



European
Commission



„DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IS ALL AROUND US – WE NEED TO LEARN HOW TO SPOT THE SIGNS“

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Kadera, originally founded as a shelter for women who experienced domestic violence, is an organisation that provides specialised training, capacity building projects and support for everyone who is affected by domestic violence. With their project “Safe at home” Kadera runs training for housing providers to enable them to identify covert signs of domestic violence and to provide them with the skills and information needed to address the situation. The project operates in the UK and the Netherlands, reaching a total of 25 housing providers.

CHILDREN BAREFOOT IN THE COLD; BROKEN WINDOWS; LOUD NOISES – ALL THESE ARE EVERYDAY OCCURRENCES FOR CARETAKERS AND MAINTENANCE STAFF WORKING IN HOUSING ESTATES. “I NEVER USED TO REALISE THAT THESE WERE NOT JUST A NUISANCE OR SIGNS OF PARENTAL NEGLECT THAT WEREN’T REALLY MY BUSINESS. NOW I KNOW THAT THEY ARE MOST LIKELY SIGNS INDICATING THAT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IS HAPPENING IN THE BUILDING,” SAYS JORIS, A MAINTENANCE WORKER, WHO HAS BEEN TRAINED BY THE WOMEN’S SUPPORT ORGANISATION KADERA. „FINDING OUT THAT ONE IN THREE WOMEN ACROSS THE EU HAS EXPERIENCED DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND WHAT THE REALITY OF THAT LOOKS LIKE PUT EVERYTHING INTO A NEW PERSPECTIVE FOR ME.“

KADERA is based in Zwolle, in the Netherlands, and has made it its mission to end domestic violence. It started out as a women’s shelter, where women who experienced violence from their partners found refuge for themselves and their children. In January 2017, KADERA initiated a project called SAFE AT HOME, which will be funded by the European Commission until the end of 2018

NON.
NO.
NEIN.

#SayNoStopVAW

“We work with housing providers to enable their staff to recognize the signs of domestic violence.”

Yvonne Matser - van t'Oever, Project manager, Kadera

The project's approach is as simple as it is effective: identifying domestic violence directly where it occurs – at home. There are 370 social housing providers in the Netherlands and most of them not only struggle to address the problem of domestic violence – some don't know the signs by which to recognise domestic violence to begin with.

SAFE AT HOME aims to reach 25 housing providers over the course of the next 2 years, 10 in the UK, and 15 in the Netherlands.

Working closely with housing providers, the project wants to make policy recommendations to governments across the EU and raise awareness about domestic violence. The main focus of the project, however, is the provision of training. With these training courses SAFE AT HOME specifically targets staff who are in close contact with residents, such as maintenance staff, housing officers and caretakers. Only when they know how to spot the signs and respond to them, can they work together with other agencies to follow up on any suspicion that violence may be happening with a coordinated response.

Yvonne Matser-van't Oever, SAFE AT HOME's project leader, explains: “One important thing we teach in the training courses is to recognise the signs. But even when people see the signs, not knowing why it is so difficult to leave an intimate, yet violent, environment, can lead to the avoidance of responsibilities. We can raise awareness and understanding amongst staff of

the emotional and social hurdles that women affected by domestic violence have to overcome. This, in turn, empowers them to respond appropriately to any signs of domestic violence they may observe.”

With practical examples, interactive exercises and discussions, Yvonne makes the fear of the unknown that women experiencing domestic violence face tangible to training participants. She explains that “when they think about leaving their partner, the fear of the perceived unknown is often bigger than the sufferings they endure in the world they know. Adding financial insecurities and the worry about children to the list makes the prospect of escaping a violent environment almost unbearable.” The people SAFE AT HOME work with are very thankful for the training. Not only do they understand the role they can play in making a difference in people's lives, they also revisit their own stereotypes. Yvonne says she remembers one woman saying that in her 20 years of experience as a caretaker, she perhaps came across 1 or 2 cases of domestic violence. „However when we ask people who have already received training, they tell us that they now ask themselves the question whether domestic violence may be happening more frequently. They realise in hindsight that they have seen many situations where violence may have been the root cause of the tenancy issues they observed. You can learn how to spot the signs – and it is crucial that we all start looking for them attentively – and don't look away.

MORE INFORMATION ON THE PROJECT

kadera.nl/index.php

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