



BOTTOMLESS TEA CONVERSATION ON IMPACT OF NARCISSISTIC PERSONALITIES ON GBV IN THE CHURCH HELD IN TEMBISA

2 March 2022 - On 22 February 2022, People Opposing Women Abuse (POWA) had a Bottomless Tea Conversation at the Eagles On Fire Church in Tembisa, one of South Africa's gender-based violence (GBV) hotspots. The event focused on the Impact of Narcissistic Personalities on GBV in the Church.

It was held as part of the #EndDomesticSilence initiative being run by Unilever tea brand, Joko in partnership with POWA. Launched in 2019, the initiative aims to end the silence around domestic violence and increase the speaking out, reporting of, awareness and education around domestic violence.

At the event were POWA staff, community members and various stakeholders including the Tembisa Child and Family Welfare Society, Child Welfare, Childline, faith-based organisations and members of the GBV Brigades which inform households about the impact of GBV.

The panel of speakers at the Bottomless Tea Conversation included a GBV survivor, Noluvuyo Zantsi, a Clinical Psychologist, Koketjo Mantati, a POWA social worker, Pastor Nyathi and Dikeledi, a representative of the South African Depression and Anxiety Group.

During the event, Kate Mocheki, Head of Projects at POWA, spoke about the importance of a woman suffering domestic violence talking about it to get a new understanding of her experiences and receive the support she needs to leave an abusive relationship. "People are dying because of silence and because they kept quiet for so long. By educating yourself about narcissism, you become aware that you are being abused by a narcissist and are empowered to address the situation."

Noluvuyo informed everyone in attendance about the characteristics of Narcissistic Personality Disorder, which include, but aren't limited to, regarding themselves as superior, demeaning you, lacking empathy, having an exaggerated sense of self-importance, being self-centred, controlling, status conscious, disrespectful, manipulative and easily jealous. She added that they often make you feel it's your fault they abused you, but being abused is never your fault. Narcissists can also gaslight you, which means making you second guess your feelings, perceptions and memories.

Noluvuyo said it's important to keep in touch with friends and family, so you get the support you need if you are ever with a narcissist.

It was also noted that some priests and elders in the church are narcissists, hiding nastiness and abuse behind a mask of goodness and morality.

A GBV survivor spoke of how her ex-husband, who is a pastor, was emotionally and financially abusive making her carry all the household costs including paying for food, petrol and school fees.

Koketjo said she knew of some women who were in abusive relationships with priests for years, kept quiet about it and would be in church every Sunday showing their support for them. “Some narcissistic men believe they are entitled to make all the household decisions because they are breadwinners,” she added. “They often want you to consult them on every move you make, stating that if you don’t, you don’t respect them. Don’t ignore the red flags of a narcissist. If you have been in a relationship with one, don’t blame yourself. Through counselling, you can undergo healing by reclaiming your identity and learning to set boundaries and love yourself.”

Penny Ndlovu, a member of the audience, described the church as being ignorant: “I was in an abusive relationship and would go to church with blue eyes, but no elder in the church ever asked me what was happening and if they could help.”

Patricia Naha, POWA’s Project Assistant, added: “Abused women who approach the church for assistance are often told they should pray about the issue without being given other support. We want the church to be a safe space where abuse isn’t swept under the carpet and where women suffering abuse can speak about their problems openly without being judged.”

Going forward, more open, honest conversations about various aspects of violence towards women will run as part of the #EndDomesticSilence initiative. It is through having these conversations over Joko tea that one is released from the burdens troubling their minds, that one can gain knowledge, courage and support to end their silence and abuse and where communities can change harmful attitudes and behaviour patterns that perpetuate domestic violence.

You can view the Bottomless Tea Conversation on the POWA Facebook page.

If you or someone you know is being abused, you can contact POWA on (011) 591 6800/(011) 642 4345/6, email counselling@powa.co.za or send a DM to POWA, for counselling.

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ABOUT POWA

POWA is a feminist, non-profit organisation that was established in 1979. Its vision is a safe and equal society intolerant of all forms of violence against women and girls in all our diversity, where we are treated with respect and dignity and our rights are promoted.

POWA provides advocacy, skills development opportunities, counselling, sheltering and legal services to gender-based violence survivors.

Our work is rooted in the belief that change can only be effective when women's lives are directly improved through our interventions. POWA also believes that there is no single route to change, and so constantly seek new and creative approaches in our programming to achieve the change we seek.

ABOUT JOKO AND #ENDDOMESTICSILENCE

With the scourge of domestic violence against women in South Africa, JOKO has decided to play its part in helping women of strength in these abusive relationships by helping create safe spaces for women to be heard. #EndDomesticSilence is an initiative in partnership with POWA (People Opposing Women Abuse) to make a significant impact towards ending the silence surrounding domestic violence because tea and conversations go together.

JOKO's social mission is to leverage the strength of JOKO tea to harness the power of conversations to help reduce domestic violence and the stigma faced by survivors. It aims to do this through the #EndDomesticSilence initiative by harnessing both the strength of South African women and the immense power of humble conversations in which women facing domestic violence are listened to, believed and supported.

- JOKO is using newly branded red and purple packs to drive awareness around the need for women in abusive relationships to end their silence.
- JOKO is donating R1 from every JOKO 100's pack sold to POWA to create more safe spaces in which women can feel secure enough to end their silence.
- A JOKO website dedicated to the purpose gives women essential information around domestic violence and advises them on how to either get or give help. Visit www.joko.co.za.
- JOKO is engaging with prominent SA women to champion #EndDomesticSilence in their own ways.

Together, with the help of all its consumers, JOKO aims to make a real difference to fight domestic violence against women in South Africa.