

MYTH OR MATTER OF FACT?

WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE?

- ✓ 1. To dispel common myths about domestic violence.
- ✓ 2. To encourage learners to obtain accurate information about domestic violence.
- ✓ 3. To help learners become more comfortable talking and asking questions about domestic violence, and what they can do to get help.

45 Mins

Copies of **Myth or Matter of Fact? What Do You Know about Domestic Violence Quiz** (provided below)
Myth or Matter of Fact? What Do You Know about Domestic Violence Answer Key (provided below) for the teacher

PROCEDURE

- 1 Tell learners that they are going to answer a short quiz about domestic violence. The point of the quiz is for them to separate popular myths from the facts about domestic violence.
- 2 Tell them that the quiz can be quite tricky, but that they should answer all the questions. They are not going to be graded on their responses.
- 3 Hand out the quiz and give learners 20 – 25 minutes to complete it individually.
- 4 After they have completed the questionnaire, go through the answers item by item. Discuss the correct answers provided in the Teacher Answer Key (below). Make sure that you explain why the myths are incorrect, and answer any clarification questions.
- 5 Conclude by asking learners where they get their information about domestic violence. Expect learners to say things like: their peers, siblings, parents, books/movies/TV shows and the like.

Remind learners that South Africa's **Domestic Violence Act** clearly defines what domestic violence is, who can apply for protection from violence from the criminal justice system, and makes it a priority for the police and the courts to respond.

Suggest that they seek accurate information from places like the police and courts, and specialist NGOs and websites. You can suggest some of these that are located in the area/neighbourhood near the school, and even provide leaflets and brochures for them to look at.

things like 'it is wrong when someone verbally abuses someone else' rather than saying 'your dad is wrong to abuse your mother'.

Different people in the class may have different opinions on what constitutes domestic violence, and what is acceptable behaviour. Do not entertain long debates on this topic, but rather refer to the definitions provided by the Domestic Violence Act.

Do not try and take on the role of counsellor to learners during the class. If a learner discloses that they live in an abusive house, acknowledge their disclosure (by saying something like 'It was very brave of you to tell us that') and ask them to come to you after class so that you can provide them with more assistance. Be prepared with the telephone numbers and information of NGOs or other counselling services that they could contact for assistance.



Making the Link with Gender & Violence

This lesson is directly focused on dispelling popular myths on domestic violence, and provides learners with the correct information. Learners who live in abusive households or who are in abusive relationships may not realise that they, too, are victims of domestic violence, and may not know what they can do to protect themselves.



Assessment Ideas

This quiz could be used as it is, or adapted to be a class test.

TEACHER TIPS



General

If you do not have enough time to go through questions one by one, please ensure that you give copies of the Answer Key (provided below) to learners. It is vital that they not only know what statements are myths, but that they know why the myths are incorrect.

Teaching about domestic violence is an extremely difficult topic for both learners and teachers. In every class and school there are likely to be perpetrators and victims of domestic violence. It is important for teachers to be mindful of this fact, and to make sure that the discussion doesn't single out individuals or vilify people (for example, 'fathers'). It is much more helpful to focus on the abusers' behaviours, by saying



MYTH OR MATTER OF FACT: WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE?

Answer whether the statements below are myth or matter of fact:

SEXUAL HEALTH STATEMENT	MYTH	FACT
1. There are many legitimate reasons that a victim may choose to stay in an abusive relationship.		
2. Someone in an abusive relationship is immediately safer when they have left.		
3. Victims of domestic violence often try to leave many times.		
4. Men are victims of domestic violence as often as women are.		
5. Domestic violence occurs because men can't control their anger and frustration.		
6. Domestic violence is a problem in poorer communities.		
7. Alcohol and drugs are a major cause of domestic violence.		
8. Domestic Violence is almost never just a single episode.		
9. You need to have bruises or other physical evidence to show the court that you have been a victim of domestic violence		
10. You can get a protection order against people other than your intimate partner under the Domestic Violence Act.		
11. You can only apply for a protection order if you are an adult.		
12. People who are victims of dating violence can't apply for a protection order under the DVA because they seldom live together.		
13. In situations of domestic violence, everyone in the family has a role to play in stopping the violence		
14. Victims of domestic violence must like it or they would leave.		
15. Men have a right to discipline their female partners.		
16. People in same sex relationships do not suffer domestic violence.		
17. A man cannot sexually abuse his wife.		
18. Women ask for it. They deserve what they get.		
19. Pregnancy increases your risk of domestic violence.		
20. It is sometimes harder for middle-class women to get help when they leave an abusive relationship.		
21. Victims of domestic violence grew up in abusive families themselves.		
22. Abusers are losers who lack the resources to cope with the world.		
23. Abusers can be very loving partners.		
24. Abuse will get better after you are married.		
25. The police can't help you with domestic violence cases, you need to go to the court.		








