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## “A CRY FROM WITHIN”



# Presenter's Guide

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“A Cry  
from  
Within”

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Teen Drama

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Relationship

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Violence

# **“A Cry from Within”**

## **Teen Drama - Relationship Violence**

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### **Introduction**

This is a drama to demonstrate how the lives of victims of abuse are affected by responses from others, such as family members, service providers, and community members.

Although we have laws and policies within the various agencies designed to protect victims of abuse, the realities that some victims face are often not reflective of these laws and policies. These '**grey areas**' sometimes result in victims not receiving the help that they need. The laws do not cover the manipulation of an abuser, dead set on getting his victim at all costs.

We have many agencies and organizations doing a lot of great work with the resources they have available to them. However, this demonstration illustrates that our work is nowhere near complete....Before we see a reduction in violence, attitudes have to change; it is imperative that we respond appropriately to victims of violence.

We know that violence knows **no** boundaries. Violence knows **no** class. **Anyone** can be a victim...women, children, youth, seniors, people with disabilities, and men. We also know that over **90%** of victims of violence are **women**. The victim represented in this drama presentation is a young woman.

These scenarios are real, the victim is real, and the responses are real.

This teen version of “A Cry from Within” has been adapted from the *New Brunswick Coalition Against Violence* and revised by the *Central West Committee Against Violence* and *The Roads to End Violence*,

Revised Edition February 2008

## What You Will Need

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### Materials:

Script

9 White bed Sheets

18 index cards Numbered:

- 1 – 9 (Scenario # 1)
- 10 – 18 (Scenario # 2)

### Roles:

(These volunteers can be selected prior to the presentation or from the audience, whatever suits your timeframe)

Narrator

2 Volunteers to place sheets on Jennifer

A volunteer to play Jennifer

18 volunteers to read the other roles

### Hand-out Cards:

- Instruct volunteers to stand when reading cards
- Instruct the Audience not talk during the presentation

### Read Narrative: Say after each narrative "Card # 2, 3, 4, etc."

After each response card is read, volunteers place a sheet on 'Jennifer'.  
(Periodically reassure the volunteer under the sheets and ask if she is ok.)

### Narrator begins reading Scenario #1

## **Scenario # 1**

### **Narrator:**

Brandon and Jennifer started dating in high school. Brandon was a star hockey player with a high academic average; he was respected by staff and popular among his peers. All the girls at school wanted to date him. When Brandon wasn't playing hockey, he was always with Jennifer. He told her often that he loved her very much and that she was his 'girl'. It was quite common to see them publicly displaying their affection for each other.

After several months of dating, Brandon begins to disrespect Jennifer and make fun of her in front of his teammates. If she has an acne break-out, he points it out. If he sees her eating junk food, he reminds her that she is putting on weight. When he does give her a compliment, it is always based on the size of her breasts or the way her butt looks in a pair of jeans.

Although Jennifer truly loves Brandon, she doesn't like how he is making her feel lately. He has been pressuring her into having a sexual relationship with him. She has told him repeatedly that she isn't ready. One night after some heavy petting in the back seat of his car, Brandon tries to force Jennifer to have sex with him. When she refuses to go all the way, he tells her that she is 'leading him on' and if she loved him, like she says she does, she would have sex with him.

He threatens her saying that if she doesn't want to, he can easily get 'it' elsewhere. Jennifer tries explaining to Brandon that she doesn't want her first time to be in the back seat of a car and if he loved her, he wouldn't expect it of her. He slaps her across the face and she begins to cry. Brandon says he is sorry and holds Jennifer in his arms and tells her that he will never hit her again. He takes her home, walks her to the door and kisses her gently on the cheek; keenly aware that her parents are watching from an upstairs window.

The following weekend, Brandon's team was playing in a big tournament. As Brandon skates onto the ice, he sees Jennifer talking to some guy he doesn't know. The conversation ended with the guy giving Jennifer a quick hug and leaving to find his seat before the game began. During the game, Brandon keeps giving Jennifer hard looks and doesn't come to talk to her between periods. She doesn't know why he is acting this way and she isn't enjoying the game because of it.

