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# UNDERSTANDING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE: A Handbook for Victims and Professionals

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Victim Witness Assistance Unit

170363



**This handbook was developed by Charlotte Clarke of the Victim Witness Assistance Unit of the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Columbia. Renee Esfandiary, law student intern also contributed significantly to the development.**

**For additional copies contact:**

**Victim Witness Assistance Unit  
United States Attorneys Office  
District of Columbia  
555 4th Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20001  
(202) 514-7375  
Charlotte Clarke,  
Domestic Violence Coordinator**

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United States Attorney

*District of Columbia*

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*Judiciary Center  
555 Fourth St. N.W.  
Washington, D. C. 20001*

Dear citizen:

If you are reading this handbook, it is likely that you are victim of domestic violence. We want you to know that you are not alone. In the District of Columbia, the U.S. Attorney's Office filed criminal charges against 2,700 batterers from May 1996 to April 1997.

You may feel embarrassed about the abuse and may be tempted to blame yourself. Please believe that the violence is NOT your fault. **NO ONE DESERVES TO BE ABUSED.** Most of us encounter unpleasant issues and conflict on a daily basis and yet do not respond with violence. You must not accept responsibility for another person's abusive behavior. Violence in the family is completely unacceptable, and it is against the law.

Domestic violence is one of the leading causes of injury and death by homicide for women in the United States. The presence of domestic violence in the home also places the lives of children at risk. Even children who are not injured or killed by the abuse suffer serious emotional and psychological harm. Children, especially boys, who witness domestic violence are more likely to grow up and abuse others. It is important to recognize that you and your child are in more danger than you may believe.

The purpose of this handbook is to help you better understand how domestic violence affects you and your children. We also want to provide you with information on the justice system and some tools you can use to help yourself and to prevent further injury and even death. Your safety is a priority to us, and we hope you take the time to teach yourself and your children about the dangers of domestic violence. Safety planning may save your life or that of your child.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mary Lou Leary".

**MARY LOU LEARY**  
United States Attorney



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**WHAT VICTIMS  
(AND THOSE WHO HELP THEM)  
NEED TO KNOW ABOUT  
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**



# **I. Safety Planning**

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## **SAFETY PLANNING FOR VICTIMS**

If you stay in the relationship without insisting that the abuser get treatment for violence, you need to prepare yourself for the chance of future violence. Even if the abuser is in treatment, you should be careful.

### **Preparing for Future Violence**

- Remove all deadly weapons from your house.
- Purchase a key ring with pepper spray attached and carry it at all times with only one or two keys on the ring.
- Even if you still hope the relationship can be mended, tell someone you trust (family, friends, coworkers) what is going on and be aware that the situation may some day become dangerously violent—even if you don't think you will need to (e.g., see documenting evidence, page 5).
- If you don't tell your friends and family, you may be putting yourself in greater danger. Find people who you can tell about the violence even if you still hope the relationship can be mended.
- Ask a neighbor you trust to call the police if they hear any loud noises or fighting from the house. Think of a code word or phrase that will let them know you need help. Tell your friend what to do if they hear the phrase or word (e.g., call the police, knock on the door, take the children away).
- Think of a code words to use with your children and family when you need the police. Teach your children how and when to use the telephone to contact the police or the fire department. Make sure they know their own address and telephone number.
- Decide and plan for safe places to go if the abuser becomes violent and you need to stay away from him.
- Leave a bag of clothing with basic necessities with a friend or family member in case you have to leave the house suddenly. Collect important documents and leave them with someone you trust.
- Inform school administrators of the situation for your child's safety as well as yours.

- Give as much information as possible about the abuser to friends and family (e.g., full name, nicknames, social security numbers, tattoos).
- Remember—the more you plan the better you'll be able to protect yourself and your children.

### **Safety During a Violent Incident**

- If an argument seems unavoidable, try to have it in a place without any weapons (e.g., especially those in the kitchen) and where you will have a way to leave.
- Use the code word you trained your children or neighbors to respond to!
- Be aware of any different or strange behavior of the abuser during and after arguments/fights. Write everything down when you are safe.
- Use your own instincts and judgment. Do what you have to do to avoid injury and report the assault when you are safe. If necessary you can pretend to faint or pass out. If friends and family have repeatedly told you that the abuser may kill you some day, you may have become numb to the dangers of the violence. You should take extra precautions even when you don't really seem to be worried about being seriously injured.
- Always remember—You don't deserve to be hit or threatened!

### **Safety When Preparing to Leave—Especially if You Are Being Stalked**

Victims of domestic violence frequently leave the residence they share with the battering partner. Leaving must be done carefully in order to increase safety. Abusers often strike back when they believe that a victim is leaving a relationship. Frequently, there is a critical period after the relationship has been ended in which it becomes clear whether or not the abuser is going to continue pursuing or stalking the victim.

- Consider staying with friends/relatives temporarily until it is clear that the abuser is not going to try to stalk you. If the abuser does stalk you, try to be with someone as much as possible—especially when leaving from your house, your work, or places where the abuser knows your routine. If you must be alone, report to a friend/family about where you are, when you are leaving and when you should be back.
- Change the locks (preferably use double key dead bolts) as soon as possible. Buy additional locks and safety devices to secure your windows and doors.

- Consider if any/all of the following will increase your security: alarm system; dog; bars on your windows; the alarm that hearing impaired people sometimes use.
- Go to the nearest police district or precinct to apply for SPECIAL ATTENTION. This tells the police that they should watch your house more closely and alerts them that you feel threatened by the abuser. You can also ask them to come through your neighborhood at specified times (e.g., when you are leaving home or returning home from work).
- Be aware of your surroundings. Before leaving your home or work, look outside to ensure that abuser is not there. If you are entering your home, ask someone else to enter with you and check to see if the abuser has somehow gotten inside.
- Make sure a carefully thought out safety plan has been rehearsed and worked out with your children. Make sure that this plan does not put the children in danger..
- Find someone in the criminal justice system who seems to know the system well who can help inform you of steps to take for your safety. If you find a particularly good police officer, advocate, prosecutor to help you keep them informed about what is happening. If you are being stalked, it is critical that you follow instructions for collecting evidence so that the police can respond in the most effective manner.
- Write down all harassment in a journal with names, dates, type of harassment and time. State the nature of the harassment. (See the section entitled “Documenting Evidence” on the next page.) Writing everything down is critical in cases where the abuser is really persistent and is clever about the law.
- Go to the police station and give them copies of all police reports—make any relevant law enforcement officials aware of what is going on.
- Take a self-defense class.

### **What to Do if Your Abuser Is Extremely Dangerous, Resourceful, and Persistent**

- Consider leaving when the abuser least expects you to (when everything has calmed down). Never give the abuser any clue that you are getting ready to leave.
- Consider that you may be putting friends/family into danger by staying with them if the abuser knows where to find you.
- If you can, go to a shelter for battered women in your neighborhood or in a different neighborhood.

- Go to friends/relatives out of town that abuser doesn't know about.
- Change your housing location.
  - Contact your housing development authorities and ask to be transferred.
  - Move to another apartment— don't list your phone number.
  - In situations where you are working closely with a prosecutor, you could ask the prosecutor if you are eligible for witness protection.
  - Look for an apartment to live in that has the following:
    - Underground parking.
    - Security system.
    - Security staff.
    - High rise so that abuser can't get in the windows.
    - Allows you have a watch dog.
    - Deadbolt locks.

## **Documenting Evidence**

It is extremely important to keep track of evidence. Evidence may consist of photographs of injuries, past court document such as a CPOs, TPOs, or prior arrest warrants or any medical records. Evidence helps the prosecuting attorney convict the defendant.

- Have a voice-activated microcassette tape recorder. If you think there is a chance of any verbal abuse, threats, or assaults, make sure you have the tape recorder with you. If possible, record such conversations.
- Keep a journal—with dates giving information about what happened and who witnessed it.
- Take photographs of injuries, and put your name and the date on the photographs.
- When receiving medical treatment for injuries sustained from domestic violence, make sure to tell the doctor to write down what happened using the name of the abuser.
- Keep copies of all court-related documents.
- When ever you talk to the police, ask officers/detectives/officials for their cards, get their names, phone numbers, police district/precinct, police report numbers, and copies of reports. Try to make sure you understand what they are doing and whether or not you need to follow up with anything. During an incident, make sure you know whether or not they have filed a report. If you find someone particularly helpful, try to work more closely with them.

- Screen your phone calls and save messages where the abuser is harassing or threatening you.
- Buy a microphone with a suction cup that goes on your phone which will enable you to tape record any phone conversations. If you are tape recording a call, try to get the abuser to state their name and facts about past criminal incidents (get name of device and cost) that can record phone conversations if you are being harassed by phone.
- Phone safety
  - Make sure your phone number is unlisted.
  - If possible obtain caller ID, so you can prepare for or avoid harassing phone calls.
  - When you receive threatening or harassing mail from the batterer, don't throw it away. Make a copy of the envelope and the letter and give the original to the police

### **Safety and Substance Abuse**

- Substance abuse by either the batterer or the victim increases the risk of severe or deadly injuries. If you are using drugs or alcohol, you may not be aware of the danger you or your children may be in. You may not be able to protect your children from the violence and may expose them to harmful situations. We recommend getting help for yourself if you are abusing drugs.
- If both you and your abuser are addicted to drugs, your children are in danger or being seriously harmed. Consider having a relative take care of them. You may need to have them placed in foster care until you can address the problem.
- If the abuser is high on drugs or alcohol, we recommend leaving the area or having another person who can protect you present. Remember only the batterer can decide to get help for him/herself—you are not responsible for making sure s/he recovers. Besides, taking responsibility for the batterer may backfire. The abuser may start to feel protected from the consequences of his or her actions rather than seek help.
- Read up on the problems related to the drug the abuser is using. Particularly dangerous substances that often lead to excessive violence are crack/cocaine, PCP, and chronic alcohol abuse.

## Checklist of What You Need to Take if You Leave

(It is best if you leave either the originals or copies with a friend/relative/neighbor so that when you leave you don't have to worry about collecting papers.)

