

Family Violence

Parental abuse can take many forms

By JACIE B. PALMER
Herald Special

Today I went to visit my other in the hospital. When I asked her how she was, she replied: "Not so good. I've just realized I've made a big mistake. I don't understand how I could have been so stupid."

For her, this is the day she died. How dreadful it must be for her to finally realize that the person on whom she has showered love for the last 40 years has unequivocally shafted her - and in a very systematic and calculated way. The love that mothers and sons share is special but when that love becomes abusive the mothers are left devastated. I've watched her be physically, emotionally and economically abused. And, yes, I've tried to help!

The first time I remember my brother abusing my mother he was 15-years-old. He hit her across the back. I recall feeling shocked. How could he do that? I remember no disciplinary action being taken and suppose he believed from that point forward that it is okay to abuse mothers. Within a few years, I'd left home. My father died while my brother was in university.

As my mother wore the same old clothes, worked and struggled to put him through university, he demanded expensive clothes and was without doubt the best dressed man on campus. Usually he came home weekends but often all hell would break loose. He'd be drunk or high on drugs and demand mother get out of bed at all hours of the night to make him his peanut butter and jelly sandwiches. She always acquiesced.



She had built her life around him because of the loneliness she experienced after dad's death. She was afraid to refuse him anything ... the car, money, clothing, parties... whatever.

After university he travelled and eventually got married. Mother set him up in business and son had lost most of her life savings. His physical abuse was by that time becoming more overt. One employee recounted with horror an occasion when he raged through the building chasing his wife. He finally broke down a door to get at her. She divorced him. She was smart.

Of course, son returned to mother and over the next few years took the rest of her life savings and now has her home in his name. Yes, he has re-married but

this time to a woman of his own kind. They worked together to obtain her last dollar. Now they want her out of the small living quarters she has in the home that once belonged to her.

She has always kept her feelings to herself. She has always maintained such restraint. But now I see the rage in her eyes as she knows she has totally lost control of her own life. The realization of the monster her son has been all these years is crushing.

I have reassured her that I have a lawyer and am attempting to help her. Trying to force my brother to hire a housekeeper and make some small alterations to

her living quarters is no easy task especially when you realize his wife has previously refused to have the trim on mother's windows painted while the painter was doing the rest of the exterior. I've told mom that if I can't buy her home from my brother I will purchase one in which we can all live. With several small and active boys, it won't be easy for any of us but we'll make it work. I told her years ago I'd be the one who'd look after her in her senior years. I tried to tell her she'd be abandoned by her beloved son. Now she knows I spoke the truth.

Like most abusers, my brother is charming to the extreme. Not surprisingly, I became involved

in an abusive relationship for a short period of time. The man not only physically resembled my brother but also had many similar character traits. During the time I was involved with my abusive partner, he eased over \$100,000.00 from his mom's pockets.

Abuse is insidious! Feel free to contact Jacie by directing letters to her attention at the Herald. All correspondence will remain confidential. Should you wish to speak to Jacie, call the Distress Centre at 877-1211 and you call will be returned. If you are a woman or child in crisis or an abusive male wanting help, call the Distress Centre or dial 911.

Treatment centre proposed

Local resident Beverly McKee has successfully spearheaded a move to establish a treatment centre for families affected by violence to be located in Halton Hills.

A first meeting of key community leaders in the Region was held at Georgetown and District Memorial Hospital on Nov. 15th. In attendance were: Paul Bennett, Executive Director Halton Sexual Abuse Program, Cliff Burns, Director of Education, Halton Separate School Board, Noel Duignan, MPP Halton-North, Graeme Goebelle, Chairman of the Board, Georgetown and District Memorial Hospital, Alex McKee, Beverly McKee.

Russell Miller, Mayor, Town of Halton Hills, John Oliver, Executive Director, Georgetown and District Memorial Hospital, and Garth Turner, MP, Halton-North.

Regional Chairman Peter Pomeroy, Regional Police Chief James Harding and Halton Director of Education Bob Williams were unable to attend this meeting but were in support of effectively dealing with family violence.

Mrs. McKee said "there are some information processing centres and treatment clinics for specific disfunction like sexual abuse, drug and alcohol misuse and they are needed. But what is

really required is a treatment centre for the whole family because where there is violence and abuse in the family, everyone gets affected - to cope they have to adopt new behaviours which creates more disfunction. Eventually those affected become overly dependent on our health care system." She went on to say it's simply too much for our society to deal with - let alone pay for.

At the meeting it was agreed that a working committee would be formed to lay some of the appropriate groundwork. The hospital, our Federal and Provincial representatives, Region and the public and separate school boards will contribute people

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