

Why are victims reluctant to talk about their situation?

- The aggressor does not allow them to talk about the situation.
- They are afraid of the negative repercussions that the unveiling of the situation might bring upon them.
- They do not know who to talk to.
- They do not trust professionals.
- They are ashamed or they feel guilty.
- They try to protect the aggressor or the other victims.
- They feel powerless and do not believe that talking about it will change anything.



When the victims refuse to talk about their situation or deny the violence, it is important not to interpret this as a lie, a non-recognition of the problem, a lack of will or a lack of collaboration. Working in alliance with women is generally the best way to ensure the security and the well-being of children living in a context of domestic violence.

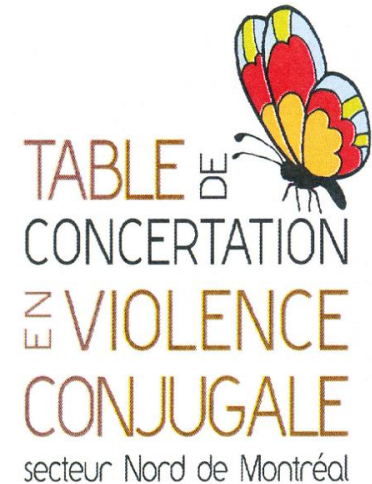
Get support

1. The majority of *shelters* offer accommodation services, information and support for women and children victims of domestic violence. Generally, it is not necessary to live in a shelter to be able to have access to those services.
2. Contact **SOS Violence conjugale (SOS Domestic Violence)** at 514 873-9010 (24 / 24 h, 7 / 7d)
3. Contact **Montreal's police service (SPVM): dialing 911**
4. Contact the **welcoming service of the CIUSSS (Integrated University Health and Social Services Centre) of the north of Montreal dialing 514 940-3300**
5. Contact the **Women's center** of your neighbourhood.

Children exposed to domestic violence: better understand to better intervene

To live in a context of domestic violence

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To live in a context of domestic violence

Children who live in a context of domestic violence are directly or indirectly victims of this violence by:

- Being a witness of the incidents of violence
- Listening to what is happening from another room of the house.
- Noticing the state of the place where the violence occurred.
- Noticing the distress or the wounds suffered by their mother.
- Being exposed to an environment of tension and terror.
- Being themselves victims of the violence inflicted by the aggressor.

Some statistics

In Canada, approximately half a million children live in a context of domestic violence. (Statistique Canada, 2001).

At school, it means that between 2 and 6 children per class are victims of domestic violence. (Sudermann et Jaffe, 1999).

The majority of children are exposed to situations where the violence is mainly inflicted by their father (or the mother's partner) to their mother. Not many children are exposed to situations where the violence is inflicted by their mother or both parents. (Hamby et al., 2011).

Domestic Violence

Domestic violence is often used by a partner as a way to control, dominate and affirm his power over his partner or his ex-partner. The violence can be physical, verbal, psychological, emotional, sexual, economic, or spiritual. It is crucial to evaluate the situation as a whole instead of considering the different behaviours in an isolated way.

It is false to believe that violence stops at the moment of separation and it is crucial to recognize that there is also violence post-separation. In fact, women and children who live in a context of domestic violence are susceptible of being victims of severe violence and homicide at the moment of separation.

It is the aggressor (and not the victim) who is responsible for exposing his children to this type of violence.

Domestic violence and the relationship mother-child

Men who display violent behaviours have the tendency to target maternity and the relationship mother-child by:

- Threatening and inflicting violence to the children to reach the women and vice versa.
- Limiting the communication mother-child.
- Undermining the parental authority of the women and their confidence as mothers.
- Blaming the mothers for the violence and for its consequences on the children.

The women develop different strategies to ensure the security and the wellbeing of their children including:

- Monitoring the behaviours of their partner to be able to predict the incidents of violence.
- Trying to prevent the incidents of violence.
- Leaving the children far away from the incidents of violence.
- Putting their own safety at risk to protect their children.
- Confronting or leaving their partner.