



THE SEVEN CHALLENGES MALE VICTIMS FACE

There are seven inter-connected challenges that men face.

(1) Institutional Sexism/Funding Bias

As stated, there has been no funding stream available for male victims from Government. With local authorities under financial pressure, very few have looked at the needs of male victims in their community. This is now in breach of the Gender Equality Duty.

The second part of the problem has been that because of political correctness (which dictates that only females can be victims), the police, local authorities and the Government have purposely turned a blind eye. This is reinforced by the attitude of the Crown Prosecution Service.

This is institutional sexism and the argument for this is that it is irrational and illogical for the official Government figures (outlined in 1) to then be ignored by the Government and local authorities when it comes to funding, services and recognition. It is in breach of the Gender Equality Duty.

This Government has **never** run a public campaign or made a specific statement about helping male victims.

(2) Lack of training on male victims

Practically all training in the police, NHS and local authorities is aimed at women as victims, men as perpetrators.

It means there is a culture of ignorance about men as victims with statutory agencies.

(3) Lack of statutory agency information or one gender information

Nearly all of the literature or PR campaigns produced by local authorities, the police, the Government and others are solely geared towards female as the only victims.

Not only is this another example of institutional sexism, it makes matters worse for male victims because they feel they cannot approach their local authority/police force and expect to be treated fairly. They believe there are no support services out there. They feel alone.

If men are recognised as victims on council web-sites and by other statutory agencies such as the Crown Prosecution Service, it is normally heavily caveated in the small print as "Men can also be victims but the vast majority are women". This is normally the only mention male victims ever receive.

The charity wants all statutory agencies to produce literature that is either gender-specific or is gender neutral. However, with the latter, information campaigns should not state "**We all support all victims**", but both "**female and male victims.**" This will give comfort to male victims that their local statutory agencies will provide them with support.

(4) Lack of recognition in the media and society

Nearly all features/stories that appear in the media about domestic abuse are automatically converted into male on female domestic abuse, often accompanied with a picture of a man hitting a woman. This is because the majority of statutory agencies only publish PR materials about females as victims. In addition, even if materials are gender-neutral, the media still only feature women as victims.

The lack of information for male victims and lack of recognition by statutory agencies compounds the fact that there is a lack of recognition within society. Male victims feel they have no one to talk to because they do not believe they will be believed.

However, the media and society are changing. There have been features on male victims during 2008 on GMTV, Radio 4 and 5. In addition, whenever these stories are featured many comments are made by people that it is about time male victims were recognised'. Often these are from women especially because a male victim will have a mother, sister, daughter or female friends.

In addition, when members of the charity meet others, it is not uncommon for people to recount personal stories or stories they have heard about male victims.

(5) Men themselves - male culture

Male culture is still resistant to men as victims, especially compounded by the fact that the female perpetrator is often smaller. Male victims feel they cannot discuss it with other men without fear of being laughed at.

(6) Police often arrest the man no matter what the evidence

The charity's help-line consistently receives calls from men who have been victims, including having received physical injuries and yet they have been the ones arrested, without any evidence gathering by the police. This is a common complaint and one that we are looking into in more depth (see B3 above).

(7) Men face the fear of losing touch with their children

The help-line receives many calls from men who are victims of domestic abuse who refuse to leave their home because of losing contact with the children. This fear, which is common with female victims, is compounded for men because of the poor reputation

and bias within the family court system against equal parenting. They feel that if they flee the family home, they will never see their children again.

In addition, they will not leave their children with a mother who is violent.

Nov 08