

Community Development

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Introduction

This report looks at the campaigns used to raise awareness of community issues within the domestic abuse community. The definition of a community is a group of people who share something in common. It will discuss the rise in domestic abuse cases, who is affected by it and look at the campaigns of the government, Refuge and Womens Aid. Women's Aid and Refuge launch regular campaigns to raise awareness to society and aim to end domestic abuse amongst women and children in the United Kingdom. It will examine how effective the campaigns are and what means were used to convey the messages, it will also examine what metrics are used to measure the successfulness of a campaign.

Domestic Abuse Community

The Home Office (2020) defines Domestic Abuse as behaviour that is intentional, calculated and controlled. Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence, or abuse between the age of 16 and over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. According to Applegate (2006), in 2005 the Domestic Violence Crime and Victims Act 2004 was introduced and therefore a criminal offence in the UK, abusers have been prosecuted and removed from the family home. The Office for National Statistics (2021) identifies an estimated 2.3 million adults aged between the ages of 16 and 74 years old had experienced domestic abuse. The survey also calculated that 845,734 domestic crimes were recorded by the Police in England and Wales identifying an increase of 7% from 2020. This data was sourced through the Crime Survey from England and Wales, police recorded crime, government organisations and domestic abuse services and certified by the UK Statistics Authority to be compliant with the Code of Practice for Statistics. According to Flatley et al (2010), one in four being women and one in six being men, with women being more likely to experience multiple types of abuse than men, as domestic abuse is a form of gendered crime stemming from societal inequality between men and women. The Royal College of Psychiatrists (2015) identify that any women, man, or child can be affected by domestic abuse regardless of race, ethnic, sexuality, class, or disability. Radford et al (2011) identifies that one in five children have been exposed to domestic abuse which can have a serious effect on a young child's mental and physical wellbeing, it is imperative to end domestic abuse and allow children to grow up in a safe environment. According to The National Centre for Domestic Violence (NCDV) (2021) 80% of domestic abuse incidents are never reported and many people experiencing domestic abuse do not feel they can speak out about it. The NCDV and Womens aid have launched campaigns to mark International Day for the Elimination of Violence against women. 'The Big Cover Up' campaign uses partially covered up billboards, partially hidden films and blocked social media channels which are accompanied by text such as 'the garage door fell on me' or 'i fell over' or 'it happened at Thai boxing class to give examples of some of the people give to hide their abuse. It is also accompanied by a text stating 'if you're ready to reveal the truth text NDVC and the number

provided for free protective injunctions. The campaign is used to expose the scale of unreported cases of abuse in England and Wales.

Gullie (2004) identifies that domestic abuse is not just physical abuse, it can include coercive control which is a pattern of regular outbursts of abusive behaviour to gain and enforce a feeling of power and control in a relationship, it can be sexual abuse such as rape or forced sexual activity, emotionally abusive behaviour such as stalking, threats and many other controlling behaviours as well as financial abuse and online or digital abuse. The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (2016) identifies that domestic abuse has a range of serious physical and mental health consequences with strong links to self-harm and suicide, and half of domestic abuse cases have been reported by children and it is estimated that 950,000 children are affected each year by living with domestic abuse.

Taft et al (2004) identify that health care professionals play a vital role in recognising and responding to domestic abuse, Bradbury-Jones et al (2014) recognise that domestic abuse is a health care issue, but many professionals are reluctant to question a woman regarding it, and many women are reluctant to disclose that they are victims of domestic abuse with around 20% never disclosing to anyone as they feel they will be judged.

The House of Commons (2020) recognise that during the global pandemic of Covid-19 there has been a rise globally in domestic abuse. The UK government guidance was to stay at home, but for victims of domestic abuse, home was not a safe place. Refuge (2020) recorded that crisis calls and contacts to the National Domestic Abuse Helpline which is run by the charity Refuge rose by 49% in the first week of lockdown and 700% accessed the website. The Men's Advice Line for male victims also increased by 42% on visits to the website and the Respect help phoneline. Domestic abuse is experienced by women and the perpetrators being male, however anyone can be affected by it.

The Home Office (2020) announced the public information campaign on 11 April 2020 #YouAreNotAlone which aims at encouraging people to get help and ensure people know that there is support for victims of domestic abuse to leave their home to seek refuge despite government guidelines to stay at home. The Home Office (2020) has launched a codeword scheme ANI (action needed immediately), this has been set up to offer lifelines to domestic abuse victims by teaming up with high street shop Boots and independent

pharmacies. Ask ANI is used to alert staff that the individual is at risk and will be offered a safe space to confirm that they are a victim of abuse and provide support and call emergency services.

