

International Day of Violence Against Women

A reflective note shared with our community

by Janice Fenech Scicluna, Senior Lecturer at the Institute of Community Services

On the day dedicated to eliminating violence towards women, one would have hoped that we could write about the improvements made towards eradicating violence. Instead, with sorrow, this week has reminded us of how much more we, as a society, still need to change to say that we are free from abuse.

What happened this week has shaken most of us in many ways. This might be even more true for those who have or are still experiencing a domestic violence environment, for those who have been very close to the murder scene and for anyone experiencing any form of trauma. It is only natural to feel angry, scared, confused, or maybe even lost when one experiences or hears of such instances. However, as human beings, we want to believe that we are entirely safe and that something that happened this week is something that we would never experience personally unless we are already living in such a nightmare.

For such reason, most of us will stop speaking about these tragedies in a few days, falsely believing that this was a one-off event and that such tragedies will never hit home, which I sincerely hope will be true. However, I would be only living in an illusion and magical world if I'd believe that by just ignoring it, things would change. Nothing changes without a change in our behaviours. You could never obtain the colour purple by mixing blue and yellow, regardless of how much you try. A change in colours is required. This is also true with behaviour.

If you are noticing behaviours in yourself or others that make you suspect someone is experiencing abuse, do not just stand by, believing it will just stop. Instead, take action and seek help. Whether you are experiencing being a victim or noticing that maybe you are having anger or jealousy issues, find the strength within and speak up. It is never too early to get help. We all know that prevention is better than cure.

Let us adopt this also for abuse issues. Let us try to shift from a reactive society to a proactive society. Most of those reading this are still young and maybe have just started experiencing dating and relationships. Look for genuine love. Love is not jealous, love is not limiting, love is not controlling. Instead, love is about wanting to be with the other, not to control or to be dependent on but rather because one enjoys their company and because one would feel that together they can grow as individuals. If this is not the love you are experiencing, stop and reflect a bit and, if necessary, seek help to learn how to experience genuine love, a love we all deserve.

Where to ask for help

At the MCAST Wellbeing Hub

Tel: 2398 7188 email: counsellors@mcast.edu.mt

More info about services offered nationally: <https://stopviolence.gov.mt>

