

Identifying situations of CHILD ABUSE

I am sorry that your parents and your cousin Karen's parents all died in the car crash. In their will, your parents asked us to be your guardian. You will live with Aunty Irene and me. Karen will live with Aunty Monica and Uncle Jeff.



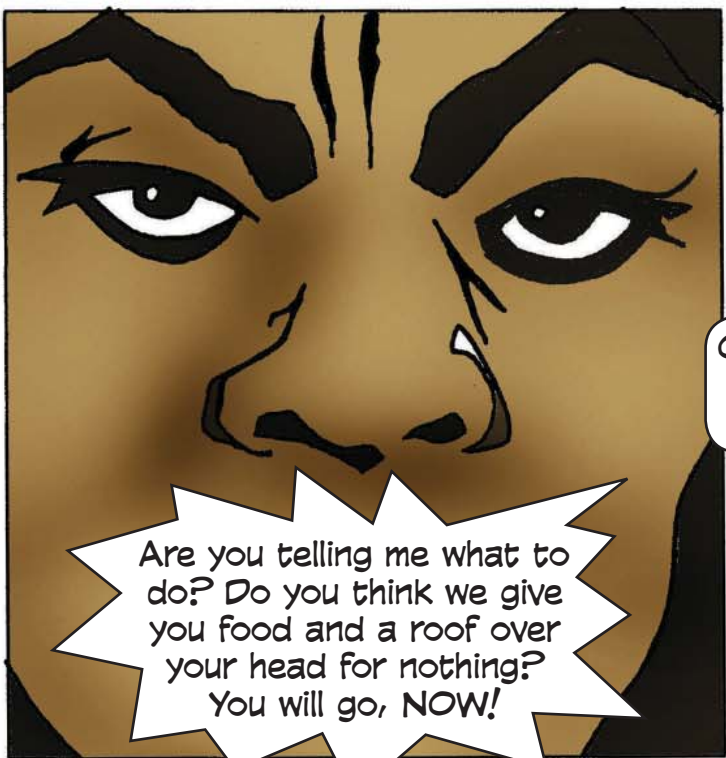
I am sorry that your parents and your cousin Emily's parents all died in the car crash. In their will, your parents asked us to be your guardian. You will live with Uncle Jeff and me. Emily will live with Aunty Irene and her boyfriend Mark.

AT EMILY'S HOME ...



Emily, I told you to go and buy me beer and cigarettes.

But I'm doing my homework and I need to clean the house before Aunty Irene comes back from work.



Are you telling me what to do? Do you think we give you food and a roof over your head for nothing? You will go, NOW!



Okay, I will go. Please don't hit me again.

And so it goes on. Day after day Emily is exposed to child abuse. Mark, her aunt's boyfriend, beats her every day. He also makes her do many chores around the house. It is okay to ask children to help with chores around the house, but Mark is making Emily do so many chores that she has to miss school and she does not have time to rest or play. This is not okay. Mark also treats Emily very differently to his own children. One sign of child abuse is when one child is being treated very differently to others in a household. Emily is very unhappy. In the evenings when she is making a bed for herself on the floor, she often wonders how her cousin is coping with their other aunt.



No dinner for you tonight.

AT KAREN'S HOME ...



Karen, where is your uncle?

I think he went to the shop.



He told me that he did not have any money. I had to borrow money from Rita to go to the casino last night. He will be sorry that he lied to me.



Oh no! I must tell Uncle Jeff that she is angry. Maybe he can hide the food he has bought for us and pretend that he didn't have any money.



