



Farming Families - Rural Barriers

This handout includes some of the dynamics that may occur in farming families where domestic violence exists.

- ▶ Many survivors in farming families are not paid a wage. Therefore, no unemployment contributions can be made, no pension plan may exist, and social security cannot be obtained. There is typically one source of income for the whole family.
- ▶ Couples often work side by side on the family farm.
- ▶ There is often little separation between work and home life because the family lives and works on the farm.
- ▶ Home and vehicles may be considered corporate assets and survivors may have little claim to them.
- ▶ Survivors may not have access to public benefits if government agencies view them as having access to business assets from the farm.
- ▶ Survivors' strong emotional ties to the farmland and animals may make it very difficult for them to leave the farm.
- ▶ Working with farming equipment can be used as an explanation for bruises and injuries inflicted by perpetrators.
- ▶ Abusers may blame survivors for business failings, poor crops, sick livestock and/or bad weather and use it as an excuse for perpetrating violence.
- ▶ Survivors in farming families may have reduced legal options. An arrest of the perpetrator or petitioning for an Injunction for Protection may not be an option if the abusive partner is needed to work the farm.

For survivors, leaving may mean...

- ▶ Leaving behind their home, their community, their animals, their business, and their job.
- ▶ Fearing for the safety, or arranging for the care of livestock and/or pets.
- ▶ Concerns that the business will fail without them. The abusive partner may tell the survivor that she would be responsible for the business failing if she leaves.
- ▶ The abuse is no longer a secret once survivors make attempts to leave and/or to access community resources.

Adapted from:

Violence Against Rural Women, Retrieved 8/5/13 from
http://ruralwomyn.net/rural_violence_difference.html

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