- \_\_\_\_\_ Driver's license, registration, and other picture identification
- \_\_\_\_\_ Restraining order and court papers
- \_\_\_\_\_ Phone book with all important numbers
- \_\_\_\_\_ Business cards of any law enforcement you have worked with
- \_\_\_\_\_ Birth certificates—your own and your children
- \_\_\_\_\_ Money, ATM cards, and credit cards
- \_\_\_\_\_ Lease, rental agreement, house deed
- \_\_\_\_\_ Bank books and checkbooks
- \_\_\_\_\_ Welfare papers
- \_\_\_\_\_ House, work, and car keys
- \_\_\_\_\_ Medications for yourself and your children
- \_\_\_\_\_ Medical records
- \_\_\_\_\_ Social security cards—yours and your children's
- \_\_\_\_\_ School and vaccination records
- \_\_\_\_\_ Work permit
- \_\_\_\_\_ Green card
- \_\_\_\_\_ Passports—yours and your children's
- \_\_\_\_\_ Divorce papers
- \_\_\_\_\_ Jewelry
- \_\_\_\_\_ Children's toys

### Important phone numbers

- \_\_\_\_\_ Police department
- \_\_\_\_\_ Police officer/detective you have worked closely with
- \_\_\_\_\_ Battered women's shelter
- \_\_\_\_\_ Domestic Violence Intake Center if a civil protection order was obtained
- \_\_\_\_\_ Domestic Violence Victim Assistance Unit, U.S. Attorney's Office
- \_\_\_\_\_ Assistant U.S. Attorney (if charges were filed against abuser)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Minister
- \_\_\_\_\_ Other

# **Victim's Diary of Abuse and Harassment**

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**What happened:**

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**Type of harassment:**

Phone     Letter     In person     Other

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**Where did the harassment occur?**

**Address:**

**Date:**

**Time:**

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**Witnesses:**

**Name:**

**Phone:**

1)

1)

2)

2)

**Address:**

1)

2)

---

**Police contact:**

**Officer's name & badge #:**

**Date:**

**Time:**

**Police report number:**

**How police were contacted?:**

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**Collected evidence:**

took photographs of bruises

kept a copy of all notes

took photographs or disarray of home

saved answering machine messages

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## **SAFETY PLANNING FOR CHILDREN EXPOSED TO DOMESTIC ABUSE**

As a parent or caretaker, you can talk about safety with your child. Here are some suggestions.

- **Help your child understand signals or cues that the abuser may become violent.** Help child identify ways you and your partner were acting prior to fights. Child may remember drugs/alcohol were involved or notice patterns (e.g., time of day/week, topics associated with fights). Factors related to the onset of violence are warning signs.
- **Identification of the child's response and outcome of this action.** Help child in identifying how they reacted in the past, such as yelling at abusive parent, running away, attempting to protect their mother, withdrawing, calling the police, etc. Consider the outcome of these actions. Was the child injured while attempting to protect their parent/family member?
- **Formulation of options and a plan of action.** Based on the previously gathered information help children identify immediate steps to protect themselves. Plan could include having the child call the police or person who is available 24 hours a day. Younger children can be encouraged to hide someplace safe in the home, or run next door and tell someone they trust. The child can identify a password or signal to use with the nonabusive parent or supportive persons outside of the home to alert them of trouble. If the child wants to have the plan written down, the child should be asked to identify a place where the plan can be kept and where the abusive parent is unlikely to discover it.

### **Teach Your Children to Follow the Rules in this “Children’s Safety Plan.”**

- Call 911 if you feel someone in your family might get hurt. Even if you only dial 911 and hang up, the police will have to call back or come and check on your family.
- Find a safe place to go (not the kitchen or bathroom) like a bedroom or a neighbor’s or friend’s home.
- Do not get in the middle of a physical fight. This may cause the violence or anger to increase or turns towards you. You could get hurt.
- Help yourself by finding someone you can trust and talk about your problems with, such as a teacher, minister, babysitter, counselor at school, etc. Talking about your feelings can make you feel better.
- Do not blame or attack either parent, because doing so may call attention to you and you may get hurt.

## II. Understanding Domestic Violence

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### **FACTS ABOUT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

Domestic violence is common in our society. It occurs in all race and class groups and regardless of age, religion, or education. Domestic violence occurs in almost half the homes in the United States. Each year, more than one million individuals seek medical assistance for injuries caused by battering. In all, authorities estimate that three to four million individuals are battered each year.

Abuse comes in many forms. It can be a slap, a kick, a shooting, a stabbing, or murder. It can involve destruction of your property, such as having furniture smashed. Abuse also can be psychological. Threats that make you fear for your safety or life are abuse. If any of these forms of abuse is happening to you and you have children, they too are likely to be physically hurt and emotionally damaged.

Whatever the circumstances, whatever the form of abuse, you ***must keep one thing in mind: your abuser has absolutely no right to harm you.*** Abusers often attack their victims not because they are "sick" or under the influence of alcohol or drugs, but because they want to feel powerful and in control.

***Statistics show that 95 percent of people who are battered are women.*** Throughout much of history, women have been thought of as their husbands' property. People—including the police and the authorities—simply looked the other way if a man beat his wife or the woman he lived with, saying they didn't want to get involved in a "domestic dispute."

Now, however, the laws have been strengthened to say that such violence is wrong and completely unacceptable. The fact that a man lives with a woman does not give him permission to batter her or for her to batter him, or for any family member to batter another. This guide can be used by anyone who is a victim of domestic violence, regardless of whether that person is a man or a woman.

Because our society now insists on protection against domestic violence, there have been some improvements. Police now are more likely to respond and to take action against an abuser. However, because things are still in the process of change, you should be prepared to insist that your rights be respected. Doing so is worth the effort. And remember, there are people prepared to help you.

- In a 6-month period following an incident of domestic violence, approximately 32 percent of women are victimized again. Abuse follows a predictable cycle: It increases in frequency and severity over time.

- A high percentage of battering occurs during pregnancy and involves blows to the victims abdomen.
- Battering is the leading cause of injury to women between the ages of 15 and 44—more frequent than auto accidents, mugging, and rapes combined.
- In the United States, women are more likely to be killed by male partners than by anyone.
- 42 percent of murdered women are killed by their intimate male partner.
- The danger of domestic abuse increases rather than decreases directly after the partners divorce or separate. In up to 75 percent of the domestic assaults reported to law enforcement agencies, the victim is already divorced or separated from the abuser at the time of the incident.
- An increase in legal protection and services for battered women has been found to result in a decrease in the number of homicides committed by women against male partners.
- In 85 percent of reported homicides due to domestic violence, the police had been called to the residence on at least one occasion in the two years prior to the death.

Figure 1: Types of Spouse Abuse

# CONTINUUM OF FAMILY VIOLENCE

**PHYSICAL** → → → → → → → → → → **DEATH**

pushing punching slapping kicking throwing objects choking using weapons homicide/suicide

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**VERBAL  
EMOTIONAL** → → → → → → → → → → **SUICIDE**

name calling criticizing "you're no good" ignoring yelling isolation humiliation

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**SEXUAL** → → → → → → → → → → **RAPE**

unwanted touching sexual name calling unfaithfulness false accusations forced sex hurtful sex

WITHOUT SOME KIND OF HELP, THE VIOLENCE USUALLY GETS WORSE. THE END RESULT CAN BE DEATH.

Distributed by the New Jersey Department Community Affairs Division on Women, Domestic Violence Prevention Program.  
From VILLAGE TO VILLAGE, Alaska Dept. of Public Safety.

**TYPES OF SPOUSE ABUSE**

PHYSICAL ABUSE	SEXUAL ABUSE	PSYCHOLOGICAL ABUSE	SOCIAL ABUSE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>THREATS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To use a gun, knife, etc.</li> <li>- To kill</li> <li>- "You'll never get away from me"</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>ACTION</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Pushing</li> <li>- Shoving</li> <li>- Holding down</li> <li>- Slapping</li> <li>- Punching</li> <li>- Choking</li> <li>- Beating</li> <li>- Kicking</li> <li>- Burning</li> <li>- Biting</li> <li>- Spitting with objects</li> <li>- Hitting with objects such as lamps, phones, etc.</li> <li>- Targeted hitting--breasts, genitals, the abdomen of a pregnant women.</li> <li>- Shooting</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>INFLECTED INJURIES</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Bruises</li> <li>- Black eyes</li> <li>- Cuts/Lacerations</li> <li>- Internal injuries</li> <li>- Broken bones</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Touching a person in ways that make them feel uncomfortable.</li> <li>• Treating a person like a sexual object with no concern for their feelings or desires.</li> <li>• Expecting sex as a duty</li> <li>• Withholding sex as punishment</li> <li>• Being intentionally promiscuous</li> <li>• Engaging in sex after violence: "Please forgive me"</li> <li>• Accusing a woman/man of being a whore if they desire or enjoy sex, sadism, etc.</li> <li>• Humiliating a woman by selling her to friends, tying her.</li> <li>• Committing incest with her children.</li> <li>• Using violence with sex: hitting, choking, beating, before or during sex.</li> <li>• Beating after sexual intimacy.</li> <li>• Allowing a person no control of their body or space.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>INSULTS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Using jokes that demean a woman/man.</li> <li>- Using put-downs.</li> <li>- Calling a person stupid, incompetent, ugly.</li> <li>- Labeling a person crazy; bitch, whore.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>THREATS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To destroy property.</li> <li>- To get the children if the woman/man attempts divorce.</li> <li>- To commit suicide.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>ISOLATION</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Separating the person from family and friends.</li> <li>- Denying the person access to their car.</li> <li>- Controlling the phone</li> <li>- Checking up on her/him</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>BLAME</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Blaming the other for your violence.</li> <li>- Hurting the children and blaming the other.</li> <li>- Humiliation</li> <li>- Ripping clothing</li> <li>- Burning possessions</li> <li>- Injuring or killing pets</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Society reinforces role of women/men.</li> <li>• Society encourages sexism with sexual jokes, put-downs, embarrassing comments.</li> <li>• Family, friends, professional, aid in isolation of women.</li> <li>• Others blame victims, even labelling them bitch, crazy, whore, masochist, perpetual victim, liar, hysterical, exaggerator.</li> <li>• Law fosters woman's dependency on a man.</li> <li>• The isolation is reinforced:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Police ignore clues.</li> <li>- Medical people take lies at face value or say it is a private matter.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Society blames mothers for ills of the family.</li> </ul>

**Figure 2: Continuum of Family Violence: How Abuse Becomes Worse Over Time**

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### Will the Violence Stop if We Go to Marriage Counseling?

*Advocates and experts working with victims of domestic violence agree that marital counseling is NOT appropriate in domestic violence situations.* For marital counseling to work, you and your partner must be safe and able to make decisions freely. This is not the case for anyone who is threatened, intimidated, or abused. Violence is not a problem of both persons in a relationship; it's the problem of the abuser alone. There are special treatment programs that focus on common problems of batterers. It is recommended that the batterer COMPLETE this treatment for at least 6 months. If the violence has stopped, ONLY THEN consider couples counseling. However, it is very difficult to stop the cycle of domestic violence—especially when the violence has been going on for a long time. In cases where there is a long history of abuse or any history of severe abuse, it may be safer for the victim and any children to leave.

### It's Only When My Abuser is Drinking That I Get Hit. Will the Violence Stop if S/he Gets Alcohol or Drug Treatment?

Batterers are frequently under the influence of alcohol or drugs when violent. Although alcohol and drugs can make it more likely that an abuser will lose control and become violent and sometimes become severely violent, *substance abuser does NOT cause violence.* Usually, the substance abuser needs to first go through detox treatment and then receive separate treatment for the substance abuse. *In most cases, treatment for substance abuse is NOT ENOUGH to solve the problems of violence in the relationship. The most effective treatment for battering is treatment that focuses on preventing violence in relationships (batterer treatment).* Other programs (e.g., NA, AA, substance abuse treatment) do not help the abuser control his violent behavior. Violence is a specific behavior which requires a specific treatment.

### Am I Safe if My Abuser is Going to a Batterers' Counseling Program?

Not necessarily. *Even if your abuser is going to a batterers' counseling program—even a court-ordered program—you may not be safe.* Batterer treatment can be very successful for people who are not chronic, long-term abusers, and who are motivated to change their violent behavior. However, even a good batterer treatment programs may be successful in only about a half of the people who finish the treatment programs. Therefore, it is important for you to keep up your guard and to do what you need to do to remain safe. It also helps if you contact the counselors in the batterer treatment program and provide them with regular feedback...especially when you have problems with continued violence. The counselors need this information to treat the batterer in the best way.