MYTH OR MATTER OF FACT: WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE?

SEXUAL HEALTH STATEMENT	MYTH	FACT
<p>1. There are many legitimate reasons that a victim may choose to stay in an abusive relationship.</p>		✗
<p>FACT: THERE ARE MANY SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL REASONS A WOMAN MIGHT CHOOSE TO STAY IN AN ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIP, FOR EXAMPLE, SHE MAY NOT HAVE A WAY TO SUPPORT HERSELF OR HER CHILDREN IF SHE LEAVES, FEEL EMBARRASSED OR HUMILIATED ABOUT THE ABUSE, OR FEAR THAT HER FRIENDS, FAMILY AND COMMUNITY WILL BLAME HER FOR THE ABUSE. SHE MAY BE RELUCTANT TO LEAVE FOR EMOTIONAL OR RELIGIOUS REASONS. SHE MAY FEAR THAT THE ABUSER WILL CARRY OUT THREATS TO HARM HER, HIMSELF THE CHILDREN, FRIENDS OR FAMILY. SHE MAY EVEN LOVE HER ABUSER.</p>		
<p>2. Someone in an abusive relationship is immediately safer when they have left.</p>	✗	
<p>MYTH: BATTERED WOMEN ARE OFTEN IN THE GREATEST DANGER OF SEVERE OR EVEN LETHAL VIOLENCE WHEN THEY ATTEMPT TO LEAVE THEIR ABUSER.</p>		
<p>3. Victims of domestic violence often try to leave many times.</p>		✗
<p>FACT: TRUE. ALTHOUGH WE OFTEN THINK OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIMS AS HELPLESS, MOST WOMEN SURVIVING IN ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIPS LEAVE MANY TIMES AND DO THINGS TO TRY TO PROTECT THEIR CHILDREN AND MINIMISE THE ABUSE.</p>		
<p>4. Men are victims of domestic violence as often as women are.</p>	✗	
<p>MYTH: ALTHOUGH THERE ARE MALE VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, AND OUR LAW PROVIDES THAT THEY CAN APPLY FOR PROTECTION FROM THE STATE JUST AS WOMEN CAN, WE KNOW THAT THE MAJORITY OF VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ARE WOMEN, AND ABUSERS ARE MALE.</p>		
<p>5. Domestic violence occurs because men can't control their anger and frustration.</p>	✗	
<p>MYTH: DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IS A PATTERN OF INTENTIONAL COERCION AND CONTROL. ABUSERS ARE NOT OUT OF CONTROL – THEIR VIOLENCE IS CAREFULLY TARGETED AGAINST CERTAIN PEOPLE AND THEY CHOOSE THEIR TACTICS CAREFULLY. MANY OF THEM SEEM PERFECTLY 'NORMAL' ON THE OUTSIDE, AND AREN'T AGGRESSIVE TO THEIR BOSSES OR PEOPLE ON THE STREET, NO MATTER HOW ANGRY THEY MAY BE.</p>		
<p>6. Domestic violence is a problem in poorer communities.</p>	✗	
<p>MYTH: DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IS COMMON THROUGHOUT ALL LEVELS OF SOCIETY, WHETHER RICH OR POOR. HOWEVER, IN RICHER COMMUNITIES, IT IS OFTEN EASIER TO KEEP THE VIOLENCE HIDDEN, OR PEOPLE ARE LESS LIKELY TO THINK SOMEONE MAY BE ABUSIVE BECAUSE THEY HAVE A GOOD JOB, STATUS, MONEY AND IMPORTANT FRIENDS. THEY MAY STILL BE ABUSIVE.</p>		
<p>7. Alcohol and drugs are a major cause of domestic violence</p>	✗	
<p>MYTH: ALTHOUGH ALCOHOL AND DRUGS ARE OFTEN ASSOCIATED WITH DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, THEY DO NOT CAUSE THE VIOLENCE. MANY MEN WHO BEAT THEIR WIVES DO NOT DRINK. AN ABUSER MAY USE ALCOHOL AS AN EXCUSE FOR THE VIOLENCE, BUT ALCOHOL IS NOT THE CAUSE.</p>		