After the game, Brandon grabs Jennifer outside the stadium and slams her up against the wall. He accuses her of cheating on him with the guy she was talking to in the stands. He punches her in the face and calls her a 'whore'. She tries telling him that the guy was her 'cousin' and he was only in town for the game. Brandon walks away without saying goodbye. Jennifer is becoming uncomfortable and afraid of her relationship with Brandon. She decides to talk to one of her friends about it.

### **Card #1: Friend**

When Jennifer tells her friend about what has been going on between her and Brandon and how she has been feeling, her friend says "Do you have any idea how lucky you are? Brandon is totally hot! Not to mention that he's one of the most popular guys in the whole school. Most of the girls are just wishing that you two would break up so they could get a chance with him. Being Brandon's 'eye candy' seems like fun to me!"

### **Narrator:**

After talking with her friend, Jennifer has her mind made up that she is going to do whatever it takes to make her relationship with Brandon work. She starts getting up extra early to get ready for school; wanting to look good for Brandon.

Brandon and Jennifer attend a post game party. All the couples have found a place to be alone. Brandon and Jennifer are no exception. Brandon begins by telling Jennifer that he loves her so much and that he wants them to get married some day. They begin to make out. Brandon starts to unzip Jennifer's pants. She asks him to stop but he tells her that he knows she really wants to and that it's okay because they love each other. She tells him "No, I'm not ready." He roughly pulls her hands over her head and pulls her pants down. He forces her to have sex with him even though she cries and begs him to stop. After the assault, Brandon leaves the room without talking to Jennifer. She gets dressed and walks home. She cries herself to sleep.

The next day Jennifer sees Brandon in the hallway at school. He doesn't talk to her but instead flirts with another girl in Jennifer's class. Jennifer is confused and feels that she needs to talk to someone. She sets up an appointment with the guidance counselor and tells her what happened at the party.

## **Card # 2: Guidance Counselor**

The counselor says "Jennifer this doesn't sound like Brandon at all. You could ruin his reputation with what you are accusing him of. You said that you were both drinking, maybe it didn't happen the way you remember it."

### **Narrator:**

Brandon sees Jennifer coming out of the guidance counselor's office. He calls her a bitch and tells her that she is nothing but a slut. He also tells her that she has a reputation as the school 'whore'. As she is walking away from him, he pulls her hair and tells her to keep her mouth shut. Jennifer breaks away and runs into the principal's office.

## **Card # 3: Principal**

The principal listens to Jennifer's story about Brandon attacking her, but when asked if there were any witnesses, Jennifer replies no. The principal says that there is nothing that he can do.

### **Narrator:**

The principal, not wanting to lose their star player right before the big game, dismisses the problem. Brandon later hears that Jennifer has talked to the Principal about what had happened and he once again attacks her. This time he gives her a black eye and breaks her arm.

## **Card # 4: Brandon's Friend**

Brandon's friend Dave finds Jennifer crying in the hall and calls a teacher for help. Dave tells Jennifer to say that she fell down the stairs. "If you really care about Brandon and getting back together with him, you won't hurt him." says Dave.

### **Narrator:**

Jennifer listens to Dave's advice and tells the teacher and her parents that she fell down the stairs on her way to class. Brandon sends Jennifer a dozen roses and calls to tell her that he is sorry. He explains to her that he is under a lot of pressure from his parents and his hockey coach to do well. He says he really loves her and will never hit her again. Jennifer tells Brandon that she forgives him.

Jennifer's parents notice that Brandon isn't coming around as often as he used to and when he calls Jennifer, their conversations end in arguments.

### **Card # 5: Jennifer's Parents**

Jennifer's parents question her about why she is being so mean to Brandon? "Brandon is a very intelligent boy" says Jennifer's father, "He is going place and if you continue to argue with him all the time, he will leave you behind."

#### **Narrator:**

A representative from the Provincial Hockey League shows up at one of Brandon's games. He doesn't choose Brandon but instead chooses a teammate. Brandon finds this out from a friend while he is shopping at the mall with Jennifer. He blames Jennifer for causing him to perform poorly. He pulls her into the hallway that leads to the mall washrooms and slams her head into a wall. Jennifer runs into a store and calls the police.