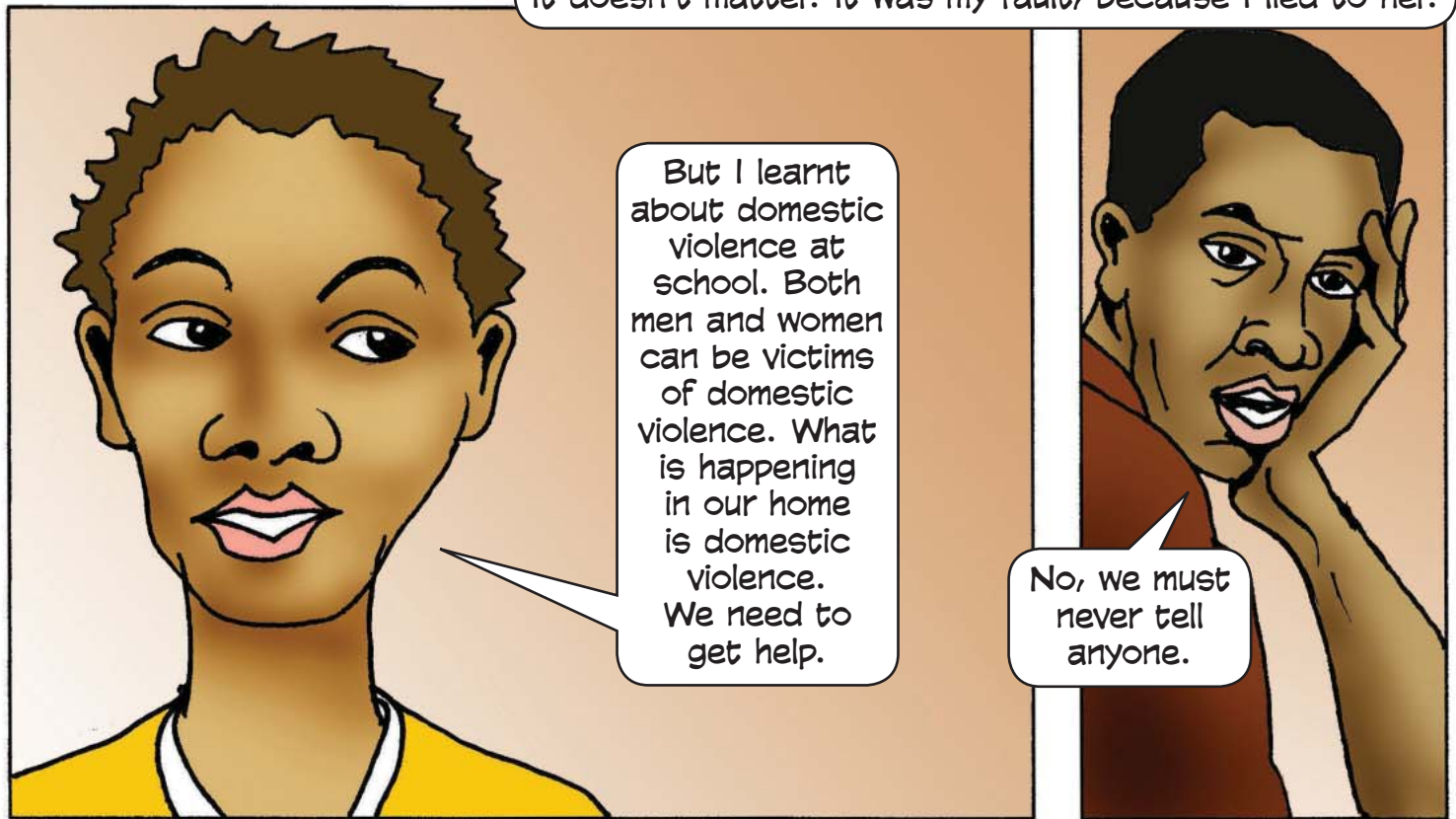
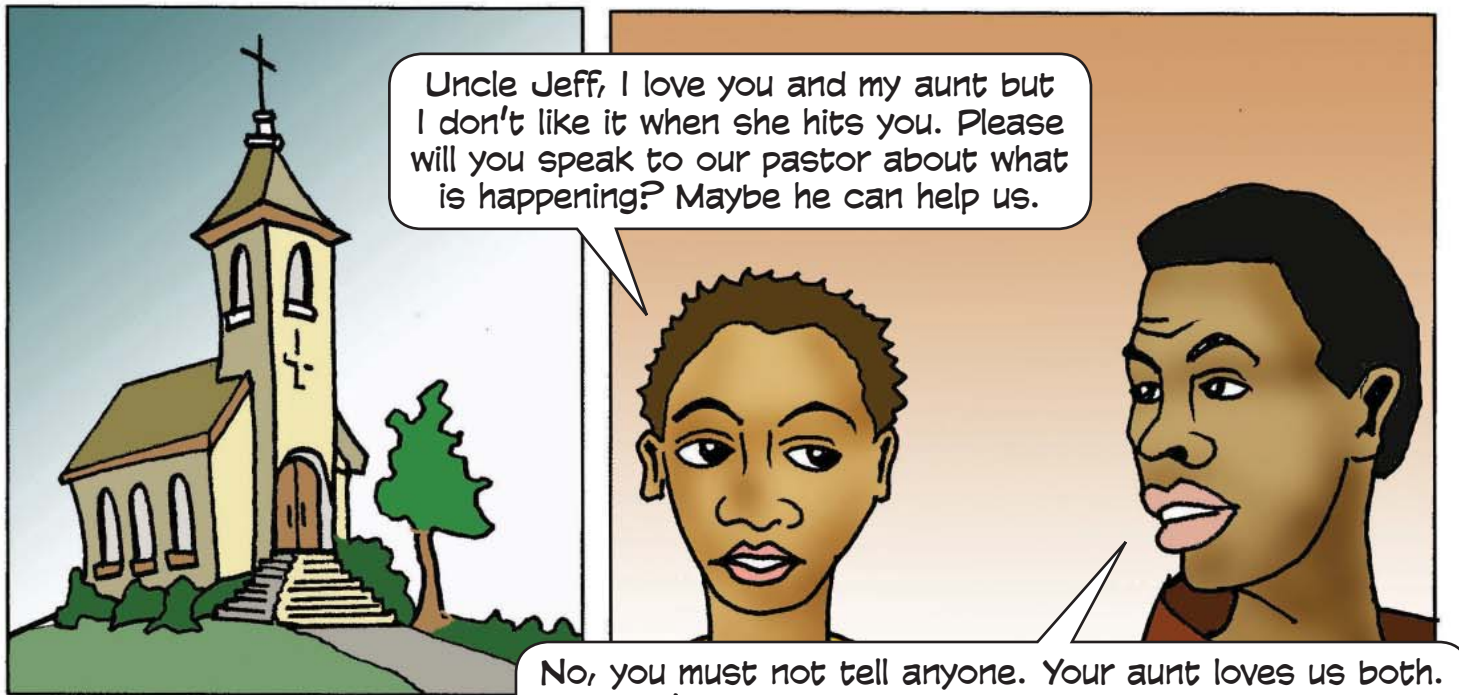
Honey, I am home.