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SEXUAL HEALTH STATEMENT	MYTH	FACT
8. Domestic Violence is almost never just a single episode.		✗
<p>FACT: BATTERING IS A PATTERN OF COERCION AND CONTROL THAT ONE PERSON EXERTS OVER ANOTHER. IT INCLUDES THE REPEATED USE OF A NUMBER OF TACTICS, INCLUDING INTIMIDATION, THREATS, ECONOMIC DEPRIVATION, ISOLATION AND PSYCHOLOGICAL AND SEXUAL ABUSE.</p>		
9. You need to have bruises or other physical evidence to show the court that you have been a	✗	
<p>MYTH: OUR LAW RECOGNISES MANY TYPES OF ABUSE OTHER THAN PHYSICAL VIOLENCE: EMOTIONAL, VERBAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL ABUSE; ECONOMIC ABUSE AND SEXUAL ABUSE AS WELL AS INTIMIDATION, HARASSMENT, STALKING, COERCION, ENTRY INTO THE VICTIM'S RESIDENCE WITHOUT CONSENT, DAMAGE TO PROPERTY AND ANY OTHER CONTROLLING BEHAVIOUR WHICH CAUSES HARM TO THE VICTIM. TO GET ASSISTANCE FROM THE COURT YOU NEED TO SHOW EVIDENCE OF ABUSE, AND NOT NECESSARILY EVIDENCE OF PHYSICAL ABUSE.</p>		
10. You can get a protection order against people other than your intimate partner under the Domestic Violence Act.		✗
<p>FACT: UNDER THE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ACT, ANYONE WHO IS OR HAS BEEN IN A DOMESTIC RELATIONSHIP WITH THEIR ABUSER CAN APPLY FOR A PROTECTION ORDER, INCLUDING: PEOPLE WHO ARE OR WERE MARRIED (UNDER CUSTOM, RELIGIOUS OR CIVIL MARRIAGE), SAME-SEX PARTNERS, PEOPLE WHO LIVED TOGETHER, PARENTS OF A CHILD, FAMILY MEMBERS, PEOPLE WHO WERE ENGAGED, DATING OR IN A SEXUAL RELATIONSHIP (OF ANY DURATION), OR PEOPLE WHO SHARED THE SAME RESIDENCE (SUCH AS HOUSEMATES). BOTH ADULTS AND CHILDREN CAN APPLY FOR A PROTECTION ORDER.</p>		
11. You can only apply for a protection order if you are an adult.	✗	
<p>MYTH: UNDER THE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ACT BOTH ADULTS AND CHILDREN CAN APPLY FOR A PROTECTION ORDER.</p>		
12. People who are victims of dating violence can't apply for a protection order under the DVA because they seldom live together.	✗	
<p>MYTH: UNDER THE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ACT, ANYONE WHO IS OR HAS BEEN IN A DOMESTIC RELATIONSHIP WITH THEIR ABUSER CAN APPLY FOR A PROTECTION ORDER, INCLUDING PEOPLE WHO WERE ENGAGED, DATING OR IN A SEXUAL RELATIONSHIP (OF ANY DURATION).</p>		
13. In situations of domestic violence, everyone in the family has a role to play in stopping the violence	✗	
<p>MYTH: ONLY THE ABUSER HAS THE ABILITY TO STOP THE VIOLENCE. CHANGES IN OTHERS' BEHAVIOUR WILL NOT STOP THE ABUSER'S VIOLENCE.</p>		
14. Victims of domestic violence must like it or they would leave.	✗	
<p>MYTH: VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE OFTEN TRY MANY TIMES TO LEAVE. SOME FACTORS WHICH INHIBIT A VICTIM'S ABILITY TO LEAVE INCLUDE INCREASED VIOLENCE ON THE PART OF THE ABUSER, ECONOMIC DEPENDENCE, FEW VIABLE OPTIONS FOR HOUSING AND SUPPORT, UNHELPFUL RESPONSES FROM THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM OR OTHER AGENCIES, SOCIAL ISOLATION, CULTURAL OR RELIGIOUS CONSTRAINTS, A COMMITMENT TO THE ABUSER AND THE RELATIONSHIP AND FEAR OF FURTHER VIOLENCE.</p>		