## DYNAMICS OF ABUSE

### Power and Control

Figure 1 on the next page shows that physical assaults and sexual violence between partners usually occur with other abusive and controlling behaviors. Some of these behaviors are: economic and emotional abuse, intimidation, isolation, and threats of taking the children. Abusers use these tactics to establish and maintain control over the victim.

### Statements of formerly battered women about power and control

*The following statements are taken from victim impact statements of victims of battered women.* The portions in bold are highlighted because they represent common themes that many battered victims have in their abusive relationships.

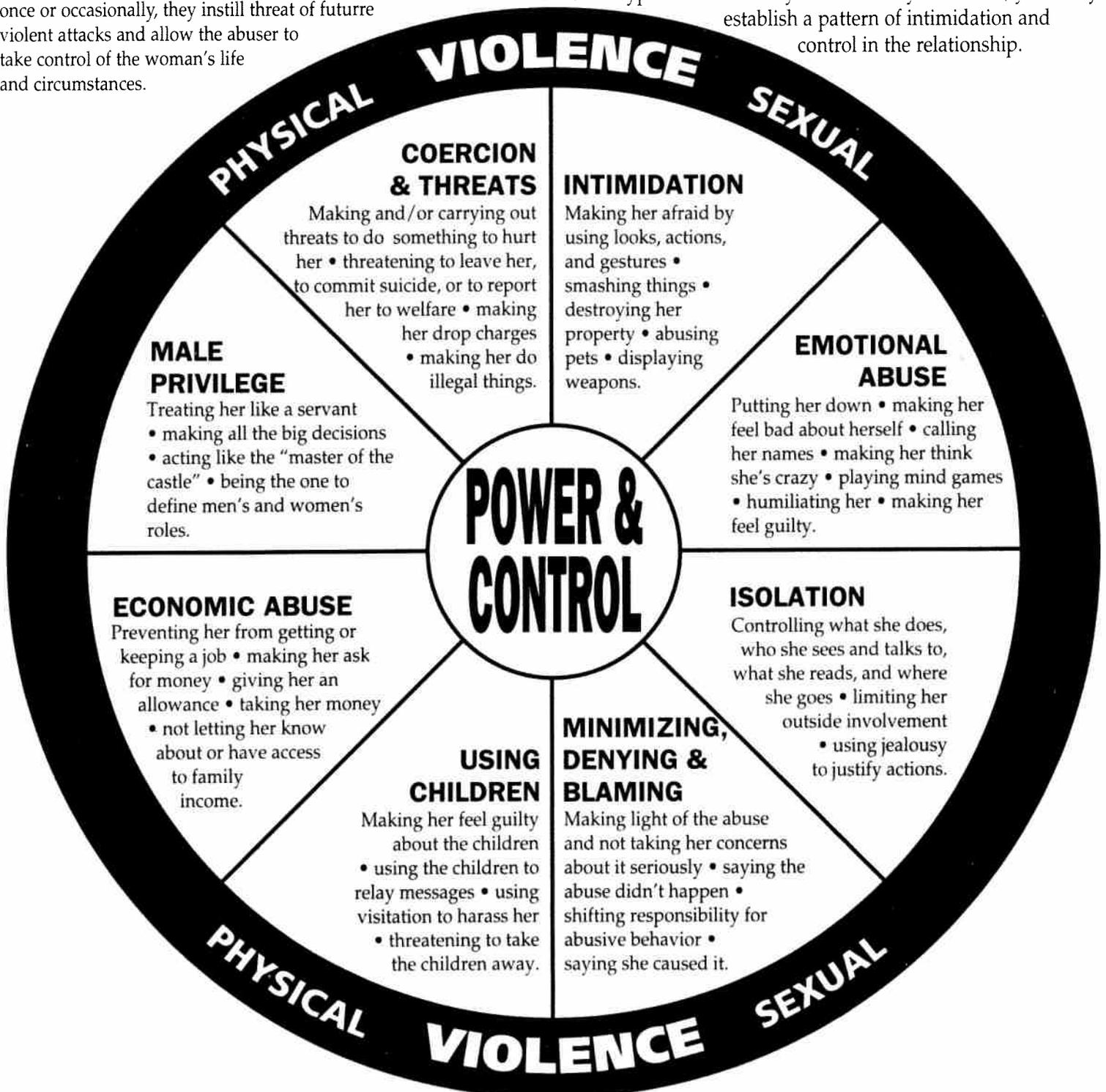
*In the beginning when I met ("my abuser"), I was treated with respect, dignity, affection, and love. From the time we had dated to eventually **living together as partners weren't always bad times.** At first, I trusted him. But when the controlling began I went into depression. Like a victim feeling helpless, isolated in the situation by myself...hiding the shame of a poor relationship from friends, family, house guests, doctors, etc. I was so afraid...fear made consequences of seeking help impossible. I knew I was in a vicious cycle. Knife flashing to knife cutting clothes, slapping to punching, knife to gun, grabbing to choking. Bring a child into all this confusion.*

*My abuser took away my identity and who I was through the constant acts of **threats and assaults and constant intimidation.** After months of his abuse, I no longer had any self-esteem or confidence in myself. I felt like I couldn't do nothing right—even though I could do these things right before I met him. I learned from him that I couldn't cook, clean, be a parent or a partner. It got to a point where he made it so I couldn't function on my job. I had to keep asking my supervisors to change my shift because he said I needed to be home when he was home because he wanted more of my time. I was always trying to "improve myself" for him.*

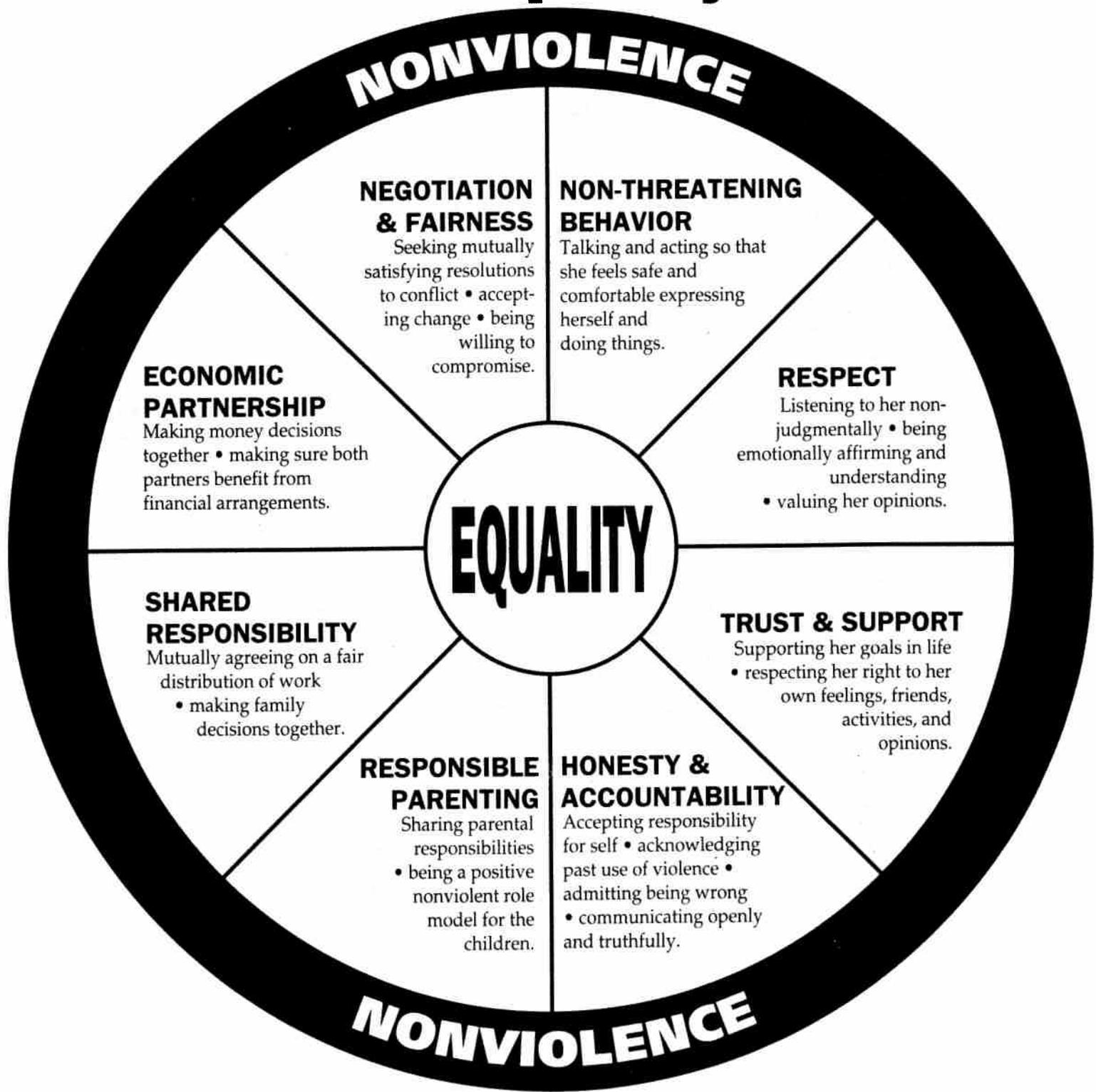
# Or, is your relationship based on power and control?

Physical and sexual assaults, or threats to commit them, are the most apparent forms of domestic violence and are usually the actions that allow others to become aware of the problem. However, regular use of other abusive behaviors by the batterer, when reinforced by one or more acts of physical violence, make up a larger system of abuse. Although physical assaults may occur only once or occasionally, they instill threat of future violent attacks and allow the abuser to take control of the woman's life and circumstances.

The Power & Control diagram is a particularly helpful tool in understanding the overall pattern of abusive and violent behaviors, which are used by a batterer to establish and maintain control over his partner. Very often, one or more violent incidents are accompanied by an array of these other types of abuse. They are less easily identified, yet firmly establish a pattern of intimidation and control in the relationship.



# Is your relationship based on equality?



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## Statements of formerly battered women about power and control (cont.)

