Orange Day: Dare to ask!

This training course is aimed at students at JU and is designed to raise awareness of domestic violence and honour-related violence. We also want to show you what you can do if you think someone is being subjected to violence, and what support and help is available.

Orange Day: Dare to ask!

In 2024, eleven women in Sweden were killed by perpetrators with whom they had been in an ongoing or former intimate relationship (Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention).

Orange Day on 25 November is the UN's day to raise awareness of violence against women. At Jönköping University, we conduct research and provide education on violence in close relationships, including at the School of Health and Welfare. During Orange Day and Orange Week, a number of activities are organised to highlight violence against women and violence in close relationships. Attention is also drawn to honour-related violence and oppression, which form part of the Government's national strategy to prevent and combat men's violence against women.



Domestic violence is not just physical violence

“Violence is any act directed at another person which, through that act, causes harm, pain, fear or humiliation, or forces that person to do something against their will or to refrain from doing something they wish to do”

Per Isdal (The Meaning of Violence, Meningen med våld, 2001)



Dare to ask – you can save a life!

It can feel both difficult and awkward to ask about violence. But it’s important that you pluck up the courage to do so! You might be the only one who actually asks, and simply being asked can make it easier for the victim to speak out.

All too often, both children and adults feel that ”everyone knew but nobody did anything.” We can break that culture of silence! By having the courage to ask, we can actually save lives.



Signs that a person may be a victim of violence

There are several signs that a person may be a victim of violence; be particularly vigilant if the person

- → gets in touch less and less frequently and has less time to socialise or talk on the phone with family and friends
- → cancels plans at the last minute
- → is questioned when they've done something on their own
- → doesn't seem to want to be home alone with their partner and would rather stay on campus or at work
- → isn't allowed to make their own financial decisions, or dress as they please
- → shows a different kind of tiredness or anxiety that you haven't seen in them before
- → has a partner who calls frequently, texts constantly and wants to know where they are and who they're with
- → is constantly being driven by their partner to and from school and activities

The gradual escalation of violence

No one would stay in a relationship that is “merely” violent or where someone punches you on the first date. Physical violence only occurs once the victim has been broken down by psychological violence.

It often begins with courtship and reassurance. The first blow comes as a shock. The abuser asks for forgiveness, shows tenderness and makes excuses. Slowly, the violence becomes part of everyday life.

Over time, the good moments become fewer and fewer, whilst the instances of aggression, threats and violence become more and more frequent. The victim struggles to regain that feeling of being in love and of connection. Daily life becomes unbearable; the victim will do something “wrong” no matter how they behave. The violence becomes more severe, occurs more frequently, and it becomes difficult to seek help as the victim has lost most of their social contacts.



Honour-related violence and oppression

Honour-related violence is a form of collective violence aimed at upholding the honour of the family. It may involve several perpetrators and be planned in advance. The family members or close relatives of the victims usually play a decisive role.

Honour-related violence and oppression can range from restrictions on everyday choices to a life under extreme control. It can involve physical punishment and, in the worst cases, murder. The forms of violence are in many ways similar to those seen in intimate partner relationships. (The National Board of Health and Welfare)



Consent

This year's theme for Orange Week is consent. Consent is about free will and respecting each other's boundaries. A person must always actively consent to sex, either through words or actions. Just because someone doesn't say "no" doesn't mean they want to.

If you have sex without consent, you are breaking the law on consent, and this is always a criminal offence. It does not matter whether the offence takes place in person or online; both are equally serious.



When you have sex with someone, bear in mind:

- → Listen to what the other person is saying.
- → Ask if you’re unsure what they want.
- → Be aware of body language and other signals.
- → Respect the person’s boundaries and the fact that they may change their mind along the way.

Consent must be given freely. Fear, threats, control or pressure can limit a person’s ability to express what they actually want.



Advice for friends or fellow students of anyone who may be a victim of violence

- Ask your friend or classmate if they feel unsafe, scared or worried. Ask if there is anyone who is intimidating them, threatening them or using violence against them. Listen to their answers and offer support if they open up to you.
- Do not blame the victim by asking, for example, “Why don’t you just leave?”
- Summarise what has been said and check that you have understood them correctly. Discuss what the victim would like to do next.
- Also bear in mind that you might not get a response the first time you ask, but at least you’ll have shown that you’re there to listen when they feel ready to talk.

If you don’t feel confident asking the question, you can turn to a teacher, the Student Union, the Student Health Care or someone you trust.

You are important!

We hope you've learnt a bit more about how to recognise domestic violence and how you can help.

There's always something we can do: talk about the violence, shift the stigma from the victim to the perpetrator, and start asking questions.

And you know what? You can't really go "wrong." You can always say: "I'm worried about you, because your boyfriend/ girlfriend/ husband/ wife/ cohabiting partner/ partner or someone else close to you is subjecting you to violence or abusing you. How are you coping? I'm here if you want to talk."



Support and help are available

Remember that you and your friends can make a difference, and that help and support are available.

Are you, or someone you know, being controlled, threatened or beaten? Are you subjecting someone close to you to control, threats or violence? Help is available. Everyone has the right to a life free from violence. If you’re worried about someone: it’s better to call once too often than once too little!



Support and guidance for anyone who is a victim or is concerned about someone else

Student Health Care JU https://ju.se/student/en/service/student-health-care.html
Sweden's national women's helpline – Kvinnofridslinjen https://kvinnofridslinjen.se/en/home/
Support line for boys and men https://stodlinjenforman.se/info/engelska/
Support line for transgender people https://stodlinjenfortranspersoner.se/info/engelska/
Support line for individuals who are subjected to threats, violence or coercive control to protect their family's honour https://rattattvalja.se/info/engelska/

Support for those who subject someone to violence

Choose to stop https://valjattsluta.se/eng/

Jönköping Municipality (in Swedish): https://www.jonkoping.se/omsorg--stod/stod-vid-skadligt-bruk-och-beroende-kriminalitet-vald-eller-sexkop/vald-i-nara-relationer/stod-till-dig-som-utsatter-andra-for-vald

Thank you for caring!

