

Tackle domestic violence with more public awareness

Training on how to handle violence against women cases under way

By Hanie Hamid & Hj Minor Absah

WOMEN often become victims of violence in various forms and behaviours. Women across all race, religion, income, class and culture groups in Brunei are not exempt from experiencing this.

This observation was made by Datin Hajah Adina binti Hj Othman, the Deputy Minister of Culture, Youth & Sports, during the opening of a three-day training programme on how to tackle violence against women at the SEAMEO Voctech Regional Centre in Gadong yesterday.

Citing statistics from the Royal Brunei Police Force, Datin Hajah Adina noted that most of the reported domestic violence cases were those involving wife abuse.

In 2006, there were 138 wife abuse cases and this figure jumped to 145 the following year. On the other hand, the number of such cases decreased to 119 in 2008 and 88 in 2009.

"We hope that the drop in (domestic violence) cases was the result of increased public awareness that violence against women is a social issue that is not tolerated in our community," the deputy minister said.



Betty Yeoh Siew Peng was one of the invited speakers

Most people still think that domestic violence cases should be a private matter between the husband and wife, as well as their families, she said.

Stressing that such attitudes have to be changed, the deputy minister said: "(It is important to) realise that cases of abuse need to be addressed by all parties concerned, including the family members (of victims)."

Datin Hajah Adina reaffirmed that the Ministry of Culture, Youth & Sport is willing to cooperate with all parties, including government and non-government agencies, to curb this problem.

It is hoped that this could be achieved through an Action Plan addressing domestic violence, she said, adding that tackling this issue requires various agencies to adopt a comprehensive holistic strategy that takes into account four aspects namely 'Prevention', 'Enforcement', 'Protection' and 'Recovery'.

More than 50 people including representatives from

government and private agencies, as well as women's associations, are taking part in the three-day programme.

The course will conclude on July 7.

Among the representatives from the Association of Women's Movement (AWAM) Malaysia who were invited to facilitate the course are Betty Yeoh Siew Peng, Dyg Haslinah binti Yacob and Ho Wai Ling.

Guest speakers include Dyh Zuraini binti Hj Sharbawi from the Office of the Attorney General and Dyg Hardiyatie binti Hj Kahar from the Islamic Legal Unit, Department of Syariah.

A special forum will be held tomorrow to strengthen networking among service agencies such as the Social Medical Service of RIPAS Hospital, a RBPF criminal investigations unit handling women and children abuse cases, the Department of Community Development and an agency from the Syariah Affairs Department dealing with family matters.



Deputy Minister of Culture, Youth & Sports speaks at the event

PHOTOS: HANIE HAMID