*He tried so hard to control everything I did. He would go out and call me every hour or two to make sure that I was awake and attentive to him when he came home. He did all kinds of sneaky things to keep me in the house so he could check up on me. After two months of living together, I was isolated and didn't have friends or family to rely on. They vanished all the way...no more family members or friends. When the phone rang I knew it was for him. I lost contact with my family after a month of being with him after he would curse them out and tell them not to call. He was rude to my friends—being arrogant and talking badly about me in front of them—making them feel uncomfortable.*

*He was also extremely jealous and possessive. He would accuse me of being with men at work, men in the building, on the street or anywhere. He would say, I saw you looking at so and so. There were so many rules that he imposed on me, that when I think of them really make me angry. He wouldn't let me wear certain clothes. He told me not to wear blouses because he was afraid someone could look down my shirt. Don't wear dresses to work because I could get raped...his thinking was that if I wear dresses at night and come home in the evening I would be enticing men to rape me. I was not supposed to wear anything fitting, with a split or a rap or a tie to it, etc...*

*I felt depressed. I knew it was getting worse and worse. I was crying most of the time. I was getting migraines every day. I would wake up late in the night and be extremely tired. I'd come home from work exhausted and just want to get some sleep—instead of waiting for him. After being with him for a while, I would have angry outbursts that surprised me. I would throw pillows and clothes and I sometimes thought I was losing my mind. I would yell and cry. After a while, I started thinking about suicide. I just wanted to stop the abuse, the violence and the relationship. I felt there was no way out. I didn't know the resources of getting out. But I knew that suicide wasn't really the way to go.*

*Finally, I realized I had to get out of the relationship. When I communicated that I was tired of being put down and that he could do all of the things he demanded of me for himself, he became more physically violent with me. I wanted out. It would have been easier for me if I knew that I had somewhere to go where I wouldn't have to worry about child care, transportation, etc. If I knew about how to get all of those things, I probably would have left a long time ago.*

*Then one day I talked to his former girlfriend. Eventually we talked about his prior abuse towards her and their child. His former girlfriend told me that he hit her in her stomach when she was pregnant and even hit their baby when trying to hit*

*her. We talked for a long time, and I heard more. She also said he had abused former partners. Everything was clear to me for the first time—I stopped blaming myself. After hearing someone else go through the same thing with him, it was no longer my problem—it was his.*

## **Stalking and Separation Violence**

Many people ask why battered victims of domestic abuse don't leave their partners. However, it is important to recognize that leaving an abusive partner can be extremely dangerous. Here is what some formerly battered women have to say about this.

*I told him I no longer wanted to see him. He slapped me around for about 10-15 minutes and the more he thought about me leaving, the angrier he got. Eventually, he went into the drawer and got a gun which he aimed at my head. While the gun was aimed at me, he threatened to kill me. Then he put the gun in my mouth. He continued to make verbal threats like "I'll kill you if you try to leave me. If I can't find you, I know how to find your younger brother." These threats caused me to stay with him against my will. Later, we got into another fight and he assaulted me.*

*The same day, he was charged with assault and issued a stay away order, which he violated by coming over to my house without a police officer. I saw him again the following week at a grocery and he followed me around the store talking to me about dropping the charges and wanting to get back together with me. Over the next two weeks, he repeatedly contacted me...making me feel both sympathetic towards him and like I was being pushed to do something I didn't want to do (e.g., get back together, drop the charges).*

*Once again he assaulted me, and still he insisted on escorting me to court so that I would testify at his preliminary hearing. While he was upstairs at the hearing, I called the victim advocate that I was working with and we talked about the situation. I was confused about what to do and I was frightened to go forward, but after speaking with the advocate and with the Prosecutor, I decided to continue to proceed with the charges. He came looking for me at the U.S. Attorney's Office!*

*When I got on a connecting bus headed home, I found that he was there. He got up and sat beside me and started harassing me about the charges not being dropped. Eventually, I had to move into a shelter for battered women so that I could get away from him.*

*When I would leave for work he would be parked outside watching me, as he would when I left either of my two jobs. On a typical day, he called me about 40 times at both my jobs. My coworkers started to cover for me saying that I was not at work. On two occasions my supervisor asked me to take a leave of absence due to the threat my husband posed to others.*

*When I flew out of town to visit my son for his birthday, he had the airline call me off the plane. When I got off the plane, he asked me who was on the plane with me. When I returned from the trip, I learned from him later that he was somewhere at the airport watching me.*

## **The Cycle of Violence**

In many cases, violence in abusive relationships follows a predictable cycle. The “cycle of violence” consists of three phases.

### **Phase #1: Tension building**

In the first phase, tension builds in the relationship. Victims report that their partners becoming increasingly irritable, frustrated, and unable to cope with every-day stresses. The abuser may lash out at the victim at this time but generally stops and become apologetic.

In this phase, the victim typically attempts to please the abuser by becoming agreeable, nurturing, or staying out of the way. S/he assumes responsibility for controlling the anger, often using denial as a defense or minimizing the inevitability of the beating and the fear. The victim may believe that s/he can control the violence and has some control over what happens. This requires denying anger, which grows with each incident.

Some victims report reaching a point where they are unable to suffer the growing tension. A victim may even provoke a beating to at least have some sense of control over the inevitable. Their reward is not the beating, but the love and attention of their apologetic partners during Phase #3, and relief that Phase #1 has ended.

The abuser is aware, at some level, that his or her behavior is wrong and begins to fear that the victim will leave. The abuser’s fears are reinforced by the victim’s coping strategy of withdrawal and avoidance. The abuser becomes increasingly demanding, jealous, and possessive of the victim in an attempt to prevent the victim from leaving.

### **Phase #2: A battering incident**

In the process of teaching the victim a lesson, the abuser becomes enraged. Victims often report that they know that fighting back at this point only invites more violence, although some use

this time to release some of their own anger. Only the abuser can end Phase #2; it is dangerous for helpers to step in during a battering.

It is important for the victim to have a safe place to go during this phase. Once the battering incident is over, many victims deny the seriousness of their injuries and deny their own terror as well as the reality that a similar battering could happen again.

### **Phase #3: A honeymoon phase**

In the third phase of the cycle of violence, the abuser exhibits extremely kind and loving behavior toward the victim. Being more afraid than ever that the victim will leave, a male who has battered a woman may become extremely charming. He is very sorry and convinces the victim and himself that his behavior will change.

A battered woman may want desperately to believe that her suffering is over. She convinces herself that the “good” side of the dual personality is the “true” personality. Somehow, the “bad” side will disappear. Her partner’s loving behavior during this phase is her reinforcement for remaining in the relationship.

The victim is most likely to seek help now, but it is also the most difficult time for her to leave the abuser. The victim believes that if the first two phases are somehow removed, Phase #3 will remain. S/he does not see this phase as a temporary part of the violence.

It is suggested that during the cycle of violence, some victims develop a form of depression in which they become psychologically paralyzed. This is known as “learned helplessness.” Despite their attempts to feel in control of their partner’s behavior, they have learned that what they do has no effect on what happens to them. They feel unable to control the abuse and are helpless to leave.

The three phases in the cycle of violence feed on one another. Denial, a powerful emotional defense, keeps the cycle going. Both partners use denial. Abusers avoid responsibility for their violent behavior by denying it has happened. Victims try to protect themselves and the relationship by forgetting the violence. A victim may often deny the very real danger in which s/he lives. The cycle of violence begins again. With each completion of the cycle, the incidents of violence increase in both frequency and intensity.

### **Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence**

Sexual assault occurs when you are forced, threatened, or intimidated into sexual contact against your will. You can be sexually assaulted or raped by a partner. When you are raped by your spouse, the act is called marital rape. Sexual assault by a partner is one of the most devastating experiences in an abusive relationship.

Sexual assault is an act of violence, power, and control. You have the right to control your own body and to make decisions about having sex. You do not lose those rights if you marry or become involved in an intimate relationship. Even though sex may be an understood part of the relationship, you do not give up the right to say “no” to having sex. No one, including your partner, ever has the right to force you to have sex, either through threats of harm or physical violence to you, your children, or another person.

Many victims of domestic violence feel that if they say “no” their partner will become more abusive, so they say “yes” out of fear. You may have felt pressured into having sex out of fear and not have considered this rape. This is rape. It is often extremely painful to realize that your partner is not respecting you, or caring about your feelings.

Sexual assault or rape can occur during a violent episode, immediately after the violence, or as a part of the making up period. In many cases, it is the primary way that the abuser exercises power and control on a daily basis.<sup>1</sup> Sexual assault by a partner hurts your self esteem and feelings of self worth.

## **Substance Abuse and Domestic Violence**

- **Alcohol and drugs do not cause family violence—they only make abusers less likely to control their violent tendencies.** Some abusers use drugs and alcohol as an excuse to commit assaults. They try to justify or deny their violence. There are many individuals who commit physical and sexual assaults without abusing drugs or alcohol and many individuals who have drug and/or alcohol addictions yet do not batter or rape.
- **Abusers who blame their violence on drinking or drugs are not taking responsibility for their violence.**
- **Abusers with substance abuse problems must address both their problem with drugs/alcohol *and* their problem with violence.** Violence is a specific behavior requiring a specific intervention apart from other treatments.
- **Abusers who perpetrate violence against partners and abuse substances are more likely to inflict serious injury and to commit sexual violence.** Some abusers abuse drugs or alcohol intending to become violent.<sup>2</sup>

Here is what some former victims have to say about their abusers’ substance abuse problems:

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<sup>1</sup>*Surviving Domestic Violence.* The Los Angeles Commission on Assaults Against Women.

<sup>2</sup>*Violence in the Lives of Women.* The Link to Substance Abuse. Domestic Violence and Substance Abuse Task Force of Virginians Against Domestic Violence.

*Abuse of drugs has been dominant in his life over the past two or three years. He has been in several excellent treatment facilities and has yet to be successful in adhering to the treatment regime. He is very manipulative and he convinces people with a sympathetic ear that he is willing to change and do the right thing.*

*He devastated our family life. His drug problem and the way he dealt with it, charging up thousands of dollars on our credit cards, forced me to both get a second job and to send my son and my granddaughter (who lived with us) away. I could no longer trust him to take care of the children while I was at work. He was getting high at home and he did things that put the children in a lot of danger. Once he left a loaded gun laying out where my granddaughter was playing. Since I had to work two jobs, I was forced to send both children to other homes to protect them from being exposed to his drugs and his violence. Sending the children away hurt me more than anything.*

### **Signs to Look for in a Abuser**

Sometimes recognizing when someone could become abusive can help you recognize when there might be a threat of future violence. It is important to recognize signs of a person who is currently a abuser or who may be a abuser in the future. Read the following list. If your partner does any of these things listed below, it is very possible that the person has or will in the future batter you.

The cycle of domestic violence starts with one incident. One abuse brings on a second, third, or fourth. Typically, the abusive partner states that the abuse will never happen again.

Look through the list below and count how many of these things your partner has done to you. If you check off more than one, you may want to 1) look closely at the relationship, 2) get help for yourself, and 3) demand that the abuser get abuser treatment.

- Abuser was abused by parents or witnessed domestic violence.
- Abuser isolates you from your friends or family.
- Abuser becomes both intimate and wants to be closely involved with the victim quickly.
- Abuser blames others for problems (e.g., unemployment) and feelings they have.
- Abuser withholds approval or affection as a way to punish you.
- Abuser criticizes or insults you in public or private—has unrealistic expectations of you or

your children.

- Abuser ignores your feelings.
- Abuser held you to keep you from leaving or calling for help.
- Abuser ridicules or insults women as a group.
- Abuser criticizes your race, religion, or other beliefs.
- Abuser insists you dress in a certain way or tries to control other things you do.
- Abuser continuously criticizes you.
- Abuser abused or killed pets to hurt you.
- Abuser throws objects at you.
- Abuser touched you in a way that made you uncomfortable.
- Abuser sexually abused you.
- Abuser manipulated you with lies and contradictions.
- Abuser destroyed furniture, punched holes in walls, broken appliances.
- Abuser punched, slapped, kicked, choked, hit, bit, scratched, shoved, cut, or shot at you.
- Abuser became jealous and harassed you about imagined relationships.
- Abuser became possessive and angry if you wanted to spend time alone or with other people.
- Abuser insists on making all the decisions about your time together.
- Abuser controlled the use of money, how your time is spent, when and where you can go.
- Abuser threatened to hurt you, your children, family or friends.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>G. NiCarthy, *Getting Free: A Handbook for Women in Abusive Relationships*, 1984.