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SEXUAL HEALTH STATEMENT	MYTH	FACT
<p>15. Men have a right to discipline their female partners.</p>		
<p>MYTH: THE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ACT RECOGNISES THAT VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IS A SERIOUS CRIME, AND INCLUDES ANY PHYSICAL VIOLENCE TOWARD AN INTIMATE PARTNER.</p>		
<p>16. People in same sex relationships do not suffer domestic violence.</p>		
<p>MYTH: DOMESTIC ABUSE IN SAME-SEX RELATIONSHIPS IS JUST AS PREVALENT AS IT IS IN HETEROSEXUAL RELATIONSHIPS. WHILST, DOMESTIC ABUSE IN HETEROSEXUAL RELATIONSHIPS IS WELL RESEARCHED AND THERE IS SOME PUBLIC AWARENESS, DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN SAME-SEX RELATIONSHIPS IS OFTEN HIDDEN. DUE TO SOCIETAL HOMOPHOBIA, PEOPLE IN SAME-SEX RELATIONSHIPS ARE LESS LIKELY TO COME FORWARD FOR HELP WHEN EXPERIENCING ABUSE, BECAUSE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE RESOURCES ARE LARGELY TARGETED AT STRAIGHT PEOPLE, AND BECAUSE OF PAST OR POTENTIAL EXPERIENCES OF HOMOPHOBIA FROM SERVICE PROVIDERS.</p>		
<p>17. A man cannot sexually abuse his wife.</p>		
<p>MYTH: MARRIAGE DOES NOT ENTITLE ANYONE TO SEXUAL ACTIVITY WITH THEIR PARTNER. THE LAW SAYS THAT ANY PERSON FORCING ANOTHER PERSON TO HAVE SEX OR PARTICIPATE IN SEXUAL ACTS, EVEN IN MARRIAGE, IS GUILTY OF A SEXUAL OFFENCE. THE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ACT SPECIFICALLY DEFINES SEXUAL ABUSE AS PART OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE.</p>		
<p>18. Women ask for it. They deserve what they get.</p>		
<p>MYTH: WOMEN ARE OFTEN VICTIMISED BY THEIR PARTNER FOR NO APPARENT REASON. EVEN IF A WOMAN HAS BEHAVED APPALLINGLY, SHE DOES NOT DESERVE TO BE BEATEN. VIOLENCE AND INTIMIDATION ARE NOT ACCEPTABLE WAYS TO SOLVE CONFLICT IN A RELATIONSHIP.</p>		
<p>19. Pregnancy increases your risk of domestic violence.</p>		
<p>FACT: RESEARCH SHOWS THAT PREGNANT WOMEN OFTEN EXPERIENCE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE.</p>		
<p>20. It is sometimes harder for middle-class women to get help when they leave an abusive relationship.</p>		
<p>FACT: MIDDLE-CLASS WOMEN OFTEN FACE BARRIERS TO GETTING GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE WHEN THEY DECIDE TO LEAVE BECAUSE OF THEIR FAMILY'S APPARENTLY HEALTHY FINANCIAL STATUS. IRONICALLY, THOUGH, WOMEN WHO ARE VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ARE OFTEN FINANCIALLY ISOLATED TO INCREASE THE ABUSER'S CONTROL. SHE MAY WELL LOOK FINANCIALLY WELL-OFF ON PAPER, BUT MAY IN FACT HAVE ACCESS TO NO MONEY AT ALL.</p>		
<p>21. Victims of domestic violence grew up in abusive families themselves.</p>		
<p>MYTH: ALTHOUGH MANY ABUSERS LEARNED VIOLENT BEHAVIOUR GROWING UP IN AN ABUSIVE FAMILY, THERE ARE AS MANY ABUSERS WHO DID NOT GROW UP IN VIOLENT HOUSEHOLDS.</p>		

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<p>22. Abusers are losers who lack the resources to cope with the world.</p>	✗	
<p>MYTH: ABUSERS COME FROM ALL WALKS OF LIFE. THEY ABUSE THEIR PARTNERS BECAUSE THEY WANT TO CONTROL THEM. ALTHOUGH OUTSIDE STRESSORS CAN ESCALATE ABUSIVE BEHAVIOUR, THEY ARE RARELY THE CAUSE, AND THE ABUSE MOST OFTEN PREDATES THE STRESSFUL SITUATION.</p>		
<p>23. Abusers can be very loving partners.</p>		✗
<p>FACT: ABUSERS WILL OFTEN GO THROUGH PERIODS WHERE THEY ARE VERY LOVING AND ATTENTIVE. THIS IS CALLED THE 'HONEYMOON PHASE' AND OFTEN COMES AFTER A VIOLENT EPISODE. THESE PERIODS RARELY LAST, THOUGH, AND ABUSERS INEVITABLY BECOME VIOLENT AGAIN.</p>		
<p>24. Abuse will get better after you are married.</p>	✗	
<p>MYTH: UNFORTUNATELY ABUSERS OFTEN BECOME MORE SUSPICIOUS AND POSSESSIVE AFTER MARRIAGE, AND ATTACKS BECOME MORE FREQUENT AND SEVERE.</p>		
<p>25. The police can't help you with domestic violence cases, you need to go to the court.</p>	✗	
<p>MYTH: WHILE IT IS TRUE THAT ONLY A COURT CAN ISSUE A PROTECTION ORDER, A VICTIM OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE CAN ALSO LAY A CHARGE AGAINST THE ABUSER WITH THE POLICE (FOR EXAMPLE OF ASSAULT, ATTEMPTED MURDER ETC.) IF YOU ALREADY HAVE A PROTECTION ORDER, THE POLICE MUST ARREST THE ABUSER IF HE HAS BROKEN THE TERMS OF THE ORDER.</p>		