### **Card # 6: Police**

The police respond to the shopping mall but no arrests are made. There is no witness willing to support Jennifer's story. She is threatened with arrest if she continues to be loud and upset.

#### **Narrator:**

Brandon's actions are once again dismissed and he is free to go about his business as if nothing happened. To compound the situation, Brandon's parents obtain a restraining order against Jennifer, to prevent her from making "false allegations" against their son. Brandon's parents also threaten to sue Jennifer's parents for slander.

### **Card # 7: Judge**

The Judge feels that Jennifer is making too much of the situation. He feels that Jennifer is doing everything to hold onto Brandon and is being very possessive. She is ordered to stay away from Brandon.



**Narrator:**

Brandon repeatedly calls Jennifer in spite of the order. To keep their relationship a secret, Brandon purchases a cell phone for Jennifer. He wants her all to himself and Jennifer is turning into a real loner. She stops seeing her friends and spends all her time in her room. She stops eating and constantly argues with her mother. Jennifer doesn't know how to cope or where to turn. She begins to cut herself. Her parents turn to their church minister for help.

**Card # 8: Church Minister**

The Church Minister insists on talking to Brandon and Jennifer together. He listens to Brandon's side of the story and when Brandon says that he is sorry, the minister tells Jennifer that the Christian thing to do is to forgive Brandon and to be a support to him.

**Narrator:**

Jennifer continues to be argumentative with her family. She is becoming especially aggressive with her younger sister. She seldom does any homework and as a result she is at risk of failing.

**Card # 9: Teacher**

Jennifer's homeroom teacher is handing back the math tests to the class. He gives Jennifer hers and with a look of disapproval, demands that she stay behind after school. Her classmates start to whisper. After school, Jennifer's teacher tells her that she is lazy and if she doesn't change her attitude, she will have to repeat the grade.

**Narrator:**

Brandon is upset that Jennifer has finally told him that she doesn't want to see him anymore and that he should stop trying to call her. He leaves threatening messages on her voice mail and threatens to hurt her very badly if she starts to date anyone else. Jennifer, feeling that she is worthless and a complete failure comes home from school, takes an overdose of pills and is found unconscious by her mother. She later dies in hospital.

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**Narrator**

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### Processing with Audience after all sheets are placed on the volunteer

- **Ask** ""What do you remember about the woman under the sheets?"
- **Ask** "Do you remember what color hair she had? Eyes? What was she wearing? Did she have glasses? Have we lost track of her?"

No one situation in this drama is unusual. The sheets represent the cumulative effect of abuse. Each time the community responds inappropriately, another layer is placed over the victim. She is burdened further from ever escaping her situation.

What would happen however, if everyone in the community knew the dynamics of domestic violence and acted accordingly?

## **“A Second Chance”**

### **Scenario # 2**

**Hand out “helpful” scenario cards. (If not already done)**

Now we are going to re-examine this scenario. Only this time, we are going to look at how things might have turned out for Jennifer had the system responded more appropriately to her throughout the stages of her troubled relationship.

#### **Direction for Volunteers:**

After each positive response card is read, volunteers will remove a sheet off Jennifer.

**Narrator begins reading Scenario #2**

## **Scenario # 2**

### **Narrator:**

How could Jennifer's friend have responded to her that would have resulted in a positive outcome for Jennifer?

### **Card #10: Friend**

When Jennifer tells her friend what has been going on, her friend says, "Jennifer! I am so sorry that this is happening to you. He has no right to treat you like this! Let's go talk to Ms. Evans the guidance counselor; she'll tell us what we should do."

### **Narrator:**

Jennifer and her friend Michelle meet with the guidance counselor. With Michelle by her side, Jennifer tells Ms. Evans what has been happening with her and Brandon. However, she leaves out the part about the rape at the party.

### **Card # 11: Guidance Counselor**

"Jennifer, no one deserves to be treated the way you have. You've done the right thing by bringing this to my attention."

### **Narrator:**

The guidance counselor is really concerned about Jennifer's safety at school. After receiving permission from Jennifer, she contacts the school principal.