# THE IMPACT OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ON VICTIMS

## Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

Humans respond similarly to threats such as natural disasters, war, captivity, personal attack, and battering. When faced with danger, most victims focus on self-protection and survival, or the survival of a loved one. Victims experience initial feelings of shock, denial, disbelief, and fear. The most terrifying fear is one of serious injury or death.

Women's reactions to violence by a partner have been compared to reactions of survivors of other traumatic events. For example, prisoners of war who are emotionally abused with the threat of physical violence and are isolated, and who are given irregular praise and punishment while sometimes fearing for their lives become crippled, unable to act and dependant. Prisoners of war often adapt by becoming numb, by complying to the demands made, and by agreeing with the abuser's actions and points of view. When the victims are extremely helpless, as in concentration camps, there is a surprising lack of anger expressed towards their captors. In domestic violence, the abuse may be ongoing and the victim may not ever be able to escape the stress.<sup>5</sup>

In the hands of the one they love, battered victims are repeatedly exposed to threats, intimidation, and violence. Battering effects victim's thinking, their feelings, their relationships with others, the way they act and their bodies. The following are statements made by victims of domestic violence.

*At the time of the assault, I was horrified and upset. I felt hopeless and helpless about escaping. Once in the bedroom, I thought a lot about dying...I was sure that I was going to die. I have never felt that helpless before... I felt alone and afraid. I always thought I would die peacefully and of old age. Many of my thoughts were on how I could survive this frightening, terrifying night.*

*While in the hospital, I was also very solemn and depressed. I couldn't understand how it happened or why it happened to me. I felt very afraid too. I tried to help him, and I couldn't understand how a person could treat someone who helps them so badly. I felt hurt that someone I loved did this to me. It made me question everything. I questioned myself and blamed myself. I just kept reliving that night over and over again. I had nightmares and would wake up in my sleep screaming and crying. One time, an intern came in the room at night while I was sleeping to draw blood. As*

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<sup>5</sup>Taken from Mary P. Koss, Lisa A. Goodman, Angela Browne, Louise F. Fitzgerald, Gwendolyn P. Keita, Nancy F. Russo, *No Safe Haven: Male Violence Against Women at Home, at Work, and in the Community*, American Psychological Association, Washington DC, 1994.

*I was waking up I thought it was my abuser and started screaming, "Get away! Help!"*

*After the assault, I didn't want to talk to anyone. I felt embarrassed and ashamed and didn't want to be judged by people. At one point, I used to be an optimistic and fun-loving individual, but now I'm very cold. I stay secluded and I am quick to anger (especially towards men). I'm sad all of the time because I'm constantly remembering the good things before that night versus the bad things that are a result of that night. I don't want it to ever happen again. I'm not sure what to do to protect myself.*

*It has really changed how I am with men. At this point, I almost need a social security number before I'm willing to go out with them. I don't trust men at all. I'm worried that this could happen again. I have so much anger towards men that I eat to distract my thoughts from the possibility of it happening again.*

*Last week, on my way home one night, while staying at the Shelter for battered women, I was hurrying to make the curfew when I heard footsteps behind me. I thought to myself, Oh my God, my abuser's people found me. When the counselor opened the door, I stormed in so fast that I ran into her and hurt her knee. I jumped up, slammed the door, and began screaming, "they found me, they got a gun!" I remember thinking I'm dead. A knock came to the door, a counselor answered, it was another resident. Everyone sighed with relief. It took me the rest of the night to calm down.*

## **Indicators of Trauma in Domestic Violence Victims**

- **Fear/Terror**—The more severe the violence and the more difficult it is to escape the violence, the more likely you will experience an extreme form of fear/terror. If you have experienced domestic violence, you may become fearful of anything that reminds you of the violence.
- **Nightmares/flashbacks and sleeping problems**—These and other intrusive symptoms may make victims experience frightening events related to the abuse. Your abuser may recognize that certain things remind you of the violence and may use these things to control you.
- **Avoidance**—Some traumatized victims cope with extreme violence by detaching themselves, withdrawing, and by blocking feelings. They may forget, minimize the violence, or become “numb.”
- **Anxiety**—Generalized fear of anything that reminds victims of past abuse becomes a trigger

for their fears. Anxiety can take the form of panic attacks (e.g., unsteady feelings, trembling or shaking, being hyper, sweating, fear of going crazy or losing control) or nervousness.

- **Difficulty concentrating**—Difficulty concentrating may cause some victims to have problems at work, at school, or elsewhere.
- **Hyper vigilance, suspiciousness**—Traumatized victims may feel unable to relax or let down their guard.
- **Psychological reactivity**—Research has found that victimization causes problems with our bodies' ability to regulate emotional and physical reactions to stress. This causes victims to react (e.g., become afraid or angry) to new stressors like they were the old ones, even when they are much less severe.
- **Anger/rage**—A traumatized victim's anger or rage at the abuse can be directly expressed to the abuser or taken out on a safer target (e.g., children, coworkers, family, friends). It may be kept inside and result in headaches or other physical symptoms.
- **Grief/depression/suicide**—Traumatized victims may experience feelings of loss or sadness resulting from the loss of friends and family supports. They are unable to do the things that are enjoyable and rewarding. Many women who attempt suicide say that battering fueled their attempts.
- **Lower self-esteem/shame/ embarrassment**—Many battered women devalue themselves and believe they don't deserve better treatment. They may feel bad, like they are damaged goods.
- **Health and physical complaints**—Victims may experience health and physical problems such as headaches, lower back pain, gastrointestinal problems (e.g., stomach aches, nausea), heart disease, and cancer.
- **Addictive behaviors**—Drugs or alcohol may be used by some victims to self-medicate their distress. These substances may be used to reduce anxiety, increase feeling "numb", block the pain and distress mentioned already.
- **Impaired functioning**—Battered victims often report that they are not able to be with friends because they feel too depressed or angry, and they may be preoccupied with the abuse or the decisions they have to make.
- **Changes in beliefs**—Some traumatized victims may come to feel that the world is no longer a safe place. They may lose the view that the world is meaningful and may feel helpless to effect change, to escape, or to protect themselves. They may blame themselves for causing the violence, for not stopping the violence, or for not being able to tolerate violence. They may believe that they cannot trust their own perceptions and judgments any more.

- **Attachment and dependency**—Common responses to trauma. For some victims, the decreased sense of self-worth and increased isolation results in a greater dependency upon the abuser (known as “traumatic bonding”). The victim may protect the abuser from harm (e.g., calling the police), from embarrassment (e.g., telling family or friends).
- **Difficulty with trust**—Victims have difficulty believing that they will not be physically or emotionally abused. Victims often respond to new partners with anger or fear as though they were the old partners.

### III. Children Exposed to Domestic Violence

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#### IMPACT OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ON CHILDREN

The following statements made by victims clearly show the concerns that battered women have about their children and the kinds of violence that children often observe in violent homes.

*He always said to me that I was lucky he didn't have a gun because if he did, he'd 'cap' me. In the last months, I've been really worried when he goes off and whoops on me—how long will it last and will I be killed or handicapped when it is over. I worry about my children who are in the next room. Is he going to hurt them too? What do they think of the violence? Will they have a mother when this whooping is over or will they have a handicapped mother who can't care for them?*

*After he went off on me, with swollen eyes, dripping blood, and bruises, he'd lock me in the back room with the children and demand that I stop their crying, that I pick them up and comfort them while he sat in the front room (which kept me from leaving) and watched TV—like nothing happened at all. At those times we didn't have a phone and I felt crazy, I couldn't think straight, I just wanted to flee somewhere away from everything.*

*While all of this was going on, I didn't have no plans, no goals—I was nowhere. Sometimes, when I was really hurting, I didn't even want to be around my children. I had trouble sleeping at night, especially when I knew that he wasn't comfortable or was picking at everything I did. He'd start picking at things I was doing and just keep picking and those nights I was really scared. I really wanted to flee, but I didn't because of my children.*

*Right now my self-esteem is low—I don't have any get up and go. I'm so scared that he's going to be out soon. It messes up my thinking. I don't want to see him at all, and I don't know how it will work out with him seeing the children. I'm going to have real problems letting my children go with him, and I also believe that he'll come looking for me again...not at first... but later on. I keep worrying how that will go.*

When a six-year-old boy was asked what he was afraid of when his parents fight, he said:

*When they (his parents) fight and stuff...every time they fight, daddy doesn't want us (the children) to wake up because he knows we'll call the police. My daddy said if he wakes us up and he knows we'll call the police and he said he'd do something bad. He didn't say what he'd do and he looked into a door. I was scared.*

*When we went to sleep, he'd try to get right back at mommy.*

*Me and my brother didn't want to do anything to him, but we were getting mad. He was fighting about tools and stuff and he scratched her neck. I felt like sad and like scratching him back because that wasn't nice. I didn't want to because I love my daddy. I didn't like him wanting to touch my mommy and stuff.*

*I kept hearing these loud noises and woke up and saw them again and I was lucky because the police were already there. (Later) My teacher taught me that it wasn't my fault because I was crying at the day care. I miss my daddy and stuff. I want to ask the judge could you keep him away from my mommy for a while?*

The brother of this boy overheard his father say that he (the father) didn't love him anymore. He also asked the judge to tell his father not to fight anymore. This boy was having problems with aggressive behavior at his day care.

On the next page is a picture drawn by an 11-year-old boy which shows the pain and suffering he experienced witnessing domestic violence.

### **Some Facts About Children Exposed to Domestic Violence**

- It is estimated that between 3 and 10 million children each year observe domestic violence.
- Children exposed to domestic violence desperately need to feel that they and their parent/caretaker who is being abused are safe.
- Children—especially very young children are present in the overwhelming majority of domestic violence police emergencies.
- Between a third and a half of all families where women are being beaten, their children are also being physically abused by the abuser and/or sometimes the battered woman.
- Girls living in homes where there is domestic violence, are also at increased risk of being sexually abused.
- Children are at increased risk of being murdered or physically injured in the crossfire by the abuser.
- Conflicts over child custody and visitation when the partners are separated increase the child's risk for further exposure to violence.
- Parental kidnaping is one of the more serious manifestations of abusers' refusal to be stopped (more than 50% of child abductions result from domestic violence)

Very Mad



Trapped in my room as a prisoner



My dad broke my heart.

# MAD DAD



trapped forever



I'm finally free

- Juveniles in detention centers are often incarcerated for assaulting their mother's abuser while attempting to protect them from further violence.
- Many parents minimize or deny the presence of children while the mothers are being assaulted. However, interviews with children of battered women reveal that they have seen, and heard, and can describe detailed accounts of violent behavior that their mother or father never realized they had witnessed.
- Children's lives are frequently disrupted by moves to escape the domestic violence. They lose considerable school time; flee home without books, money, or changes of clothing.