Womens Aid (2020) identifies that prior to the pandemic their services were stretched to the limit due to the lack of funding, which was a great concern to the sector. During the pandemic, the government announced that up to 2million funding would be allocated to support services and charities in the UK providing vital services to help the vulnerable including victims of domestic abuse. Womens Aid is a national charity organisation with an aim to work together to end domestic abuse against women and children and provide victims life changing services where domestic abuse is not tolerated. It holds the largest national data set on domestic abuse. Their campaigns have achieved change in policy, practice, and awareness to help build a future where domestic abuse is no longer tolerated. Successful campaigning by survivors, activists and Womens aid secured many changes to the Domestic Abuse Act 2021. Other successful campaigns are the Women's Aid 'Look at Me' campaign was the world's first visually powered interactive digital billboards in London revealing a bruised and battered womans face, each time a passer-by ignored the image the face remained the same, but if one person stopped and looked at the face the bruises would start to heal and the more people who looked at the image the more the face healed and looked normal. Data was collected by digital eye recognition of the billboard, hits on several media platforms and television viewers of Channel 4. The campaign proved to be an enormous success reaching 326.9 million people viewing it.

Refuge (2020) charity also provides support for domestic violence against women and children in the UK. Refuge believe that every woman should know the National Domestic Abuse Helpline number which is run by them. Refuge and Picture house produced a short film that was aired in 25 Picturehouse cinemas nationwide called 'Hide and Seek' which aimed at challenging the negativity and raise awareness on the thousands of women and children affected by domestic abuse in their own homes which is poorly understood and still hidden away behind closed doors. It was also aired to raise funds to support the vital lifesaving support that Refuge provides and gives details on how to donate £5 by texting House to 70730. A JustGiving fund page was set up in partnership with Picturehouse with a recorded amount raised of £55,915 which proved a huge successful campaign.

Grave (2019) recognises that a successful campaign is measured on metrics, social media platforms are measured on quantitative success metrics such as how many hits, followers and likes a social media post receives. Ehikioya and Lu (2020) identifies that web traffic tracking is used to measure the amounts of hits and track behaviour on a website to measure if it successful.

Womens Aid use their own case management and outcome measurement system called On Track. This manages outcomes and monitors databases, using the data to strengthen domestic abuse services. Their audience for every campaign is targeted to all of society and their aim is to end domestic violence and make victims aware that there is support out there.

Conclusion

Domestic abuse can happen to anyone, this report shows the extent and nature of it in the UK. Womens Aid and Refuge have proved successful with their digital campaigns to build and raise awareness of domestic abuse and aims to live in a world where it does not exist. Domestic violence is no longer treated lightly, abusers are prosecuted and removed from the family home. Since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic the Crime survey report for England and Wales reveals that the rate of domestic abuse has risen by 7%, this could be a lot higher as the Nation Center for Domestic Violence recorded that 80% of abuse taken place is not reported. Refuge helplines also reported a 42% rise in telephone calls and internet hits to their website for support.

Domestic abuse has been widely discussed and focused on raising public awareness due to the rapid rise during the Covid-19 pandemic and what can be done to stop it. ANI the codeword scheme has been introduced in high St store Boots and local chemists to offer a lifeline to domestic abuse victims and offer a safe space to provide support. Women's Aid most effective approach to raising awareness and open the publics eyes on domestic abuse was the 'Look at me' campaign which was the world first visually powered interactive digital billboard campaign. Its aim was by taking notice of the issue we can all help end domestic abuse rather than turning a blind eye. The campaign was a tremendous success reaching 326.9 million people through media coverage.

Women's Aid campaigns have also been successful in securing changes to the Domestic Violence Bill 2021.

Refuge's campaign Hide and Seek shirt film which was shown in Picturehouse cinemas nationwide was seen by millions of viewers the big screen before films started to raise awareness that domestic abuse is real and help raise funds for the lifesaving work that Refuge provide and raised £55,915 through this digital platform by means of asking the public to donate £5 through text message.

Recommendations

To keep encouraging victims to come forward and know that there are support networks available to support them, Education and public awareness play vital roles in reducing domestic abuse. Encourage neighbours, friends, and family to report any suspicions they have that someone is being abused. Ensure there are enough refuges and supported houses for victims to feel safe in when they build up the courage to flee their family home.

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