no to all forms of abuse and violence," Mr Bryant said.

"We recognise that men are the main perpetrators of domestic violence. But that does not mean we should turn our back on those men who are innocent victims of abuse.

"To continue ignoring male victims because of the actions of other men would be a tragic betrayal of social justice and human rights."

The ECU research was commissioned by MAN, with funding from Lotterywest, and follows recommendations by a steering committee including the WA Government's Family and Domestic Violence Unit.

Researchers interviewed male victims, their families and domestic violence-related service providers in Western Australia.

They found that men experienced the same forms of abuse as women, as well as one additional form not identified previously. This was "legal-administrative" abuse in which a person used legitimate services, such as Violence Restraining Orders, to abuse the rights of others.

Recommendations in the report include:

- A government-funded campaign to raise public awareness of intimate partner violence against men, complementing campaigns about violence against women and children;

- The provision of publicly funded services specifically for male victims of intimate partner abuse;
- Consideration of how services for male victims could be integrated with services for female victims and general services for victims of family violence; and
- The provision of training for health and welfare workers, to help them identify and support male victims of intimate partner abuse.

The Men's Advisory Network is the peak body for men's health, well-being and other issues affecting men and boys in Western Australia and receives funding from the WA Department of Health.

The full report is available on the MAN website www.man.org.au

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26 May 2010