### **Common Reactions of Children Exposed to Domestic Violence:**

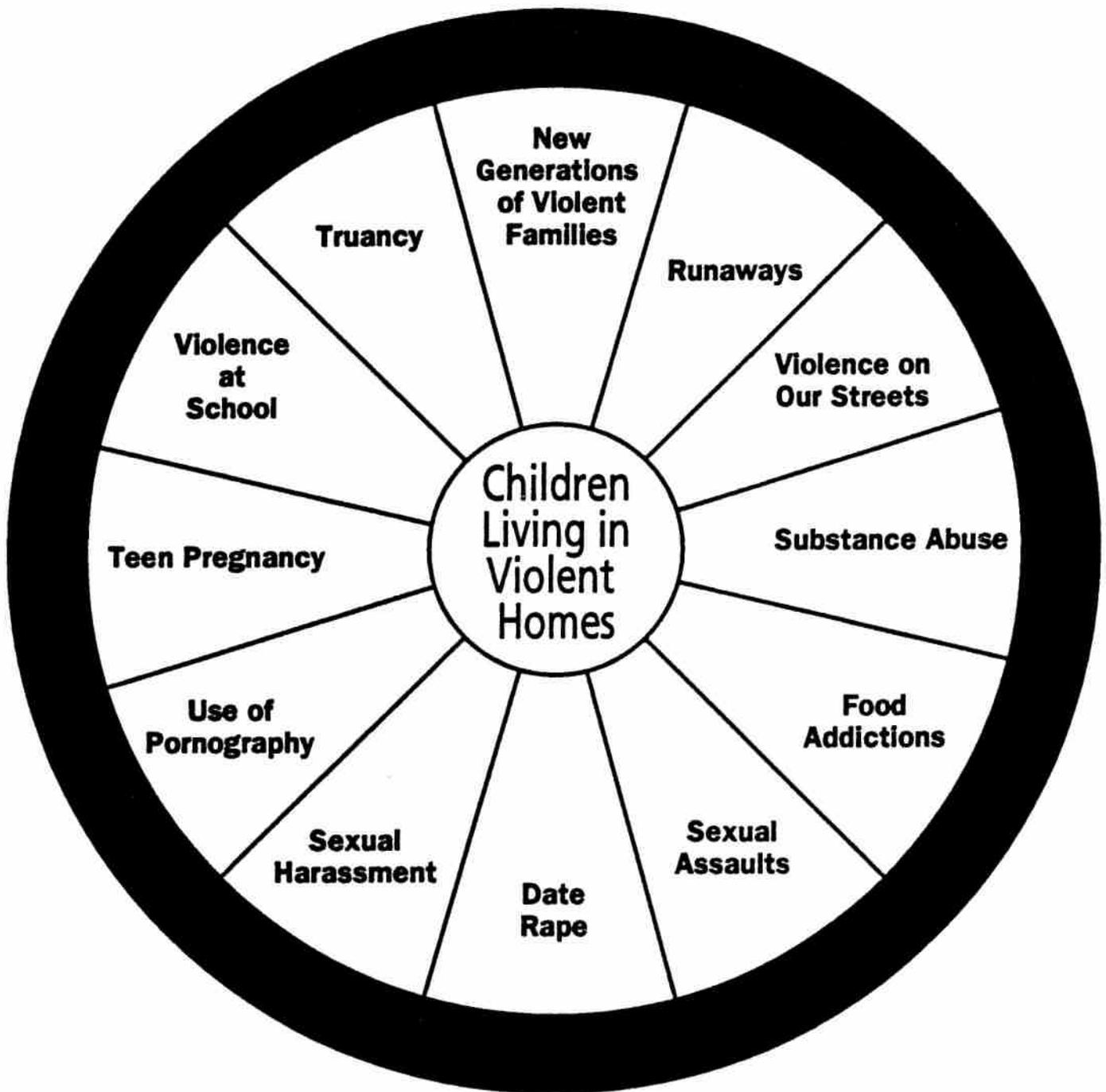
- **Isolation** - Children from violent homes may also have problems with their peers—they may be too aggressive and use some of the same control tactics that the abuser uses and consequently become isolated from friends. A sense of shame and a need to hide chaos at home from others is likely to affect their ability to express their feelings openly. They may feel they have to put on a mask to appear happy and normal when in the public eye.
- **Feeling responsible for the abuse**—A child exposed to domestic violence might think, “If I had been a good boy/girl, daddy wouldn't hit mommy.” This happens especially if parents are fighting over methods of disciplining the child.
- **Helplessness**—A child exposed to domestic violence may feel passive and dependent on others because of being unable to protect himself/herself or the abused parent.
- **Guilt for not stopping the abuse**—A child may also experience guilt about not stopping the abuse even though it is beyond the child's control.
- **Medical problems (e.g., headaches, stomachaches, asthma, ulcers)**--A child may develop physical symptoms in response to domestic violence.
- **Grief**—Children who are separated from an abusive parent may grieve over the loss of that parent. Children may also grieve over losing the life style and positive image of that parent they had before the violence began.
- **Ambivalence**—The idea of having two different emotions (e.g., love and anger or fear) at the same time about a parent is difficult for children.
- **Emotional neediness, fear of abandonment**—Children removed from one parent, or children hearing threats of homicide towards one parent, may have strong fears that one or both parents will leave or die. Very young children will often become very clingy and refuse

to leave the battered parent.

- **Fear of physical harm to themselves**—Children may worry that the abuser will find them and abduct or harm them. Another worry is that the abuser will be angry and retaliate if they return home. These are often realistic fears.
- **Embarrassment**—Especially for older children, sensitivity to the stigma of spousal abuse may result in shame.
- **Pessimism about the future and over generalization**—Many children exposed to domestic violence come to believe that all intimate relationships involve violence and problems. They may say things like, “I’ll never get married because it will lead to problems,” or “I don’t want to date boys because they are all like my father.”
- **Eating and sleeping disorders**—A child who witnesses domestic violence may exhibit a fear of sleeping and have nightmares or dreams of danger.
- **Depression**—A child exposed to domestic violence may feel sad and depressed because s/he feels responsible for causing the violence and is unable to stop it.
- **Detachment, denial of seriousness, and fantasies about normal home life**—If your child appears not to be bothered by or to barely notice when there is violence, then s/he has serious problems and must get help immediately.
- **Substance abuse and other delinquent behaviors** - Children exposed to domestic violence often have problems with school and social adjustment, higher rates of delinquency and aggression, problems with attachment, problems with substance abuse, and higher rates of suicide attempts. Many adolescent males are arrested or injured in the process of protecting their parent from the abusing parent/caretaker. Children, especially teens, may also run away, attempt suicide, and/or abuse alcohol or drugs.
- **Violence as a norm** - Some children internalize an acceptance of violence as a means of stress management and conflict resolution which are sometimes repeated in their adult relationships and parenting experiences. Male children exposed to domestic violence are at a higher risk to become abusers when they grow up. Abusers who have witnessed domestic violence as children are more likely to use severe and/or lethal violence against their partners. Thus, merely witnessing violence increases the chance that the cycle of violence will continue into the next generation.

The figure on the next page highlights how children are hurt when exposed to family violence.

# CHILDREN COPING WITH FAMILY VIOLENCE



Developed by Rita DeYoung, Hubbard House

Inspired & Adapted from the "Power & Control and Equality Wheels" • Developed by Domestic Abuse Intervention Project • 208 West 4th St. • Duluth, MN 55806 • 218/722-4134



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- **Severity of Reactions** - The seriousness and the way in which the child reacts depend on:
  - child's *age and gender*,
  - *how often and how severe the violence is*
  - the extent to which the *child sees and hears violence and verbal abuse*
  - how much *support by the victim* the child receives
  - how much *support by others* the child receives
  - if the child is the target of the abuse, feels abandoned by the abuser, or is made to feel responsible for the violence in any way

## **The Impact of Witnessing Violence at Different Ages**

### **Toddler and pre-school aged children's reactions to witnessing domestic violence**

*Toddler and pre-school aged children* who witness domestic violence may exhibit any of the following behaviors:

- aggression
- withdrawal from people
- problems with learning - slow learner
- delays in verbal development
- poor motor abilities
- general fearfulness, anxiety
- nightmares
- regressive behaviors (seems to unlearn something which was mastered at an earlier age)
- lack of confidence to begin new tasks

### **School aged children's reactions to witnessing domestic violence**

*School aged children* who witness domestic violence may exhibit any of the following behaviors:

- poor grades, may be placed in special classrooms
- poor social skills
- low self-esteem
- general aggressiveness, bullying
- violent outbursts of anger
- withdrawn, dependent
- bed wetting
- nightmares
- physical symptoms (stomach or headaches)

## **Adolescent reactions to witnessing domestic violence**

*Teenagers* who witness domestic violence may exhibit any of the following behaviors:

- poor grades, failure in school, school dropout
- low self-esteem
- refuses to bring friends home, stays away from home, isolated
- running away from home
- violent outbursts of anger
- poor judgement, irresponsible decision making, immaturity
- unable to communicate feelings
- nightmares
- bed wetting
- severe acne
- physical symptoms
- depression
- anxiety, fearfulness
- dating violence
- violence towards the abuser (while protecting the victim) or violence towards the victim (joining in on beatings of the abused parent/caretaker)
- substance abuse
- delinquency

## **What You Can Do for Your Child Exposed to Domestic Violence**

- **Get them some help.** In the District of Columbia, there is a program for children called C.O.V.E. which stands for Children Of Violent Environments run through the Department of Probation. For more information on this program, contact Department of Probation at 608-8405.
- **Recognize the dangers that your children are in and try to find ways to protect them.** Remember that if their parents do not protect them as children, they may never learn adequate ways of protecting themselves.
  - Teach yourself and your child about safety during violent incidents (see “Children’s Safety Plan” on page 9)
  - Listen to your children’s concerns and validate their feelings.
  - If the abuser has made threats to harm or has assaulted the children, consider staying at a shelter or having your children stay somewhere safe until the violence has ended

- **Recognize that children need information and explanations about what is happening.** Don't try to hide what is happening, it only makes things worse for the child.
- **Let the children know that the violence is not their fault** and they are not responsible for stopping it because they are likely to blame themselves for the violence (even if they say they don't!).
- **Let the children know that the abuser is the one with a problem and in need of help.** Children who understand that the abuser is in need of help are less likely to internalize the problem.
- **Do whatever you can to bolster your children's self-esteem** (e.g., ask them about their interests and take an interest in their accomplishments). If possible, give your child opportunities to have fun and to explore new interests.
- **Remember you still need to set limits on your children's behavior.** Don't let guilty feelings about exposing your child to abuse interfere with your ability to confront them in a nonabusive manner when they are doing something wrong.
- **Insist that the person abusing you read this information about how his or her behavior may harm your children.**

## IV. Asking For Help

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### WHAT FRIENDS AND FAMILY CAN DO TO HELP

- **Emotional support can be a tremendous value to a victim of domestic violence.** By listening to the victim, providing the victim with information, and helping the victim create a safety plan, friends and family can help the victim understand what options are available. The following steps should help friends and families aid victims:
- **Gather all the information you can about domestic violence.** Being informed of the dynamics of domestic violence as well as the options available to victims of domestic violence will help you be a better advocate for your loved one. Domestic violence hotlines (See p. ) and books from your local public library (See page 49 ) can provide family and friends with valuable sources of information.
- **Lend a sympathetic ear.** Friends or family who are willing to listen to the victim, may be one of the victim's strongest assets. Focus on listening and supporting the victim rather than placing blame or pushing the victim to make certain decisions. Do not under estimate the victim's fear of potential danger.
- **Encourage the victim to find assistance.** Hotlines, domestic violence advocates, counselors or members of the clergy may help the victim deal with her or his pain as well as providing the victim with important information. Emphasize that transformation from victim to survivor can lead to many positive outcomes (e.g., empowerment, attachment to new supportive and nurturing individuals).
- **Give the victim positive reinforcement.** Victims are often told they are inadequate mothers, girlfriends or wives. Emphasize to the victim that she is a good person and deserves a life free from violence.
- **Confront the victim about the danger her abuser is putting her through.** Remind the victim of the harm the abuser has already exhibited towards the victim. Inform the victim that the abusive behavior is going to continue.
- **Help the victim develop a safety plan.** Discuss steps the victim should take if her partner becomes abusive again (see page 2).<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Office of Justice Programs, Office for Victims of Crime, U.S. Department of Justice, *Helping the Battered Woman. A Guide For Family and Friends*, Washington, DC., 1996.

