

3.2: Combating domestic violence against women by helping victims and others recognize the danger signs and take preventive measures

In 2000, the Belgian organization Vie féminine, in partnership with CDF-BAIE in Nancy, France, and Associazione Nondasola in Reggio Emilia, Italy, ran a campaign against domestic violence, encouraging victims to: 'speak, resist and act'. It also aimed to sensitize decision makers to their responsibilities with regard to national, European and international laws and their enforcement.

Materials produced

- A postcard-sized concertina folder in full colour was produced for wide distribution to women, to remind them that violence is not accepted in Europe and to encourage them to seek help if they are facing violence or feeling threatened. The images on the cards tell the 'story' of a woman whose situation at home becomes more and more threatening, and illustrates the kinds of things that she might hear in a risk situation – from early 'sympathetic' suggestions that she should not have 'inappropriate friends' to downright insults that she is worthless. At each stage, the image of the woman shows her growing smaller, as her vulnerability increases and her partner dominates.
- The organization also produced an information sheet containing contact addresses for women so that they would know where to turn once they had decided to act.
- The same imagery is reproduced on the front page of a brochure aimed at decision makers and lobby groups who can make changes and implement laws. This lists current legal and regulatory frameworks and reminds relevant institutions of their responsibilities.
- A handbook was also produced for workers in the field. This 'Guide to good practice for field-workers' identifies different types of violence and provides field workers with an opportunity to work from a common platform of knowledge.

How the materials were put together

- Vie féminine interviewed women who had suffered domestic violence and, on the basis of their findings from these interviews, prepared the field handbook and the brochure.
- There are several intended **target groups**: policy makers, fieldworkers, women and the general public. The brochure is aimed at policy makers; the handbook is aimed at fieldworkers and the leaflet and sheet of addresses are aimed at victims of domestic violence or those who feel threatened.
- The **message** of the campaign is that violence in the home can take many forms: physical, psychological, economic, sexual and verbal, and that this violence should not be accepted.
- The **format** is colourful and non-threatening, in almost comic book style. The size of the leaflet is useful because it is small enough to hide away if a women feels she is in a

threatening situation. The brochure aimed at decision makers is A4 size and can be filed in a standard binder.

- ***Quantities produced.*** 40,000 copies of the brochure and guide to fieldworkers were produced and distributed to places in Wallonie (Southern Belgium) alone. Quantities for distribution elsewhere are not known.

Vie féminine contact details. The domestic violence prevention campaign was coordinated by Joëlle Sutura, + 32 (0)2 227 13 14, 111, rue de la Poste, B – 1030 Bruxelles, Belgique. E-mail vie.feminine@skynet.be

Graphics references

[3.2 domestic violence awareness leaflet.jpg](#)

[3.2 domestic violence leaflet inside.jpg](#)