

Men also victims

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WHEN most people think about family violence and abuse victims, they think of women and children.

However, one in three victims of sexual assault – and at least the same figure for victims of family violence and abuse – are males.

In an effort to highlight the forgotten victims of family violence – men – the One In Three campaign was established several years ago.

And one Ballarat man, himself a victim of spousal abuse, has made it his mission to heighten awareness about the issue and the national campaign.

The Ballarat man, who cannot be identified for legal reasons, had been in a happy relationship for more than 10 years, but things changed when he discovered his partner was having an affair and had hidden bank accounts containing an estimated \$200,000.

The father of two – one being a stepchild – said his partner had a hidden life, even from her own parents.

"This is when the abuse really



younger child. My stepchild is now safe with me, but I fear for (his own child)."

The Ballarat father said for a man to admit to being the victim of family violence seemed, at first, "unmanly", but after joining One in Three he realised he wasn't the only one suffering.

The One In Three campaign aims to raise awareness of the existence and needs of male victims of family violence and abuse.

Members of the campaign include a diverse group of male and female professionals like academics, researchers, social workers, psychologists, counsellors and trainers. Campaign members work with government and non-government services to provide assistance to male victims and to reduce the incidence and impacts of family violence on men, women and children.

Because of barriers such as feeling shame and embarrassment, the social stigma of not being able to protect themselves, One in Three believes men are much less likely to report being a victim of family violence than women.

Abuse of men, says One in Three, takes many of the same forms as it does against women, including physical violence, intimidation and threats, sexual, emotional, psychological, verbal and financial abuse, property damage and social isolation.

According to One in Three, there are few tailored services and resources available for male victims of family violence and abuse. Services that are available include:

- Police - 000
- Lifeline - 131 114
- Mensline Australia - 1300 789 978

People can learn more about One in Three by going to www.oneinthree.com.au.

The Courier's It's Up To Us campaign, which has the support of the White Ribbon Foundation and local and national welfare agencies, is helping to highlight the many issues around family violence. During the campaign, which culminates in White Ribbon Day on November 25, readers can go online to pledge an oath to stop violence against women. To make that oath go to www.thecourier.com.au

KEY FACTS AND STATISTICS

- At least one in three victims of family violence is male.
- More than one male a week is a victim of domestic homicide.
- Almost one in four young people are aware of their mum/step mother hitting their dad/step dad.
- Male and female victims of reported domestic assault receive very similar numbers and types of injuries.
- Males are almost three times less likely to report being a victim of domestic violence to police.
- Post-separation, similar proportions of men and women report experiencing physical violence, including threats by their former spouse.

THE Australian Bureau of Statistics Personal Safety Survey (2006), the largest and most recent survey of violence in the nation, found that:

- 29.8 per cent (almost one in three) victims of current partner violence since the age of 15 were male;
- 24.4 per cent (almost one in four) victims of previous partner violence since the age of 15 were male;
- 29.4 per cent (almost one in three) victims of sexual assault during the past 12 months were male;
- 26.1 per cent (more than one in four) victims of sexual abuse before the age of 15 were male.

THE Crime Prevention Survey (2001) surveyed young people aged 12 to 20 years and found that:

- while 23 per cent of young people were aware of domestic violence against their mothers or step mother by their fathers or step fathers, an almost identical proportion (22 per cent) of young people were aware of domestic violence against their fathers or step fathers by their mothers or step mothers;
- an almost identical proportion of young females (16 per cent) and young males (15 per cent) answered "yes" to the statement "I've experienced domestic violence";
- an almost identical proportion of young females (6 per cent) and young males (5 per cent) answered "yes" to the statement "my boyfriend/girlfriend physically forced me to have sex";
- the Australian Institute of Criminology (2013) found that 39 per cent (two in five) victims of domestic homicide and 27 per cent (almost one in three) of victims of intimate partner homicide between 2008-09 were male.

One third of victims male

MEANWHILE, the Victorian Victims Support Agency (2012) found that in 2009-10, 36 per cent (more than one in three) people admitted to Victorian public hospitals for family violence injuries were male.

And the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2012) found that 45.4 per cent (almost one in two) victims of hospitalised family violence (from a spouse or domestic partner, parent or other family member) in Australia from 2002-03 to 2004-05 were male.

The Australian Institute of Family Studies (1999) observed that, post-separation, similar proportions of men (55 per cent) and women (62 per cent) reported experiencing physical violence, including threats by their former spouse. Emotional abuse was reported by 84 per cent of women and 75 per cent of men.

An evaluation by the Australian Institute of Family Studies of the family law reforms found that 39 per cent (more than one in three) victims of physical hurt before separation were male and 48 per cent (almost one in two) victims of emotional abuse before or during separation were male.

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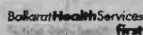
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