



Norwegian Centre for Violence
and Traumatic Stress Studies

Prevention of Domestic Violence in Norway: Lessons from policy and practice

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Norway is no Paradise

- Prevalence of rape (lifetime): 9,4 % for women, 1,1% for men.
- Half of the women who reported rape had been raped before the age of 18.
- Few women had a medical examination/treatment the first weeks after being raped; almost one third had not told anyone.
- Physical violence: 16,3 % of the women and 14,4 % of the men report «less severe» violence from (ex)partner (lifetime), e.g. pinching, scratching, hair pulling, slapping.
- 8,2 % of the women and 1,9 % of the men report of «more severe» physical violence, e.g. kicking, strangling, being beaten up.

(Source: Hjemdal & Thoresen, NKVTS 2014).

- 21 per cent of Norwegian 18-19 year olds have experienced physical violence from at least one parent in the course of their upbringing. 6 % have experienced severe violence.
- 23 per cent have experienced at least one form of sexual assault (in or outside the family); girls are much more exposed for sexual violence than boys.
- What about rape? 10 % of girls, 2 % of boys (legal def. of rape); response to question of rape: 5 % of girls, one per cent of the boys.

(Mossige & Stefansen 2016)

30-35 years of development

- From «women's struggle» to a problem of public health, criminal policy, gender equality and human (women's) rights
- The first shelter/crisis centre for battered women: Oslo 1978.
- The first rape reception centre for women and the first medical reception centre for sexually abused children: Oslo 1986.
- Treatment for perpetrators: Alternatives to Violence (ATV) was founded in 1987.
- 1980s-1990s: Rapid establishment of shelters around the country.
- Institutionalisation, professionalisation.
- Today: domestic/gender-based violence is on the political agenda.

Political follow-up

- First cross-ministerial Action Plan in 1983
- 1983-2016: Five action plans on domestic violence/gender-based violence.
- Emphasis on changing attitudes in society, strengthening professional communities and expertise, assistance to victims and therapeutic services/treatment of perpetrators. Plans involve several (today 6) ministries – coherent, integrated, cross-sectional approach.
- Own action plans on rape, genital mutilation, forced marriage.
- Municipal action plans – first one in 1991.
- The first White Paper on Domestic Violence approved by Parliament in 2013.

- Competence building and research
- Increased attention on children exposed to sexual abuse or physical violence. All forms of violence, incl. corporal punishment, are criminalised since 1987 in Norway.
- In 1988, unconditional public prosecution was introduced in cases of domestic violence
- A special penal sanction for violence in intimate relationships entered into force on 1.1.2006 (increase in penalty levels; also psychol. violence is covered).

Examples on other measures:

- Domestic violence coordinators in all police districts.
- Emphasis on the rights of victims – free legal counselling, protection/restraining orders, mobile violence alarms etc.
- A nationwide network of Children's Houses (include new methods for interviewing and medical examination).

The Shelter Law (2010)

- Public responsibility to guarantee assistance and protection to victims of domestic violence – women, men and children.
- Legal obligation of the municipalities to provide shelter services and assistance to victims.
- Funding of the shelters: included in the budgets of the municipalities.

Concluding remarks

- In Norway today, domestic violence is seen as unacceptable – taken us 30-35 years of work
- Important to ensure that state authorities carry out their «positive duty to the 4 P's» – in cooperation with NGOs:

Prevention of all forms of violence in society

Protection of victims

Prosecution of perpetrators

Provision of good services

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