

What is Domestic Violence?

Domestic Violence is any behavior within the family or relationship that causes physical, emotional, sexual or financial harm to another person.

The facts:

- ❖ 1 out of 4 women are likely to be abused by a partner sometime during her lifetime
- ❖ Domestic violence is the leading cause of injury to women aged 15 to 44 and the number 1 cause of death in pregnant women
- ❖ 85% of domestic violence victims are women
- ❖ In 2005, there were 69 homicides in North Carolina as a result of domestic violence

Domestic violence occurs:

- between current or former partners or spouses
- in both opposite and same sex relationships
- in all socioeconomic and age classes
- in all racial, ethnic and religious groups
- in all occupational and educational backgrounds

Domestic Violence under the law in North Carolina is:

1. Physical abuse

- a. Kicking, beating, grabbing, slapping, pushing, pulling hair
- b. Using a weapon against you (knife, gun, hammer, etc.)
- c. Throwing you down, throwing something at you
- d. Forced sex
- e. Destruction of your possessions (breaking personal items, ripping clothes, etc.)
- f. Threatening behavior

2. Threats

- a. Fear of imminent serious bodily harm
- b. Statements such as “I will hit you” or “If you tell anyone, I will kill you”, etc.

3. Child abuse

- a. Violence against your children
- b. Actions that cause marks or bruises on children
- c. Sexual abuse of children

4. Stalking

- a. Harassment to the level of emotional distress
- b. Following someone either on foot or in a vehicle
- c. Person being followed feels threatened or intimidated
- d. Harassing or threatening telephone calls, letters, or other communication made with the intent to put the person in fear of his or her safety

Causes of Domestic Violence

The causes of domestic violence are complex. It is learned when children and adults are exposed to it in the family and throughout society.

Domestic violence is not caused by:

- Anger or stress
- Mental or other types of illness
- Alcohol or drugs
- The actions of the victim

Signs to look for / common characteristic of an abuser:

- Grew up in an abusive home or has been abusive in past relationships
- Quick involvement – proposing marriage or moving in together after a short period of time
- Jealousy – possessiveness and lack of trust
- Controlling behavior – will not let partner make choices about the house, her clothing, her money, the children, etc.
- Blames others for problems and feelings
- Narcissism and considers self superior to others
- Rigid sex roles and negative attitude towards women
- Isolation; fear of close relationships; lack of trust with others

- Minimizes or denies violent incidents; tries to justify the violence
- Dr. Jekyll / Mr. Hyde personality – may be charming to others and in public, but is abusive in private
- Cruel to animals or children; may expect children to be capable of things beyond their age or ability
- Abuses drugs and/or alcohol

Power and Control

Domestic violence occurs when one person attempts to gain power and control over another person. Batterers may use many tactics ranging from subtle intimidation to serious injury and even death to control their partners. They will use:

- **Emotional and psychological abuse**
 - name calling, blaming, put-downs
 - isolating the partner from friends and family
 - threatens harm to self or suicide
 - jealousy or possessiveness
- **Financial or economic abuse**
 - stealing or misusing partner's money
 - preventing the partner from working or attending school
 - ruining the partner's credit
 - destroying property or possessions
 - limiting access to medical care
- **Physical abuse**
 - shoving, hitting, pushing, grabbing, or slapping
 - kicking, biting or pulling hair
 - choking (strangulation)
 - throwing objects at partner
 - assaulting with weapons
 - restraining the partner
 - hurting or killing pets

➤ **Sexual abuse**

- forcing unwanted sexual activity
- pressuring to get pregnant or have an abortion
- calling the partner sexually degrading names

➤ **Stalking**

- following
- going to partner's home or work (unwanted)
- tapping phones
- using internet to track communications or activities
- sending unwanted gifts

➤ **Abuse through the children**

- harming or kidnapping children (or threatening to)
- using children to monitor partner's activities
- forcing children to take part in the violence
- using custody disputes to maintain contact

In an attempt to put their definition and experiences of domestic violence into a visual image, the Power and Control Wheel was developed by battered women in Duluth, Minnesota. These wheels were designed to refer to a female survivor who was being abused by a male partner. Other versions of the wheel are available through the Duluth Abuse Intervention Project at www.duluth-model.org.