You lied to me. I wanted money to go to the casino. There was bread in the house. That is fine for you and Karen. I am eating out tonight with my friends. You don't need any other food.



And so Karen has witnessed yet another argument that has resulted in fighting. Monica has not been violent towards Karen, but it is still a form of child abuse to expose a child to physical, sexual or psychological violence towards someone else. Karen is so scared of her aunt that most nights she locks herself in her room crying and wishing that her parents were alive. In the evenings she often wonders how her cousin is coping with their other aunt.



It can be difficult for children to ask for help when they are in abusive situations. This is because children may find it difficult to tell an adult about the abuse. When a child does ask for help, if the adult does not want to listen, the child may not have the confidence to make other efforts to seek help. Jeff is experiencing domestic violence, and it can be hard for a victim of domestic violence to speak out. But he has a duty to look after Karen. He needs to get help for both himself and his niece.

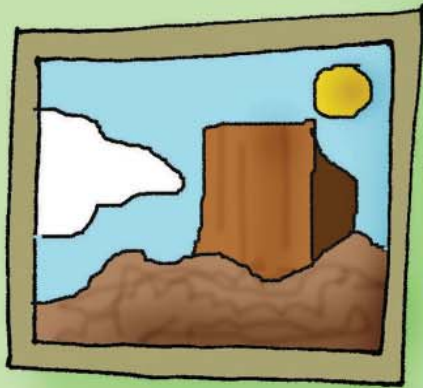
Meanwhile, life is becoming unbearable for Emily. She has missed school for two weeks because of the beatings she has received from her aunt's boyfriend.

A mathematics teacher, Mr Klaazen, is very concerned about Emily. He cannot understand why she is not coming to school. He decides to visit Emily and her family at home.



LATER THAT DAY, A SOCIAL WORKER VISITS THE FAMILY. SHE ASKS TO SPEAK TO EMILY IN PRIVATE.

I would like to help you. Can you tell me who did this to you?



