

»The 'silent men,' who are often linked to violence, come to mind first; but sometimes women are also overcome by a genuine lack of understanding, and it seems to me that this is a good, 'personal' start for all of these cases. Ingenious, wonderful, interesting, really good.« Dr. Rolf Tschannen, psychiatrist, Wil, Switzerland

Website for Abusive Men: www.4Uman.info

Information and self-diagnosis for violence in a relationship

- sensitizes men to all forms of violence in a relationship
- through tests it shows them how they can recognize and work on such problems
- where they can find counseling centers for men's violence and how they work
- men who have been in counseling report about their experiences
- the staff of youth and welfare agencies, on police forces and within the justice system, can gain insights into the course and causes of domestic violence, as well as into the working methods of counseling centers for men's violence.

1) Situation

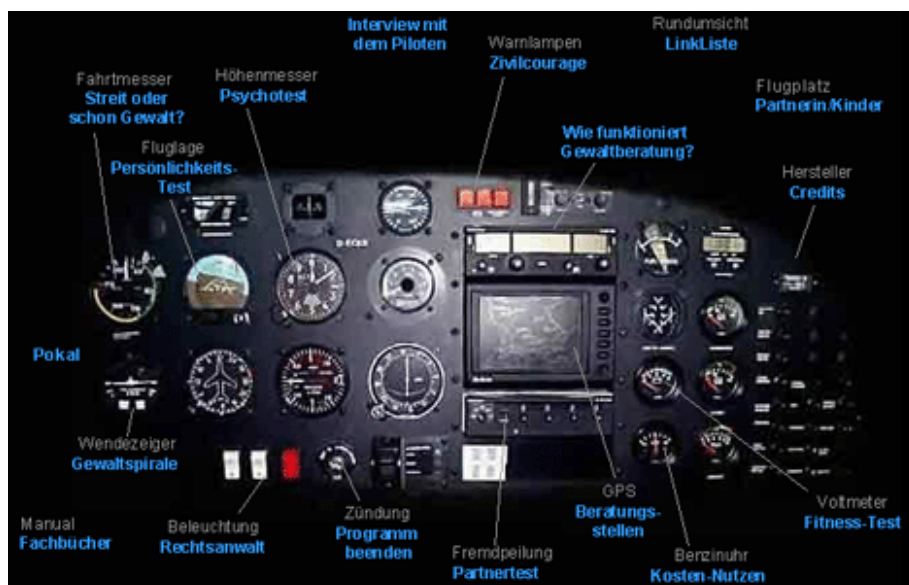
Abusive men can be found among all age groups, levels of education and incomes. Domestic violence is a taboo. Rarely is a problem recognized or addressed by relatives, friends or the authorities. In such cases, the damage can be immense:

- In addition to physical injuries, victims often suffer lasting traumas that result in other illnesses (depression, heart and circulatory ailments, stomach and intestinal problems, alcohol abuse) and suicide.
 - The economic damage of domestic violence is enormous; the additional costs for medicine, police and the courts alone was set at \$290 million USD in Switzerland.
 - Children of such couples feel guilty and helpless: often reacting with fear, bedwetting, learning disabilities, alcohol and drugs, depression and suicide, or through excessive violence at school.
- When they become adults, 95% of the boys and of 72% of the girls will repeat the roles they experienced as either victims or abusers.

2) New internet dramaturgy

The project www.4Uman.info is both politically and contextually innovative – even its adaptation adopts a new direction with a novel Internet presentation: The [beginning](#)(Link) is like a feature film; a sarcastic thriller, narrated from the abuser's point of view. Then his lawyer appears, cast in the role of his first opponent. Brief dialogues introduce the problem. The user begins to take interest in the story and its solution, and can learn more about:

- popular myths
- forms of violence in relationships, with a relationship test that helps to clarify the issues
- a fitness test and a psychological test that sensitize men to critical situations
- the spiral of violence
- standing up for what's right
- how violence counseling and social training function
- reports from abusive men in counseling
- counseling centers: addresses, profiles of their staffs and their working concepts.