### **Card # 12: Principal**

The principal meets with the guidance counselor and Jennifer. He assures Jennifer that he is concerned about what has happened to her and he will see that she is protected when she is at school and will contact the authorities. He also reassures her that she has done the right thing by reporting what has happened to her.

**Narrator:**

Brandon hears that Jennifer has talked to the Principal about what had happened and he once again attacks her. This time he gives her a black eye and breaks her arm.

**Card # 13:        Brandon's Friend**

Brandon's friend Dave finds Jennifer crying in the hall and calls a teacher for help. Dave says, "Jennifer tell the whole truth about Brandon. Lots of people know what happened at the party and they would be willing to testify if they had to...Hey, even I know that this is abuse. My sister saw a counselor at the hospital last year after she left an abusive relationship and it really helped her".

**Narrator:**

The teacher calls Jennifer's parents who take her to the emergency room in the hospital.

**Card # 14:        Jennifer's Parents**

After they come home from the hospital, Jennifer's parents tell her that they are very concerned about what has been happening with her and Brandon. They reassure her that they are there for her no matter what.

**Narrator:**

A representative from the Provincial Hockey League shows up at one of Brandon's games. He doesn't choose Brandon but instead chooses a teammate. Brandon finds this out from a friend while he is shopping at the mall with Jennifer. He blames Jennifer for causing him to perform poorly. He pulls her into the hallway that leads to the mall washrooms and slams her head into a wall. Jennifer runs into a store and calls the police.

**Card # 15:        Police**

The police respond to the shopping mall and arrest Brandon. Jennifer is referred to Victim Services, where she receives counseling, completes a victim impact statement and discloses about the rape. Although Brandon's parents retain a lawyer, he is held without bail.

**Narrator:**

Three months later, Brandon goes to court.

**Card # 16: Judge**

Because Brandon is eighteen, this case is handled in adult court. The Judge sentenced Brandon to two years in jail.

**Narrator:**

Jennifer begins to feel sorry for Brandon and wonders if she should have just forgiven him and not went to the police. She talks to her parents about how she is feeling. Her parents suggest that she speak with their church minister.

**Card # 17: Church Minister**

The minister listens to Jennifer and reassures her that she has made the right decision. He assures her that although she may choose to forgive Brandon for what he has done, he still has to face the consequences for his actions. He is not above the law. The minister puts her in contact with a support group for young girls who have experienced the same type of abuse.

**Narrator:**

After attending several group sessions, Jennifer starts to feel that she can begin to move past what has happened to her.

**Card # 18: Teacher**

Jennifer's teacher offers her support and understanding and reaffirms that she has made the right decision. Jennifer thanks him and promises him that she will do better.

**Narrator:**

Jennifer graduates from high school with honors and pursues a career in social work. She becomes a leading advocate for victims of violence.

## **Post Drama Discussion: (Based on Solutions)**

**How did you feel during the drama?**

**The following discussions can take place (add your own things here)**

**Ask audience to note the types of violence in the Drama:**

Emotional, verbal, psychological, sexual abuse, physical

And how these types of abuse were present in this relationship and served to beat the victim down?

Note how the bad responses further victimized her and the accumulative effect of this was devastating.

Note how the sports figure was put on a pedestal and this served to further put her down.

Physical abuse occurs under an umbrella of all these types of abuse. Rarely will you see bullying start out as physical abuse without the umbrella of the emotional, verbal, psychological, etc.....that is what makes a person vulnerable to an abuser...they become a victim physiologically and emotionally and the fear sets in...this fear becomes so intense that the abuser need never get physical with its victim.....

Clearly this drama demonstrates how we need to change attitudes in order to effectively reduce violence in society....

### **Discuss Community Resources:**

Crisis Lines

School Counselors

Women's Centre

Regional Coordinating

Committee's (Violence Prevention Initiative)

Victim Services

OutrageNL

you're not alone booklets

abuse help cards

power wheel posters

### **Ask audience to help spread awareness**

Explain that just as abusers choose to use violence, we all have the choice to remain silent or spread awareness. Silence is violence's best friend...