# to Help Victims of Domestic Violence COMMUNITY ACCOUNTABILITY WHEEL



This wheel *begins* to demonstrate the ideal community response to the issue of domestic violence. Community opinion, which strongly states that battering is unacceptable, leads all of our social institutions to expect full accountability from the batterer by applying appropriate consequences. This wheel was developed by Mike Jackson and David Garvin of the Domestic Violence Institute of Michigan, P.O. Box 130107, Ann Arbor, MI 48113-0107, 313/769-6334.





**CONFIDENTIALITY** - As a first step, confidentiality must be established. Discussing the possibility of victimization must occur in private. A victim of domestic abuse will not typically disclose a history of violence in the presence of her perpetrator or other family members. If she discloses the violence in his presence, it is likely she will suffer retaliation.

**ACKNOWLEDGE INJUSTICE** - Let her know that the violence perpetrated against her is not her fault. No one deserves to be abused. No one has the right to use violence and intimidation to control another person in an effort to keep them in a relationship. What has happened to her is not her fault.

**AUTONOMY** - Empowering advocacy is based on the fundamental belief that victims of domestic violence have the right to control their own lives. In the process of

victimization, control has been taken away from them. In your interaction with a victim, you can give her that control back, by respecting decisions and reaffirming that she has the right to live a life free of violence and coercion.

**SAFETY PLANNING** - What are the victim's options? Does she want to go home, to the home of a friend or family member, or to a local safe house or shelter? What has she done to protect herself in the past? If she's returning home to her partner, can she plan for a quick escape should the violence begin again? Can she call law enforcement officials for protection?

**PROMOTE ACCESS TO COMMUNITY SERVICES** - Know the resources in your community. Inform her of services available that may be able to provide additional assistance. Is there a program for battered women in your community?

**EMPOWERING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIMS**  
**Figure 8: Empowerment**

## WHAT EMPLOYERS CAN DO TO HELP

The following letter of commendation was written by U.S. Attorney Eric H. Holder to coworkers and supervisors of a battered woman. We had contact with the battered woman because her abuser attempted to kill her with a gun while she was dropping her child off at a day care. These coworkers were very important to this victim in keeping her safe at work, in helping her use of the legal system and in testifying at the trial. Feel free to give a copy of this letter to your supervisor and have them call us for any additional information about how they can assist you. The names have been changed to give the victim and her coworkers anonymity.

*Dear John Smith:*

*I would like to commend the work of your employees for their extraordinary efforts to assist an employee/coworker who was being stalked while at work. Their combined efforts significantly improved the United State's Attorney's Office attempts to prosecute the stalker and may have saved the life of the employee/coworker being stalked.*

*During the time that the stalking was escalating, your employees all worked hard to protect a employee/coworker whose former boyfriend refused to leave her alone when she chose to end a relationship with him. His stalking efforts culminated in an attempt on her life. Recently, he was convicted on 10 counts of criminal conduct, including assault with intent to kill while armed (gun), assault on a police officer, and stalking.*

*Often, when stalkers harass victims at their jobs, the victims often find that their coworkers and supervisors are, at best, unwilling to help their coworkers/employees for fear of reprisal from the stalker. It is also not unusual for victims of domestic violence to lose their jobs or to be asked to take a leave of absence until the situation is resolved. In the years of assisting victims of domestic violence, I have never seen a place of employment provide so much meaningful support and substantive assistance. It is apparent that all of the combined efforts of these three employees made a big difference in both the coworker's sense of security and in the U.S. Attorney's Office ability to prosecute this stalker.*

*Your employees gave the stalking victim substantive advise about how to effectively utilize the criminal justice system. They both encouraged this employee to report all of the incidents to appropriate authorities and encouraged her to follow through on all court matters. Before and pending the criminal conviction of the abuser, the victim's supervisor made efforts to help this employee get out of the area by examining the issue of relocation or reassignment.*

*Furthermore, your employees all thwarted the abuser's attempts to contact this employee while she was at work. As the stalking became more persistent, several phone lines were blocked, making it impossible for the stalker to directly contact his victim. Finally, the victim's supervisor ensured that this employee was given a liberal leave policy for any court involvement or emergencies that came*

*up as a result of any violence perpetrated by the coworker's stalker.*

*A coworker documented attempts by the abuser to contact their coworker and assisted her in getting home safely. They all cooperated with the U.S. Attorney's Office investigation and testified during trial. Their efforts were a tremendous asset to the successful prosecution of this stalker.*

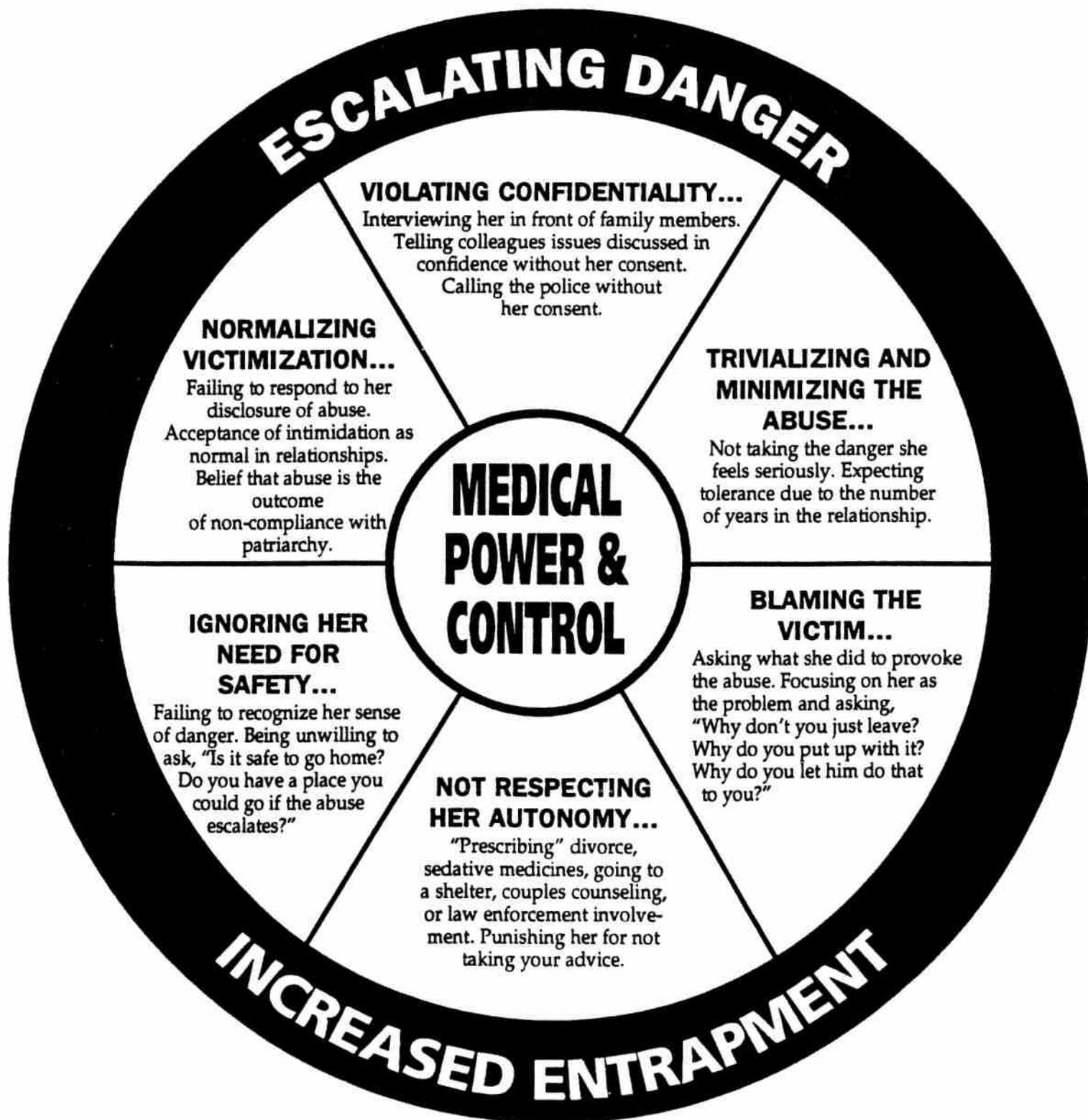
*One of your employees provided her coworker with the following additional assistance:*

- 1) She reported an incident where her coworker's stalker came to the workplace to all relevant law enforcement agencies that had jurisdiction of the stalking case. She alerted the building police (a private security company). She gave them pictures and a copy of the victim's civil protection order (CPO).*
- 2) This worker also drafted a barment letter (see attached) that was served on the stalker. She also edited and provided technical assistance on a letter that her employee wrote filing a complaint against inadequate responses made by law enforcement.*
- 3) She escorted her coworker to court for CPO hearings and to the interviews with local law enforcement. She also offered to serve as a witness in these hearings/meetings.*
- 4) Finally, this coworker was the person that really listened to her coworker's problem. She helped her calm down and directed her towards constructive actions to protect herself (e.g., advised her to document problems, contact court officials).*

*Sincerely,*

***ERIC H. HOLDER, JR.***  
*U.S. Attorney*  
*District of Columbia*

Figure 9: Medical Advocacy



Developed by the Domestic Violence Project...a hospital based advocacy program. • 6308 8th Avenue Kenosha, WI 53143 • 414/656-8502

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## **V. Resources for Victims of Domestic Violence**

### **HOTLINES AND GENERAL INFORMATION**

If your victim advocate is not available or wish to receive additional information or support you can contact one or more of the following organizations.