[link to screen shot with 764 x 465px](#)

The cockpit metaphor is meant to transmit a positive feeling of being at the controls and of having an overview. Individual chapters are assigned to the instruments. Many delicate issues are conveyed through »tests.« In this way, men are brought into a playful type of self-reflection, for which they might not otherwise spend the time. This topical selection can also be accessed directly through the [SiteMap\(Link\)](#).

How is the target audience reached? We use the Internet as a »structure of opportunity«: Web surfers land on the website almost »by chance,« through links from government websites, social institutions and from sponsors. Consequently, the men receive answers to questions that they may not have even asked...

3) Participants and support

CREAM e.V. (Content Creation for Interactive Media e.V.) – an alliance of women in media in Berlin, whose managing chairperson is Prof. Dr. Cecilia Rentmeister – is in charge of this project. It has received support from the Ministerium für Arbeit, Soziales, Gesundheit und Frauen in Brandenburg, the Equal Opportunity Commission of Thuringia and the Bundesministerium für Familien, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend.

The website was developed in dialogue with experienced men's violence counselors, and was evaluated by 200 men aged 16–60, as well as by the authorities and counseling centers. Cristina Perincioli, a filmmaker and multimedia producer in Berlin, is responsible for its concept, treatment and design. Her work on this theme since 1974 includes a book, *Gewalt in der Ehe*, 1976, and a feature film »The Power of Man is a Patient of Women,« 1978. Information about CD-ROMs on the subject of domestic violence, »AVA1,« »AVA2« as well as her additional »Medien zu heiklen Themen« (Media About Delicate Subjects), can be found at www.sphinxMedien.de(Link)

For questions, please contact:

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- Please do not publish any telephone numbers!

4) Quotes from the men involved about what they have learned:

D: »I blamed her mother or the mess in the apartment. I also blamed my wife, because she had so little time for me. Somewhere along the line, I decided to beat her. I did it. And I'm responsible for it. Now I approach problems right away, and don't repress them. That makes arguing simpler, because it is only about a single issue. I focus my attention on the parameters, which is to say I focus on the place, time or my own issues. If I notice that a fight is escalating, then I break it off. When things have quieted down, the problem can be discussed again. Also, I don't always have to be right. I don't have to be a 'perfectionist.'«

B: »During the last conversation with my girlfriend, I had a lot to say about my own feelings. She said: 'I've never heard you talk like this before.' When she said goodbye, she held me very close.«

C: »I now have the courage to admit that I don't know what to do next. I no longer fight until the bitter end like I used to. My children recently told me: 'Papa, you're different somehow. You talk a lot more with us and you look great.«

5) Evaluation: Men's Counselors

»I see '4Uman' as a solid, no-frills preparation for enrollment in a counseling program, which never becomes boring while working through it – even for an expert – but instead induces the user to keep on going.«

Martin Dubberke, Berliner Zentrum für Gewaltprävention

»We find the idea of appealing to the men's interests and curiosities in a more playful way, without actually pointing a finger at them, to be quite good. (...) The website truly offers a multi-faceted range of means to get to know one's own personality, one's own behavior and own limitations, as well as to find out more about oneself in a non-threatening way. (...) Taking the example of a client, whom I had set before the computer, I discovered that your program provoked a great amount of interest.«

Dr. Jochen Hoffmann, Informationszentrum für Männerfragen e.V., Frankfurt

Evaluation: The Authorities

Heidi Kleine, Anwaltschaft Berlin (Public Prosecutor's Office):

»The website makes one curious by playfully providing stimulation to look further.«

Mr. Vetter, a victim's protection representative for the Berlin police

»Tremendous, very informative, well-constructed and engagingly represented!«

Ms. Höner, TOA (Täter-Opfer Ausgleich), Soziale Dienste Justiz Berlin:

»Excellent! The content is very good and appealingly presented; it makes one curious.«

Ms. Wiedemann, a coordinator for domestic violence for Berlin's Chief of Police:

»100% enthusiastic« – she would like to immediately put the website to use as a source of scholarly exchange among the authorities.