CHARACTERISTICS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE



CHARACTERISTICS OF A HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP



Cycle of Violence



Phase 1: Honeymoon

Potentially abusive relationships are difficult to spot in the beginning. They start as most courtships do – intense feelings, desire to be together all the time. Sometimes abusive incidents happen during this period with the promise that “it won’t happen again”. The abuser will make promises, apologies, and excuses. He may try to make amends with flowers and gifts.

Phase 2: Tension-building

Usually the tension starts to build once you become a couple, living together, engaged or married. This is when he feels ownership. He may become jealous and verbally abusive. You may make excuses for his behavior when you are with your friends or family.

Phase 3: Violence

Often the violence explodes with no warning. Verbal and physical abuse gets worse. Your partner may continue to batter you even after you are injured. At this point, you just try to survive. Often women block out the experience to “escape” the violence.

If You Need Help

Call 911 if you are in immediate danger! You do not need to decide whether a crime has been committed to call the police for help. They can take you to a safe place and provide you with information. They can also help you if you need medical attention. Remember: your safety is the most important thing!

Safety Plan

If you are still in the relationship:

- Think of a safe place to go if an argument occurs. Avoid rooms with no exits (bathroom), or rooms with weapons (kitchen).
- Think about and make a list of safe people to contact. Have phone numbers nearby for you and your children.
- Keep some cash with you at all times.
- Ask friends or neighbors to call the police if they hear angry or violent noises. Establish a "code word" or "sign" so that family, friends, teachers or co-workers know when to call for help.
- Teach children to dial 911.
- Think about what you will say to your partner if he\she becomes violent.
- Pack a bag containing some clothing, medications and other items that you and your children would need in case you are able to flee the home. The bag may need to stay hidden (or placed with a friend) until you are ready to leave.

If you consider leaving your abuser, think about:

- Four places that you could go if you leave your home.
- Putting together a bag of things that you use everyday. Hide it where it is easy for you to get when you need it.
- People who might help you if you left (keep a bag for you, lend you money, keep your pets).
- Opening a bank account or getting a credit card in your name.
- How you might leave. Practice how you would leave.

- How could you take your children with you safely. There are times when taking your children with you may put all of your lives in danger. You need to protect yourself to be able to protect your children.

Remember, you have the right to live without fear and violence.

Items to take with you when you do leave (if possible):

- 1) Money
- 2) Keys to car, house, work
- 3) Extra clothes
- 4) Medicines, medical records
- 5) Credit cards, bank books
- 6) Driver's license, car registration
- 7) Social Security cards, birth certificates for you and children
- 8) Welfare identification
- 9) Lease/rental agreement
- 10) Passports, green cards, work permits
- 11) Mortgage payment book, unpaid bills
- 12) Insurance papers
- 13) Address book
- 14) Pictures, jewelry, other items that have meaning to you
- 15) Items for your children (toys, books, etc.)
- 16) Protective Order, divorce papers, custody orders

If you have left the relationship:

- Screen your phone calls. Get a cell phone if you don't have one. Your local domestic violence agency may help you get a phone for emergencies.
- Save and document all contacts, messages, injuries or other incidents involving the batterer.
- Change locks, if the batterer has a key.
- Avoid staying alone.
- Plan how to get away if confronted by an abusive partner.
- If you have to meet your partner, do it in a public place.
- Vary your routine. Don't use the same store or businesses that you did when you were with your abuser. Change your route to work or school.
- Notify school and work contacts concerning your situation.
- Call a shelter for battered women. They can help in many ways.
- Get a Protective Order from the court. Keep a copy with you at all times. Give a copy to police, schools or babysitters, your boss.

Warning: Be very careful when you leave. Abusers try to control their victim's lives. When abusers feel a loss of control – like when the victim tries to leave – the abuse often gets worse. Get help with your safety plan.

If you are in northeastern North Carolina, call:

Albemarle Hopeline at 252-338-3011

Elsewhere in the United States, call:

**National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-SAFE
(7233) to locate a shelter near you**