

The Development Center "Double Exposure"

– men's violence against
women with disabilities

Both women and men are subjected to domestic violence, but in the majority of cases it is a question of men's violence against women. Therefore, one of the Swedish government's priority objectives is that men's violence against women must stop.

Since violence against women is a problem for public health as well as a general problem for the society, it is important that all levels of society work against this. Fundamentally, it is a question of gender equality and women's human rights.



The number of reported assaults against women increases every year. Research shows that women with disabilities are subjected to violence in equal or slightly higher degrees than women in general.

The official Swedish statistics however do not show how many of the reported assaults that are directed against women with disabilities. Many women with personal experience of violence testify that their surrounding focus more on their disability than on the fact that they have been subjected to violence.

In the Swedish Action plan for combating men's violence against women, women with disabilities are listed as a particularly vulnerable group.

Women with disabilities are not a homogeneous group. The group includes women that have difficulties to move, to hear, to see, to tolerate certain substances and to process, interpret and communicate information and has expertise on violence against women with disabilities.

"Every woman subjected to violence must be treated according to her need for support and protection regardless of her background and of who she is"

The Swedish Government 2007



Differences and similarities?

Women with disabilities are first and foremost women – and of course included amongst women subjected to violence. But there are differences; the violence can be directed against the disability and to be dependent of others may results in an extra vulnerability.

For four years, The Development Center "Double Exposure" has worked to raise awareness about violence against women with disabilities. Our current priority is draw attention to the particular vulnerability of some groups of women with disabilities, in comparison to other women with disabilities and women in general.

Especially vulnerable women have several things in common. They may have difficulties to communicate and to be believed. They often have a smaller social network and may find it harder to see themselves as being subjected to violence.

"Men's violence against women may never be excused or accepted. It is time for women's human rights to be brought into all homes - also in Sweden."

Amnesty 2004

The Development Center "Double Exposure"

The Development Center "Double Exposure" is a unifying force and has expertise on violence against women with disabilities.

Our aim is to become a permanent national development- and knowledge center, since there is a need for an actor in the field of competence of violence against women with disabilities. Our aim is also to provide support to existing centers of expertise concerning domestic violence, researchers and NGOs.

The Swedish National Council on Crime Prevention (BRÅ) points out in its report "Violence against people with disabilities" that there is a lack of knowledge about how widespread the victimization is of people with disabilities, how the violence manifests and what the consequences are for particularly vulnerable women. Due to this we are currently working to initiate a broader knowledge base about violence.

In our project we work to develop methods to prevent and to process experiences of violence at the individual level. We also work to find ways to maintain knowledge among the staff who has participated in our basic education.

It is important to be able to see oneself as a subject to violence and to be able to communicate one's experiences. We are therefore reviewing the alternative and complementary means of communication and work to complement them with missing pictures/symbols.

We will arrange seminars in cooperation with for example Swedish County Administrative Boards and find ways to reach the group of young women with disabilities.

Further, we will develop our website and newsletter, as they are important channels to spread knowledge and to network with others.

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The Development Center "Double Exposure" is a project within Bräcke Diakoni, with the purpose to develop and spread knowledge about men's violence against women with disabilities.

Our aim is that women with disabilities subjected to violence will receive the support they need and are entitled to.

Our target groups are professionals in social services, health care, justice, education, research, women's shelters, victim support centers, schools and NGOs.

The center started in 2007 and was initiated by Bräcke Diakoni and representatives from Young Disabled in Gothenburg, Gothenburg HSO, The Organization Grunden and Swedish Association of the Visually Impaired, Gothenburg.

Bräcke Diakoni manages a diversified non-profit work in health care. Our goal is for people to grow. Our knowledge of health care, elder care and disability goes hand in hand with research and education. We are available at several locations in southern Sweden, and we continue to develop and grow.

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