



4 targets of intimate partner violence by proxy



Abusers aim to exercise undue power in their intimate relationship. Because the victim is the direct target of this desire for power, she is often the direct target of the violence as well. However, an abuser who wants to affect a victim may also choose to strike elsewhere to reach her. This is what is known as indirect violence or violence by proxy. Very common in situations of intimate partner violence (IPV), this strategy is extremely effective because it targets those who are dear to the victim, or who have power over her situation. Here are four common targets of this type of violence.

1 Children

Making a child live in a climate where one parent is forced into submission by the other is a form of child abuse in itself. Moreover, some children can also be directly targeted by the abuser in a bid to hurt the victim. For example, they may be threatened or assaulted when the abuser tries to force the other parent into submission. Parental alienation, the act of manipulating a child to interfere with his or her relationship with the other parent, is also a common aspect of indirect violence via the children but aimed at the victim. After the separation, indirect violence involving the children may sometimes result in the victim returning to the abuser in order to protect them.

2 Pets

Pets may be threatened or subjected to acts of animal cruelty. An abusive partner may also deprive the victim of the presence of her pet (or threaten to do so), by forcing her to get rid of it, letting it escape, having it euthanized, or worse. The presence of pets who are at risk of reprisals can make a victim hesitate to leave out of fear that her pet will pay the price of her decision

3 Family & friends

Family, friends, colleagues and neighbors are often victims of skillful manipulation. By lying and presenting them with a biased image of reality and of the victim, the abuser tries to influence them against the victim and discredit her. Elderly parents living in the family unit and who support the victim in exercising power over her own life are particularly vulnerable and can also become victims of the abuser's violence in an effort to influence the victim. For example, they may be the subject of threats to "kick them out" or to no longer offer them care related to a medical condition.

4 Psycho-social/Legal practitioners

Workers in psychosocial services and the socio-judicial environment are particularly affected by proxy violence. Because of the manipulation and lies they are subjected to, it can be very difficult for them to accurately assess the situation, hear the victim's version, and develop a positive relationship with her. Unfortunately, this type of indirect violence can have devastating consequences on the victim's life, especially when it comes to child custody and divorce.

SOS VIOLENCE CONJUGALE IS AVAILABLE 24/7 ACROSS QUEBEC, AND PROVIDES ACCESS TO ALL THE APPROPRIATE SERVICES AND RESOURCES FOR VICTIMS OF INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE (IPV) AND ANYONE WHO IS CONCERNED ABOUT A SITUATION OF IPV.

* Although most victims of intimate partner violence are female, some men can also be victimized.