



Day 11 – Tribute

16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence

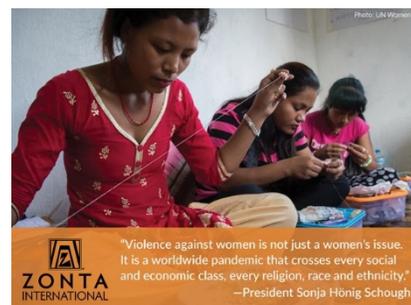
Psychological trauma can cause feelings of helplessness and a complete sense no control. When one is experiencing post-traumatic stress, they may feel overcome by the intrusion of negative thoughts and constant flashbacks of horrid experiences. Research shows that trauma caused by the harm or injury of another person is the most difficult to overcome. Imagine what it is like to be traumatized by another individual that is living in your home; or imagine what it is like to experience harm or injury by a person who is supposed to provide you with care and support. For many of us, it is difficult to imagine.

Domestic and gender-based violence does not happen overnight. Usually, a survivor of abuse will tell you that the same person that is now abusive was once very charming. More often than not, survivors say that when they met their partner, they thought the person to be too good to be true. They were. The survivor will explain that they are constantly shocked by the abusive person their partner has become.

Domestic violence can be manipulation and psychological terror that is so severe that victims completely lose themselves. A domestic violence victim is being terrorized by the person who is supposed to be her partner in life, there are feelings of confusion, shame, doubt, and maybe a little bit of hope that things will change. All of these painful feelings are often experienced alone, because the survivor is usually suffering in silence. Survivors often wish that they could tell someone that the abuse has escalated to the extent that they feel fear for their life or the lives of their children.

When meeting a survivor of abuse do not ask why she stayed, but rather how she survived. Admire her strength to move forward for herself and her children. Commend her for starting over. Breaking the cycle of domestic violence does not begin with the cessation of violence, but with standing with the survivors rather than against them. It means that you believe someone when they tell you they are being abused. Because they need to know that their story matters and that they do not and should not suffer in silence.

Share a survivor's story. Pay tribute to the strong survivors you know.



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"Violence against women is not just a women's issue. It is a worldwide pandemic that crosses every social and economic class, every religion, race and ethnicity."
—President Sonja Hönig Schough