

Domestic violence can take many forms and includes physical, emotional or sexual abuse and even economic deprivation, usually perpetrated by a partner or member of the victim's family. Frequently, the victims are women. According to a recent survey, every fourth woman in Germany has experienced violence of a physical or sexual nature by a partner or spouse at some time in her life.

Domestic violence must not be seen as a private matter. It is important that all forms of domestic violence are unequivocally condemned by society, but also in the context of each individual family.

Our long-term objective is to achieve a consensus within society for clear and decisive action against **domestic violence**.

Domestic violence must be tackled at the root – focussing on the perpetrators of violence with a view to altering their behaviour and ending their violence.

This shift in thinking is now taking place, but, in practice, violent and abusive men are not yet consistently taken to task.

Children are always and inevitably also affected by domestic violence against their mother.

Official bodies and institutions need to take this on board and provide help and support specifically aimed at children whose mothers are victims of **domestic violence**.

Victims of domestic violence have a right to protection and comprehensive support.

Laws and guidelines form the basis and need to be applied across the board. All those working in institutions that come into contact with victims of **domestic violence** must be able to rely on a strong and stable network of support organisations.

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BIG e.V.

Ending domestic violence.
Support for women and their children

Berlin initiative against
violence towards women

Berlin initiative against violence towards women – BIG e.V.

BIG was founded as a registered association in 1993 with the objective to work against domestic violence, in cooperation with all societal forces.

Through its own projects and in various fields of activities, BIG strives to create conditions in society that will prevent violence from occurring and that will contribute to better protection and appropriate support for women and their children.

BIG coordinates a united and concerted action of all sectors that deal with issues of domestic violence and accompanies them in their fields of work.

BIG collaborates with numerous experts of various professions to develop and implement specific support measures for women and children.

Furthermore it is BIG's objective to strengthen the rights of abused women and to ensure that abusive men are held responsible for their actions.

BIG informs about male violence and its effects on women and children by raising awareness and by targeted public relations.

In addition BIG contributes to tackling domestic violence at an early stage by developing and implementing preventive strategies and projects.

Today, BIG is comprised of three institutions which contribute to realising these objectives by offering specific services within the areas of intervention, coordination and prevention.

BIG HOTLINE

BIG Hotline is the first point of call for advice in Berlin.

It is open every day – even at weekends and on public holidays – from 9am to midnight. If necessary, interpreters can be provided in 51 languages.

BIG Hotline consultants offer advice to women experiencing domestic violence, as well as the people around them. Professionals who, due to their occupational activities, have questions about domestic violence can also contact the BIG Hotline. The services offered by the BIG Hotline include crisis intervention, placement in protected accommodation and information about police and legal intervention. They also offer mobile intervention: if telephone advice is not sufficient, a consultant can provide counselling on site.

BIG Hotline is financed by the Berlin Senate, Department for Economy, Technology and Women's Issues, and through donations.

BIG COORDINATION

BIG Coordination monitors and analyzes interventions against domestic violence. To improve the actual practice, interdisciplinary and interinstitutional meetings are being coordinated, in which experts of the police, the judiciary system, child and youth services, immigration services and authorities and support services for women work together to develop rehabilitation programs for perpetrators and other (more) effective measurements and strategies against domestic violence.

This also includes promoting and forwarding legislative changes and developing innovative concepts or pilot projects. Brochures and different information materials are authored and published for all relevant sectors and target groups.

Further trainings are offered and practical guidelines developed for all professions dealing with issues of domestic violence. In addition BIG Coordination organizes conferences for a broad professional audience.

BIG Coordination receives financial support from the Berlin Senate, Department for Economy, Technology and Women's Issues.

BIG PREVENTION

Education, awareness-raising and prevention of domestic violence are the primary goals of BIG Prevention. With its holistic approach it strives to reach all involved in the school system.

BIG Prevention offers further trainings on the subject of children and domestic violence for teachers and all others working at schools, parents' evenings and parents' workshops, workshops and individual project days for children and case discussions with teachers. As accompanying measure BIG Prevention provides the interactive traveling exhibition "REALLY FAIR!".

Furthermore BIG Prevention supports cooperation between schools and youth welfare services in cases of domestic violence.

BIG Prevention is financed by the Berlin Senate, Department for Education, Science and Research.



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