

A Serious Problem

On average, 24 people per minute are victims of rape, physical violence, or stalking by an intimate partner in the United States. Over the course of a year, that equals more than 12 million women and men.¹

While domestic violence can happen in any relationship – regardless of gender, sexual orientation, or other factors – the vast majority of victims who report violence are women abused by male partners or ex-partners.

- One in 4 women have been the victim of severe physical violence by an intimate partner, while 1 in 7 men has experienced severe physical violence by an intimate partner at some point in their lifetime.²
- Among women and men who experience rape, stalking or physical violence by an intimate partner, 81% of women and 35% of men report serious impacts such as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) symptoms and injury.³
- A woman is far more likely to be killed by her spouse, an intimate acquaintance, or a family member than by a stranger.⁴

Given these statistics, it is likely that you know someone who has been abused. They may be your friends and family members, your neighbors or co-workers. Domestic violence takes its toll on our communities as well, contributing to other forms of violence and suffering, burdening us with huge medical and criminal justice costs, and decreasing workplace productivity.

For assistance call:

National Domestic Violence Hotline

www.thehotline.org

1-800-799-SAFE (7233) / 1-800-787-3224 TTY
Secure online chat: <http://www.thehotline.org/what-is-live-chat/>

National Dating Abuse Helpline

www.loveisrespect.org

1-866-331-9474 / Text “loveis” to 22522
Secure online chat: <http://www.loveisrespect.org/get-help/contact-us/chat-with-us>

Access your local resources:

This brochure is part of a series developed by the Capacity Building and Education Team of the National Resource Center on Domestic Violence (nrcdv.org). It can be freely reproduced. For more information, call (800) 537-2238 or email nrcdvTA@nrcdv.org.

 National Resource Center
on Domestic Violence

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Putting the Pieces Together



Helping End Domestic Violence

What is Domestic Violence?

Domestic violence is a pattern of abusive behaviors, characterized by one partner's need to control the other by using a range of tactics. While the frequency and severity of physical or sexual violence may vary, coercion, intimidation and emotional manipulation occur on a routine basis throughout the relationship.

- **Physical Abuse:** Hitting, slapping, punching, shoving, kicking, burning, strangulation/choking, using weapons or other objects to cause injury.
- **Sexual Abuse:** Forcing a partner to engage in unwanted sexual acts; refusing to practice safe sex; treating a partner like a sex object.
- **Emotional Abuse:** Name-calling and put-downs; denying/shifting blame; treating a partner as an inferior; threatening to harm self/others or to have a partner deported; abusing children or pets; stalking; using threatening looks, actions or gestures.
- **Economic Abuse:** Stealing or destroying belongings/money; preventing a partner from getting or keeping a job; not letting the partner know about or have access to family income; damaging or ruining a partner's credit.

Citations

^{1, 2, 3} Black, M.C., Basile, K.C., Breiding, M.J., Smith, S.G., Walters, M.L., Merrick, M.T., Chen, J., & Stevens, M.R. (2011). *The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS): 2010 Summary Report*. Atlanta, GA: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

⁴ Violence Policy Center. (2013, September). *When Men Murder Women: An Analysis of 2011 Homicide Data*. Washington, DC.

Knowing the Facts.

- Domestic violence is a social problem. It is rooted in social values that place importance on people having power over others, and allow violence against women and other groups to occur with minimal and/or inconsistent punishment.

- Domestic violence is not caused by drugs or alcohol, mental illness, being "provoked," stress, or poor anger management. Abuse is a purposeful and deliberate behavior aiming at gaining power and control over another person.

- Victims seeking help with abuse face many barriers, including fear of injury, shame and self-blame, lack of money, resources and support, social pressures to keep their family together and other cultural taboos.

- Racism, homophobia, ageism and discrimination based on physical ability, nationality or other factors help to perpetuate domestic violence and make finding safety even more difficult for some victims.

- Domestic violence can have many negative impacts on victims such as lowered self-confidence, physical illness and disability, difficulty trusting self/others, and poverty. Despite these impacts, victims find many creative and courageous ways to survive and protect themselves and their children.

Joining the Effort.

To stop domestic violence, we all need to be part of the solution. The following are some things that you can do to help:

- **Help a friend or family member who is being abused.** Let them know that the abuse is not their fault, listen to them, help them to identify resources and options, empower them to make choices for their safety, and provide nonjudgmental support and an opportunity for them to seek your support again.
- **Support your local domestic violence program.** Most hotlines, advocacy or shelter organizations could benefit from your time, financial support or other donations. Click here for ideas on how to get started: <http://vawnet.org/special-collections/DVShelterAlternatives.php>.
- **Speak up about abuse.** Let the person using violence or intimidation know their behavior is wrong and encourage them to seek help. If you see abuse, call the police. Doing nothing can make the abuse worse and even deadly.
- **Educate yourself and others.** Call your local domestic violence program to schedule informational workshops for your workplace, community group or church. Encourage schools to include abuse prevention as part of their curricula. The Domestic Violence Awareness Project at www.nrcdv.org/dvam offers a variety of tools and ideas to support your prevention education and awareness efforts.
- **Set an example.** Make a commitment to work for equality and ending violence in all of its forms. Model non-violent and respectful behavior through your everyday actions.