

Strength from the #PowerInMe

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"Each time a woman stands up for herself without knowing it possibly, without claiming it, she stands up for all women."

- Maya Angelou



This August is the fourth anniversary of My Personal Lifeline, CDA Solutions' crime assistance product which launched on Woman's Day in 2017. The first "lifeline" created was to support victims of domestic violence.

Designing a product which is relevant to one in four women, but unlikely to be bought by those who need it most, required some innovative thinking around positioning the offer. In addition, the high claims ratio for such specific cover, could make the product unaffordable.

Finding solutions has always been our strength and by collaborating with industry partners, My Personal Lifeline (MPLL) now includes various lifelines to support not only victims of domestic abuse, but also victims of rape and assault, home invasions and hijacking.

"We're not aware of another product within the financial services industry that provides benefits and legal insurance specifically for domestic abuse." – Shani Plantema, Marketing Director of CDA Solutions.

<https://mypersonallifeline.co.za/DomesticViolence.html>

The sad reality is that we all probably know someone who is or has been abused within an intimate relationship. While there are no cultural, socio-economic, political, religious, or educational boundaries to domestic violence, there are various reasons why victims don't leave these relationships. MPLL can help victims escape a bad situation and assist them with a personal exit strategy. But, even with the best physical, emotional, and financial support, the victim must believe that they are able to leave and start a new life.

This Woman's Day we launched the #PowerInMe campaign, with the objective of turning those critical inner voices into words of power and strength.

Everyone has negative thoughts at some point, but in cases of domestic violence, those thoughts feed on their deepest fears and become a victims' reality. "If I leave, he will just find me." "How will I make it alone?" These thoughts, if left uncontrolled, will result in that person staying in a very dangerous situation.

To counteract these negative thoughts and fears, it's important to focus on those extraordinary strengths that come naturally to victims, often developed in a desperate need to survive. The basis for this focus on inner strengths comes from the belief that a problem does not constitute all of a person's life. A person is always more than their problems. Problems do create uncomfortable emotions and might signal danger, but having a problem is not the problem, rather how a person is going to deal with it.

Building on the strengths highlighted below, can potentially change a victim mindset to that of a survivor and knowing that there is #PowerInMe.

Hope

Coping mechanisms include a positive outlook on life and a hope that things will eventually improve. It is this hope that helps people go on and not give up despite difficult circumstances. Most abused women will press forward and continue to dream of a better life and it's this hope that we need to encourage and nurture by providing an escape strategy and support.

Resilience

People are more resilient than they even realise, despite particularly demanding and stressful experiences, even ongoing ones. Desperate situations do not inevitably lead to vulnerability and failure to adapt. Resilience does not imply a cheerful disregard of difficulties and challenges, but rather the ability to hold on despite these ordeals. It is a fact that women who are in an abusive relationship often have physical, emotional, and psychological scars. Regardless, a strength perspective implies that these women have a fighting spirit and are survivors rather than victims.

Pride

Those who have survived a difficult time and managed to improve their situation, develop immense self-respect and confidence. Pride is that deep sense of overcoming challenges and obstacles despite the scars, hurts and even terrors. Affirmation of the sense of pride and accomplishment on the other side of a terrifying ordeal can be a great motivator to be brave.

Healing and wholeness

The human spirit has the ability to heal itself. This strength aspect of healing and wholeness challenges the view of the "disease model" where only experts know what is right for their patients and that healing or transformation comes from external support. The realisation and belief that it's each person's responsibility to initiate the healing process, starts the journey to wholeness.

Determination

Willpower and bravery are both imperative in the journey to healing and wholeness. Women from all spheres of life are slowly but surely becoming more courageous and are breaking their silence. Some actively ask for help, some write their stories, others obtain protection orders. Those who stay rediscover an inner strength. They reshape their stories and do not view themselves as debilitated or as victims, but as survivors.

Personal qualities, traits, and virtues

Personal strengths are those qualities that become sources of energy and motivation to help survivors through crises. Sometimes a sense of humour, caring, creativity, loyalty, insight, independence, or patience is developed during trauma and catastrophe. Various talents people have, such as art, baking or music can help to foster friendships and provide a temporary reprieve.

"Never forget that walking away from something unhealthy is brave, even if you stumble a little on your way out the door."
— Unknown

The power is within each of us to not merely survive, but to thrive. Join the #PowerInMe conversation on our social media pages and support those braves enough to silence their inner critic and find their own strength.

<https://www.facebook.com/mplapp/videos/580116873001051>

If you, or your company, would like to sponsor or support survivors, or nominate a woman in need of support, please email boitumelo@cdasolutions.co.za, or visit the MPLL website at <https://mypersonallifeline.co.za/index.html> to find out more about the various lifelines.

References:

Dr Ilze Slabbert: Against the odds: strength displayed by abused women, SA Social Work Journals, 2017.

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