

physical
sexual
mental
economic
abuse

Women and Domestic Violence

Edges Magazine is grateful to the BBC for these articles.

Domestic violence includes physical, mental, sexual and economic abuse within the family. This often involves a power relationship where the abuser uses their position of power to control the more vulnerable and powerless person.

The prevalence of domestic violence is similar in all communities, and it is largely women and children who face the brunt of violence and abuse within the home, often from a violent and more powerful male abuser, such as husband, father, brother or uncle. However, sometimes women can also be abusive, often in collusion with a male abuser. In Asian households, the extended family and the wider community, including community leaders, may be involved in or collude with domestic violence.

Asian women, from all religious backgrounds, have similar experiences of domestic violence to that of white, English women and to women in other communities. However, Asian women's experience of domestic violence can take culturally specific forms, such as forced marriage. The following are some issues relevant to the experiences of Asian women:

Shame and honour

Within the community, women are subject to powerful traditional practices such as izzat (honour) and sharam (shame). Women are expected to uphold the honour of the family by conforming to certain prescribed roles, as the dutiful and obedient wife and daughter, who accepts or tolerates domestic violence rather than leave home. Failure to do so results in being treated as a social outcast by their extended family and wider community. They are accused of having brought shame on their family honour and are ostracised, harassed and even subject to acts of violence.

In "honour killings" for instance, minority women may be killed by family or community members. These killings or other honour crimes such as assaults and abuse are justified as punishment for having brought shame on the honour of the family and that of the wider community.

Forced marriage and restrictions on lifestyle

Many young Asian women and girls may experience forced marriage, which is different from an arranged marriage. An arranged marriage is