


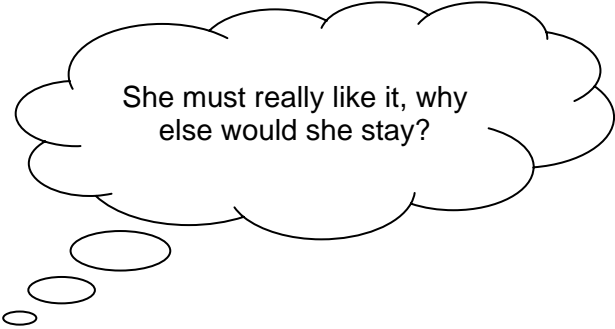
## SOME OF THE MYTHS ABOUT FAMILY VIOLENCE... ...AND THE REALITY



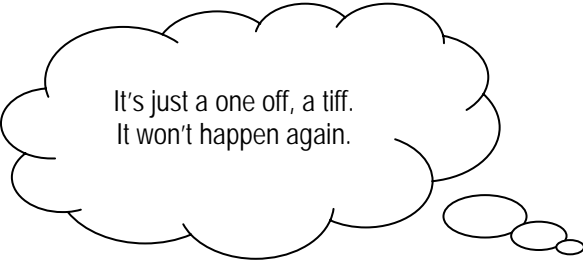
It mainly happens in low socio-economic families/particular ethnic groups doesn't

Hunt and Martin<sup>1</sup> report that there is no evidence available to suggest there is any difference in the actual pattern of violence or incidence of domestic abuse amongst different social groups. The prevalence of this idea may mean that health professionals are more willing to accept this behaviour as 'normal' for certain groups which has implications for intervention as well as recording. In addition, victims of family violence with few resources are more visible because they seek help from public agencies.

Physical abuse is one part of a complex range of tactics used to gain power and control over a person such as social isolation, intimidation, threats, as well as the creation of economic dependency, all of which make leaving extremely difficult. Between 1978 and 1987, 90 per cent of partner homicides in New Zealand were committed by men against their female partners or ex-partners. The process of leaving is complicated, typically taking a number of attempts because of the nature of the violence, and requires the support and resources to which health professionals, in partnership with the victim, have relatively easy access.



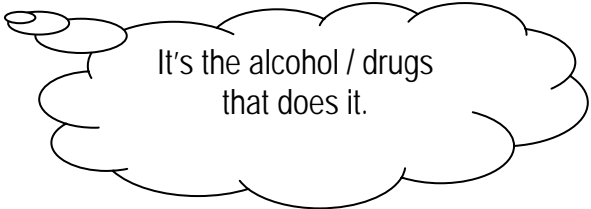
She must really like it, why else would she stay?



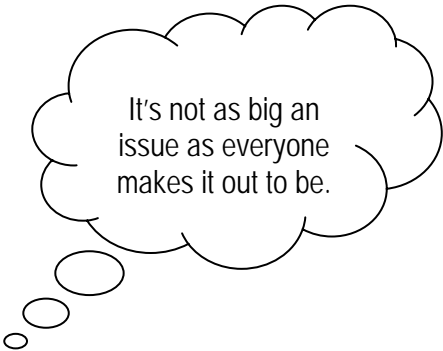
It's just a one off, a tiff. It won't happen again.

Domestic violence almost always involves repeat victimisation, with attacks becoming more frequent and severe over time.

Alcohol does not cause domestic violence. Many people who have alcohol problems do not abuse their partners and many perpetrators are sober when they abuse their partners. Alcohol provides an excuse for the behaviour.



It's the alcohol / drugs that does it.



It's not as big an issue as everyone makes it out to be.

Between 15 and 21 per cent of women report having experienced physical or sexual abuse in the previous 12 months and 44 to 53 per cent of women report having experienced psychological abuse in the previous 12 months.<sup>3,4</sup> In addition to the range of physical and mental health effects on women and children, family violence is estimated to cost Aotearoa New Zealand as much as 5 billion dollars per year.<sup>5</sup>

- 1.Hunt and Martin (2000) *Domestic violence: A resource manual for health care professionals* London: Department of Health
- 2.Fanslow J, Kotch J and Chalmers D (Unpublished Thesis) *Partner Homicide in New Zealand 1978-1987*
- 3.Morris A (1996) *Women's Safety Survey* Wellington: Victimisation Survey Committee
- 4.Leibrich J, Paulin J and Ransom R (1995) *Hitting Home: Men speak about abuse of woman partners* Wellington: Department of Justice
- 5.Snively, S (1994) *The New Zealand Economic Cost of Family Violence* Coopers and Lybrand
- 6.Stenson K, Saarinen H, Heimer G et al (2001) Women's attitudes to being asked about exposure to violence *Midwifery* 17(1) pp 2-10
- 7.Parsons L (1994) *Women offended study* Paper presented at Nursing Network in Violence Against Women International Conference Seattle July 1994
- 8.Friedman et al (1992)
- 9.Howden-Chapman P (1994) *Battered women's recent experiences of health professionals* Unpublished report Department of Public Health, Wellington School of Medicine
- 10.Hetrick, S (1995) *Seeking help from the General Practitioner: The experiences of women who have been abused* Unpublished Thesis
- 11.Ministry of Health (2002) *Family Violence Intervention Guideline: Child and Partner Abuse* Wellington NZ