



Briefing:

Media

Produced by Zero Tolerance
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This briefing is one of a series by VAW Prevention Scotland which aim to highlight the key research and resources on a particular VAW issue. They aim to provide practitioners with a starting point when researching the subject. There are many more resources in the resource directory on our website (<http://www.vawpreventionscotland.org.uk/resources/general>) and sources of further resources are listed at the end of this briefing. Please contact us with suggestions for updates and for resources to add to our directory.

Summary

The media plays a powerful role in determining how we see the world around us by both creating and affirming our sense of the world.

News Media

Despite the recent proliferation of social media, such as Facebook and Twitter, news media remains the major and most influential source for information, ideas and opinion¹. What is, and what is not, considered newsworthy is crucial to our understanding of the power of the media. Women are underrepresented in both news content and production² this imbalance has been seen as perpetuating women's subordination.³

Journalists have been encouraged to think carefully about how Violence Against Women (VAW) is reported in the news, not simply reporting survivors of domestic abuse and rape as passive victims but to give attention to the causes of violence against women and thus challenging taken for granted aspects of everyday life⁴. When reporting cases of isolated violence advocates of VAW prevention urge journalists to be careful not to place the blame on the survivor; to use appropriate language and avoid stereotypes⁵.

Advertising

Advertising media relies heavily on the visual to sell products and brands. Corporate brands have been criticised for creating advertising campaigns that objectify women and in some cases for perpetuating the subordination of women presenting them as weak and vulnerable⁶. Advertising has come to be seen as a form of commercial sexual exploitation, harmful to both men and women by prescribing highly sexualised ideals⁷.

Key Statistics

News

24% of the people who feature in the print, radio and television news are female. In contrast, 76% of the people in the news are male.⁸

18% of female news subjects are portrayed as victims in comparison to 8% of male subjects.⁹

46% of stories reinforced gender stereotypes, almost eight times higher than stories that challenged such stereotypes.¹⁰

In the 1990's at least one sensational sexual abuse case per week was being reported in the daily tabloid press.¹¹

The Daily Mail in 2000 reported, on average, 5 sexual abuse stories per week.¹²

Media

27% of British 15 – 17 year olds said the media was one of the earliest influences on Beauty and body image, above the influence their mother and friends had.¹³

Children living in the UK see between 20,000 and 40,000 TV advertisements a year, not to mention billboards print advertisements and new media ads.¹⁴

39% of 16 – 20 year old Scottish girl would consider having surgery to change the way they look.¹⁵

Men's weekly magazines have, on average, 70 pictures of women per issue with around one third posing topless.¹⁶

Quotes: Women and the Media

Representation of the world, like the world itself, is the work of men; they describe it from their own point of view, which they confuse with the absolute truth.

Simone de Beauvoir¹⁷

The style of reporting sexual violence has become more explicit and lurid in detail over the past few decades.

Cynthia Carter¹⁸

[False allegations] are extremely rare. I have been prosecuting for 20 years, and have prosecuted for a false allegation once.

Criminal prosecution lawyer¹⁹

Quotes: Media and Advertising

They have ads of how you should dress and what you should look like and this and that, and then they say, 'but respect people for what they choose to be like.' Okay, so which do we do first?
Kristy 16 year old girl commenting on a teen magazine²⁰

[Young girls are strongly influenced] by stereotypical images of uniformly beautiful, obsessively thin and scantily dressed objects of male desire. And studies show that girls who are frequent viewers have the most negative opinion of their gender.

Shawn Doherty and Nadine Joseph²¹

[Advertisements] tell us who we are and who we should be. What does advertising tell us about women? It tells us that what's most important is how we look. The first thing that advertisers do is surround us with images of ideal female beauty.

Jean Kilbourne²²

I don't look like and I don't desire to look like that.

Kate Winslet on the digital enhancement of her picture in GQ Magazine²³

Key Resources on News

The following resources are aimed at journalists and student journalists.

- Handle With Care: A guide to responsible media reporting of violence against women (Zero Tolerance and Scottish Woman's Aid 2011) <http://www.vawpreventionscotland.org.uk/resources/resource-briefing/handle-care-guide-responsible-media-reporting-violence-against-women>
- Tackling violence against women and girls: A guide to good practice communications, Government Equalities Office, 2010, http://www.equalities.gov.uk/news/vaw_guidance.aspx
- Getting the Balance Right; Gender Equality in Journalism (International Federation of Journalists 2009) <http://www.vawpreventionscotland.org.uk/resources/training-materials/getting-balance-right-gender-equality-journalism>

Key Research Reports

- Who Makes the News? (Global Media Monitoring Project 2010) <http://www.vawpreventionscotland.org.uk/node/1385/edit>

Key Resources on Advertising

The following resources are aimed at children and young people, and focus on establishing a critique on mainstream media advertising.

- Killing us softly: Advertising's Images of Women <http://www.vawpreventionscotland.org.uk/resources/audio-visual-resources/killing-us-softly-4-advertisings-images-women>
- Tough Guise: Violence, Media and the crisis in Masculinity <http://www.vawpreventionscotland.org.uk/resources/audio-visual-resources/tough-guise>

The following publications are academic readings on pop culture, providing in-depth analysis and critical reading on the visual, the market and gender.

