

The Declaration on The Elimination of Violence Against Women Passed by The United Nations in 1993 states:

**“Violence against women is a manifestation of historically unequal power relations between men & women & that violence against women is one of the crucial social mechanisms by which women are forced into a subordinate position to men.”**

UNICEF 1997

**“Violence against women & girls is the most pervasive violation of human rights in the world. Its forms are both subtle and blatant & its impact on development profound....it is deeply embedded in cultures around the world..yet this brutality is not inevitable...once recognised for what it is - a construct of power - it can be dismantled.”**

## **What is Domestic Abuse?**

Domestic abuse can be perpetrated by partners or ex partners & can include:

**Physical abuse** - assault & physical attack involving a wide range of behavior.

**Sexual abuse** - acts which degrade or humiliate women & are perpetrated against their will, including rape.

**Mental abuse** - threats, verbal abuse, withholding money or other types of controlling behaviour such as isolation from family/friends.

Children are witness to & subject to much of this abuse. There is a correlation between domestic abuse & the mental, physical & sexual abuse of children. Domestic abuse is associated with broader inequalities in society, is part of a range of behaviours constituting male abuse of power & is linked to other forms of male violence, such as rape & child sexual abuse.

Domestic abuse occurs in **ALL** social groups - is **NOT** caused by stress, poverty, unemployment, alcohol, mental illness, **OR** by the women who experience the abuse. The range of common effects of domestic abuse includes physical injury, poor health and a range of emotional difficulties.

The effects on children & young people who may witness the abuse or who may be used in the abuse are also recognised as including a range of forms of stress or fear as well as additional correlation between domestic abuse and child sexual abuse.