



What if she were your mother? Your daughter?

We see this comment a lot in reference to the victim blaming of victims of sexual and domestic violence and abuse:

What if she were your daughter? Your mother? Your sister? Your aunt?

We understand the desire to make the reality of victim blaming clear to those perpetuating damaging myths about sexual and domestic violence and abuse, however we have concerns about the use of this language. The implication in this use of language is that victims only matter due to their relationships with men. We understand that this is not what is intended by many making the comment but we need to be clear about all the potential consequences of our words. After all, this phrase is never used in conjunction with prostituted women, exited women or women working within the sex industry. It is used solely to refer to women who meet patriarchal definitions of "good" - which inevitably excludes most women.

We need to be very clear that sexual and domestic violence and abuse are unacceptable - irrespective of any other detail. If someone cannot understand the severity of these crimes without it couched in terms of their personal relationships, well, that just shows how endemic victim blaming is within our culture.