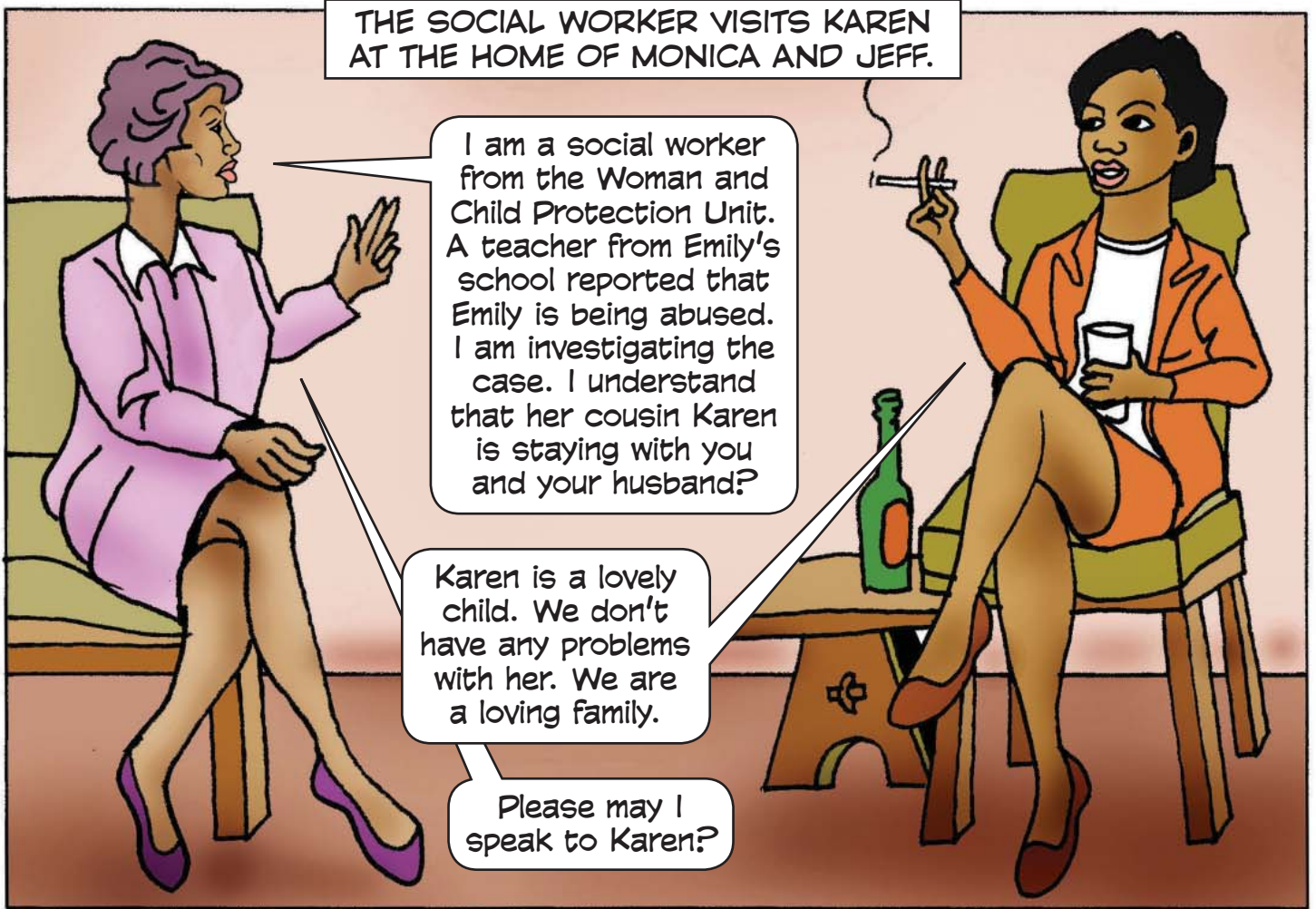
Uncle Mark. He always finds excuses to beat me. Aunty Irene is at work when he beats me. She works long hours and only comes home late at night. Uncle Mark is always angry with me and he beats me or does not give me food.

I am glad that we have found out about this. We will put a stop to the abuse. We will find somewhere else for you to stay while we investigate the matter.

Please can I stay with my cousin Karen? She lives with Aunty Monica. I miss her so much. I haven't seen her for months even though we live in the same town.

EMILY

THE SOCIAL WORKER VISITS KAREN AT THE HOME OF MONICA AND JEFF.



I am a social worker from the Woman and Child Protection Unit. A teacher from Emily's school reported that Emily is being abused. I am investigating the case. I understand that her cousin Karen is staying with you and your husband?