- Attwood, F. (2004) Pornography and Objectification: Re-reading "the picture that divided Britain". <http://www.vawpreventionscotland.org.uk/resources/general/pornography-and-objectification-re-reading-picture-divided-britain>
- Walter, Natasha (2010) Living Dolls The Return of Sexism. Virago Press
- Brooks, Libby (2006) The Story of Childhood growing up in modern Britain. Bloomsbury Publishing PLC.
- Palmer, Sue (2007) Toxic Childhood: How the modern world is damaging our children. Orion
- Mayo, Ed & Nairn Agnes (2009) Consumer Kids. How big business is grooming our children for profit. Constable.

Key Contacts

Scotland

Scottish Women's Aid

The lead organisation in Scotland working towards the prevention of domestic abuse challenge harmful media and good reporting.

<http://www.scottishwomensaid.org.uk/>

Zero Tolerance

Working to tackle the root causes of men's violence against women and children producer of Handle with Care.

www.zerotolerance.org.uk

Engender

Role: A membership organisation working on an anti-sexist agenda in Scotland and Europe to increase women's power and influence and make visible the impact of sexism on women,

men and society.

www.engender.org.uk

VAW Prevention Scotland

Role: A national network bringing together people in Scotland with an interest in or expertise on preventing violence against women

www.vawpreventionscotland.org.uk

International

European Women's Lobby

The largest umbrella organisations of women's associations in the European Union; home of the Policy Centre on Violence against Women and recently contributed to the European advisory committee on Women and the Media.

www.womenlobby.org

Women's Views On News

An online daily women's news and current affairs service which features news stories and opinion of women in the media.

<http://www.womensviewsonnews.org/>

1. Global Media Monitoring Project (2010) Who Makes the News? World Association of Christian Communities. <http://www.whomakesthenews.org/>
2. Only 24% of new subjects (people in the news) are female according to Global Media Monitoring Project (2010) Who Makes the News?. Women represented only a third of the full time journalism workforce in the 522 companies surveyed by the International Women's Media Foundation for the Global Report on the Status of Women in the News Media (2011).
3. 4th World Conference on Women in Beijing (1995) (url). Un Beijing Conference on Women in 1995 pledged a commitment to greater gender equality in the media. The UN strategic objectives on this matter are as follows; promoting balanced and non-stereotyped portrayal of women in the media and of increasing women's participation in news production see Beijing + (P96).
4. This challenging of social norms and standards is based on an approach whereby women are seen to be subjected to violence because of a gender order which privileges male violence through the normative and institutional formations of society. Para 90, Report on the Special

- Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, Yakin Erturk A/ HRC/11/6/Add.5
5. Handle with care. Zero Tolerance; Scottish Woman's Aid
 6. see Susan Bordo analysis of gender in advertising. http://www.media-awareness.ca/english/issues/stereotyping/men_and_masculinity/masculinity_advertising.cfm.
 7. SLAP Abi and Emma Moore
 8. An improvement on 1995 when 17% of people in the news were women, however the recent figures show that the world depicted in the news remains predominantly male. Global Media Monitoring Project (2010) Who Makes the News? World Association of Christian Communities. <http://www.whomakesthenews.org/>
 9. According to the GMMP, while the gap between the % of women and the % of men depicted as victims remains large, it has been gradually narrowing since 1995. In 2010, 6% of females in contrast to 3% of males are portrayed as survivors. This is a reversal of the situation in 2005 when 4% of females compared to 8% of males were portrayed as survivors. Global Media Monitoring Project (2010) Who Makes the News? World Association of Christian Communities. <http://www.whomakesthenews.org/>
 10. According to the GMMP over 50% of stories on crime reinforce stereotypes, followed closely by celebrity and political stories. Global Media Monitoring Project (2010) Who Makes the News? World Association of Christian Communities. <http://www.whomakesthenews.org/>
 11. Carter, C. (1998) News Gender and Power Routledge
 12. Boyle, Karen (2005) Media and Violence Sage
 13. Beyond Stereotypes: Rebuilding the foundation of beauty beliefs (2006)
 14. Compass: The Commercialism of Childhood
 15. Girls Attitude Survey 2009 16-21 (Child Wise).
 16. Guardian Unlimited.
 17. Simone de Beauvoir, The Second Sex, London Penguin 1972 pg 175
 18. Carter, C. (1998) News Gender and Power Routledge
 19. A Report by Baroness Vivien Stern CBE of an Independent Review Into How Rape Complaints Are Handled By Public Authorities In England And Wales, The Government Equalities Office and the Home Office 2010, page 40.
 20. Kirsty 16 Quoted in Girl Talk
 21. Shawn Doherty and Nadine Joseph Media and Girls 2005. Media Awareness Network. 15 Mar. 2005.
 22. Killing us softly: Advertising's Images of Women <http://www.vawpreventionscotland.org.uk/resources/audio-visual-resources/killing-us-softly-4-advertisings-images-women>
 23. Press release issued by Kate Winslet on The digital enhancement of her picture in GQ Magazine.



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