

SOS Détresse

Why is it so difficult to act?

It is very difficult for a person who is stuck in the context of domestic violence to act. The reasons why it is difficult to denounce the aggressor and leave are absolutely normal and legitimate. Often, the victim must go through a phase of hesitation whilst weighing the pros and cons before they decide to walk away and change the situation.

Many victims of domestic violence don't dare talk about their situation out of fear that the partner will become even more aggressive or that s/he will take revenge. Frequently, the person also stays in order to protect the couple or the family. The hope that the situation will change, causes him/her to give their partner another chance in order not to break up the family. Feelings of guilt, solitude, financial dependence, ignorance of laws and rights, religious and cultural convictions, love for the partner and family and the pressure of the environment all complicate the decision.

All these factors create the illusion of a desperate situation, that the necessary effort is too big or that there is no support. Yet bringing the situation to the attention of others will show you that you are not alone and that there are people who will help you. We all have the right to live in peace and to be respected. Violence is not excusable. It is important to understand that the aggressor always has the option of not using violence.

If you suffer violence from someone close to you, it is important to act. The earlier you react, the easier it will be to re-establish the relationship. If the situation of violence lasts too long, the only solution may be to leave. Denouncing the situation can save your family, your relationship, protect your children and to save yourself.

To confide in someone already constitutes a first step towards change. If you don't have anyone to speak to, don't hesitate to call or to write to SOS Détresse.

What are the consequences of violence?

The reactions to violence vary considerably between victims, but frequently reflect real distress, whatever their age or gender. Many children witness violence in their family. Even if the aggression is not directed at them, they can be traumatized and suffer in different ways:

The violence can have varying consequences:

- Psychological consequences: depression, anxiety, embarrassment, reduced self-confidence, guilt ...
- Physical consequences: injury, loss of appetite, digestive / respiratory problems, undefined aches and pains, exhaustion ...
- Social consequences: isolation, problems with the family, feeling of rejection, drug / alcohol consumption
- Existential consequences: feeling of emptiness, changes in personal value system, loss of hope in life ...
- Economical consequences: job loss, revenue reduction, increase of expenses in case of divorce ...

If children become victim or witness of domestic violence, the consequences can consist of anxiety or fear, sleep or eating disorders, aggressive behaviour towards others or themselves, isolation, hyperactivity, inhibitions, problems at school ... *When a child grows up in a context of violence, s/he learns that violence is a means to an end and that s/he is authorized to use it in social relationships. The violence has a negative impact on their development and will have repercussions on his/her adult live.*

In order to stop the violence you and your family are experiencing, it is vital to talk to a person of confidence and tell them what you are going through.