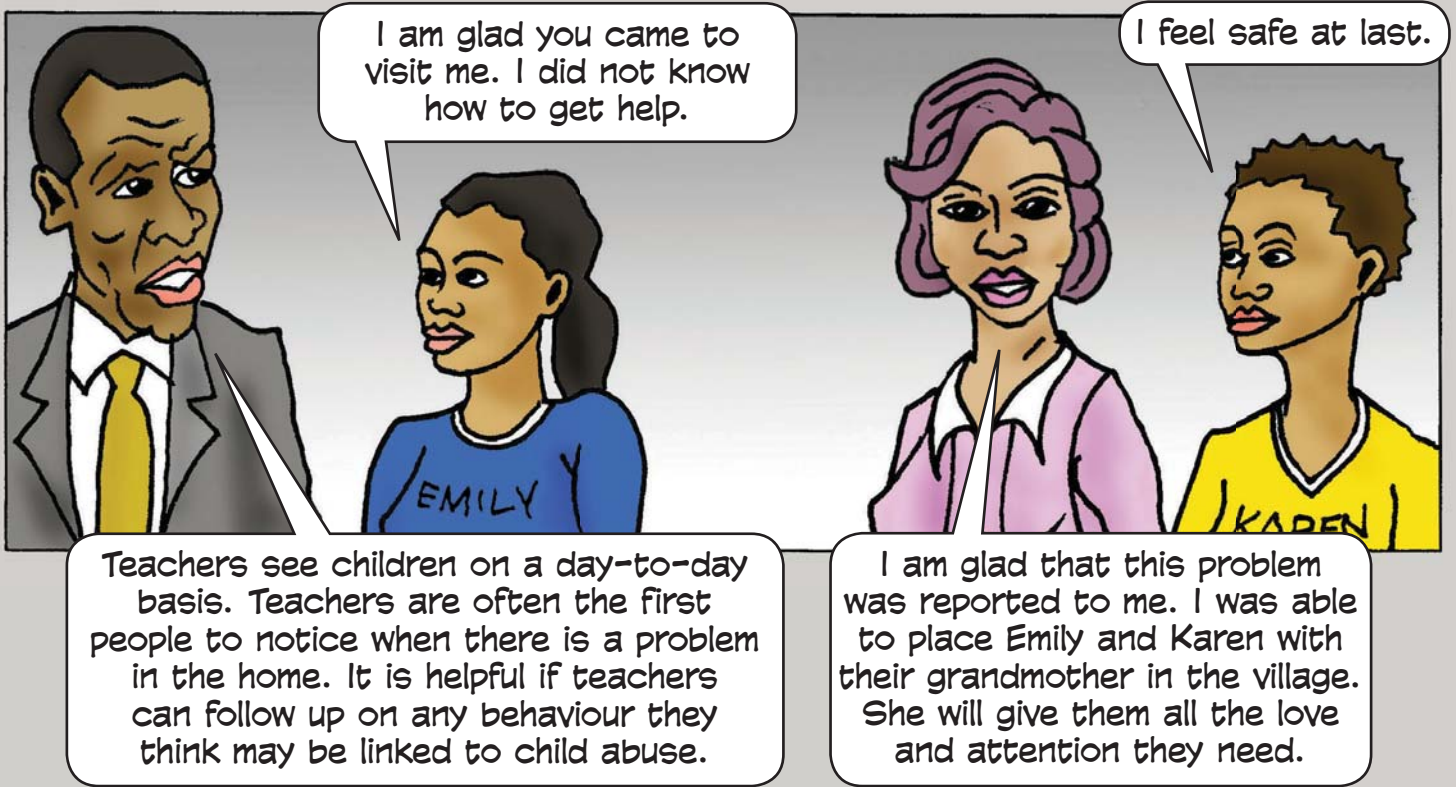
Karen is a lovely child. We don't have any problems with her. We are a loving family.

Please may I speak to Karen?



Please help me. My aunt beats my uncle. She does not hurt me but I am afraid that she will.

It is a form of child abuse to expose a child to physical, sexual or psychological violence. I am glad that you have told me about this. I will be able to help you.



WHAT IS CHILD ABUSE?

1. Child abuse is the mistreatment of a child. Children can be abused by people they know such as family members or people in the community, or by strangers.
2. There are many different types of abuse. These include physical, sexual, economic and psychological acts of violence.
3. When a child is abused by family members, this is domestic violence. It is also domestic violence if a child is allowed to see physical, sexual or psychological abuse against a family member.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE A CHILD AND YOU ARE BEING ABUSED

1. Speak to a trusted adult or friend. This could be a family member, teacher or pastor.
2. Ask the adult or friend to help you contact a social worker, a Woman and Child Protection Unit or the police. You can also contact a social worker or police officer directly.
3. If you cannot find anyone to help you or if you are not sure what to do, you can call LifeLine/ChildLine free on 116. They can advise you.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU KNOW THAT A CHILD IS BEING ABUSED

Report the case to a social worker, a Woman and Child Protection Unit or the police.

If you have comment or question about this comic, contact the Legal Assistance Centre:

SMS: 081-6000098

Email: info@lac.org.na

Fax: 088-613693

Post: PO Box 604 Windhoek

We would like to hear your feedback about this comic.



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