**National Domestic Violence Hotline** (800) 799-SAFE  
**D.C. Coalition Against Domestic Violence** (202) 783-5332

### **D.C. Hotlines and Shelters**

My Sister's Place (24-hour hotline and shelter) (202) 529-5991  
House of Ruth (24-hour hotline and shelter) (202) 347-2777  
House of Imogene (answering machine) (202) 797-7460  
Family Intake (25th & M Streets, S.W.-intake in person 4pm)  
Rape Crisis Center (Hotline) (202) 333-7273  
Suicide Hotline (202) 223-2255  
Safe Place (*Sasha Bruce: 24-hour teen hotline and counseling service*) (202) 547-7777  
Battered Lesbian Hotline (800) 224-0211  
Among Friends (202) 722-7004  
Non-emergency shelter for gays and lesbians - intake takes 2-3 weeks

### **D.C. Support and Counseling Services**

House of Ruth (202) 347-2777  
My Sister's Place (202) 529-5991  
Family Violence Intervention Program (**children and families**) (202) 608-8405  
Center for Mental Health (Anacostia) (202) 889-5255  
Center for Mental Health (Van Ness) (202) 244-7711  
Family and Child Services (N.W.)(victim and abuser treatment) (202) 289-1510  
St. Francis Center (grief counseling for victims and children) (202) 333-4880  
Rape Crisis Center (counseling and self-defense classes) (202) 333-7273  
D.C. Commission on Women (202) 939-8083  
Hermanas Unidas (202) 387-4848  
Asian/Pacific Islander Domestic Violence Resource Project (202) 364-4630  
The Korean Community Service Center (202) 882-8270  
Domestic Violence Intervention Program (**For abusers**) (202) 608-8432  
Whitman Walker Clinic, Support and Anger Management Groups (202) 797-4406

## **Reporting Abuse: Protective Services**

Protective Services for Children <i>Handles reports of <b>child neglect</b>.</i>	(202) 727-0995
Metropolitan Police Department Youth Division <i>Handles reports of child <b>physical abuse</b>.</i>	(202) 576-6762
D.C. Adult Protective Services Handles reports of physically/mentally impaired adults especially those who have been abused, neglected, or exploited (e.g., the elderly).	(202) 727-2345

## **RESOURCES FOR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIMS IN THE JUSTICE SYSTEMS**

<b>Domestic Violence Intake Center (D.C. Superior Court)</b>	(202) 879-0152
Corporation Counsel	(202) 879-0152
Emergency Domestic Relations Project	(202) 393-6290
U.S. Attorney's Office	(202) 879-7844
Metropolitan Police Department	(202) 879-7849
D.C. Coalition Against Domestic Violence	(202) 879-7851
Clerk's Office	(202) 879-0157

## **Free or Inexpensive Legal Assistance in Obtaining a Civil Protection Order (CPO)**

AYUDA (Spanish-speaking victims only)	(202) 387-0434
American University - Women and the Law Clinic	(202) 274-4140
Columbus Community Legal Services - Families and the Law Clinic	(202) 319-6788
Georgetown University Law Center - Sex Discrimination Clinic	(202) 662-9640
George Washington University Law Center - Domestic Violence Clinic	(202) 994-7463
Emergency Domestic Relations Project <i>Screens individuals for eligibility for free legal assistance. Also can refer you to "process servers". Conducts civil intake.</i>	(202) 393-6290
D.C. Corporation Counsel <i>Screens individuals for eligibility to be represented for free by own attorneys. Conducts civil intake.</i>	(202) 879-7859
D.C. Superior Court's Clerk's Office - Domestic Relations Unit <i>Can give you information about your civil protection order or take information from you about why you are unable to come to hearing</i>	(202) 879-0157

## **Assistance with Criminal Cases**

### **U.S. Attorney's Office**

Domestic Violence Victim Assistance	(202) 514-7375
Victim Witness Assistance Unit <i>(Assistance for victims other than domestic violence victims)</i>	(202) 514-7130
Domestic Violence Prosecution Unit	(202) 305-3693

## **Other Useful Resources in the Justice System**

**Crime Victim's Compensation Program** (202) 879-4216

### **D.C. Superior Court, (500 Indiana Ave N.W., WDC 20001)**

General information	(202) 879-1010
Finance Office	(202) 879-1585
Support and Paternity	(202) 879-1669
Criminal Records	(202) 879-1373

**Child Support/Custody Office** (202) 645-5301

*After applying for emergency relief through a CPO, you may also apply for permanent support, visitation and/or custody of your child through this office.*

**D.C. Department of Probation** (202) 508-1900

*Probation supervision services. Contact this number to get the name of the probation officer supervising an individual on probation.*

**D.C. Department of Parole** (202) 727-1646

*Parole supervision services. When the defendant is on parole and you want to find out who the parole officer is.*

**D.C. Jail** (202) 673-8000

**Pretrial Services** (202) 727-2944

## **GENERAL LEGAL SERVICES**

(e.g., landlord/tenant, child custody and visits, immigration)

AYUDA	(202) 387-0434
Bread for the City and Zacchaeus Free Clinic	(202) 265-2400
D.C. Bar Association of the District of Columbia (lawyer referral)	(202) 737-4700

**GENERAL LEGAL SERVICES (Cont.)**

D.C. Law Students in Court	(202) 638-4798
Legal Aid Society of the District of Columbia	(202) 628-1161
Legal Counsel for the Elderly	(202) 434-2120
Neighborhood Legal Services Program	(202) 682-2700
Washington Legal Clinic for the Homeless	(202) 872-1494
Immigration/Naturalization Services	(800) 375-5283

**HOTLINES, COUNSELING, & SHELTER SERVICES: MARYLAND & VIRGINIA****Maryland**

Maryland Alliance Against Family Violence	(410) 545-4545
Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence	(800) 634-3577

*Hotlines, Counseling Programs, and Legal Assistance:*Montgomery County:

Hotline (24 hour crisis line)	(301) 654-1881
Victim Assistance and Sexual Assault Program	(301) 217-1355
Abused Person's Program	(301) 986-5885
Bar Association of Montgomery County (Lawyer Referral)	(301) 279-9100
Legal Aid Bureau (Silver Spring)	(301) 942-8100

Prince George's County:

Family Crisis Center (hotline, shelter and counseling services)	(301) 864-9101
County Hotline (24 hour)	(301) 577-4866
Sexual Assault Center	(301) 618-3154
Commission on Women	(301) 925-5370
Legal Aid	(301) 927-6800

Anne Arundel County:

House of Ruth (Baltimore City)	(410) 889-7884
YWCA Women's Center Battered Spouse Program	(410) 222-6800
Sexual Assault Crisis Center	(410) 222-7273
Domestic Violence Legal Clinic	(410) 554-8463

Surrounding Counties:

Baltimore City Hotline	(410) 889-0840
Domestic Violence Helpline (Howard County)	(410) 997-2272

**Virginia**

Virginians Against Domestic Violence	(757) 221-0990
Virginia Hotline	(800) 838-8238

**Virginia (cont.)**

Northern Virginia Hotline	(703) 527-4077
Northern Virginia Family Services	(703) 533-9727
Virginia Lawyer Referral Services	(800) 552-7977
Legal Services of Northern Virginia	(703) 532-3733

**Fairfax:**

Hotline (24 hour)	(703) 360-7273
Women's Shelter	(703) 435-4940
The Women's Center (counseling service)	(703) 281-2657
Mental Health Center	(703) 360-6910
Fairfax Bar Association (lawyer referral)	(703) 246-3780

**Alexandria:**

Shelter and Hotline	(703) 838-4911
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**Arlington:**

Arlington County Hotline and shelter services	(703) 358-4848
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**Loudon County:**

Loudon Domestic Violence Program	(703) 777-6552
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**INFORMATION RESOURCES ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE****National** (for research and policy purposes)

Asian Women's Shelter (training materials on cultural issues)	(415) 751-7110
Battered Women's Justice Project	(800) 903-0111
Center for Prevention of Sexual and Domestic Violence	(206) 634-1903
Domestic Abuse Intervention Project (videos and workbook-/Duluth)	(218) 722-2781
Family Violence Prevention Fund	(415) 252-8900
Family Violence & Sexual Assault Institute	(903) 534-5100
Health Resource Center on Domestic Violence	(888) 792-2873
Mentor Books (Publisher of many related books)	(800) 795-6198
National Coalition Against Domestic Violence	(303) 839-1892
National College of District Attorney's (conferences)	(713) 743-1840
National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges	(800) 527-3223
National Network to End Domestic Violence	(202) 434-7405
National Resource Center on Domestic Violence	(800) 537-2238
Resource Center on Child Protection/Custody	(800) 527-3223
Texas Council on Family Violence	(512) 794-1133

## **D.C. Metropolitan Police**

**Emergency: Dial 911.**

**Non-emergency: Dial 727-4326**

### **D.C. Police Stations**

<b>Station</b>	<b>Telephone number (area code 202)</b>	
	<b>Main</b>	<b>Detectives/ Domestic Violence Unit</b>
<b>First District Station 415 4th Street, S.W.</b>	<b>727-4655</b>	<b>727-4596</b>
<b>Second District Station 3320 Idaho Avenue, N.W.</b>	<b>282-0070</b>	<b>282-0043</b>
<b>Third District Station 1620 V Street, N.W.</b>	<b>673-6815</b>	<b>673-6914</b>
<b>Fourth District Station Georgia Avenue, N.W.</b>	<b>576-6745</b>	<b>576-6726</b>
<b>Fifth District Station 1805 Bladensburg Road, N.E.</b>	<b>727-4510</b>	<b>727-4504</b>
<b>Sixth District Station 100 42nd Street, N.E.</b>	<b>727-4520</b>	<b>727-4515</b>
<b>Seventh District Station Alabama Avenue, S.E.</b>	<b>645-0011</b>	<b>645-0038</b>

## **BOOKS FOR VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

- Asher, Alexis. *Don't Let Him Hurt Me Anymore: A Self-Help Guide for Women in Abusive Relationships*. Tarzana: Burning Gate Press, 1994.
- Evans, Patricia. *The Verbally Abusive Relationship: How to Recognize It and How to Respond*. Holbrook: Bob Adams, 1992.
- Fortune, Marie. *Keeping the Faith: Questions and Answers for Abused Women*. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987.
- Hennekens, Candace A. *Healing Your Life: Recovering from Domestic Violence*. Chippewa Falls, WI: Prowriting Services and Press, 1991.
- NiCarthy, Ginny. *Getting Free: You Can End Abuse and Take Back Your Life*. 2nd ed. Seattle: Seal Press, 1986.
- Gondolf, Edward. *Men Against Women: What Every Woman Should Know about Violent Men*. Brandon, New Hampshire: Human Services Institute, 1989.
- Jones, Ann and Susan Schechter. *When Love Goes Wrong: What to Do When You Can't Do Anything Right*. New York: Harper Collins, 1992.
- White, Evelyn C. *Chain, Chain, Change: For Black Women Dealing with Physical and Emotional Abuse*. Seal Press: Seattle, WA, 1985.
- Zambrano, Myrna. *Mejor Sola Que Mal Acompañada: Para La Mujer Golpeada/ For the Latina An Abusive Relationship*. Seal Press: Seattle, WA, 1985.

## **BOOKS FOR CHILDREN EXPOSED TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

- Davis, Diane. *Something Is Wrong at My House: A Book about Parents Fighting*. Parenting Press, Inc., Seattle, WA, 1984.
- Hall, Lynn. *The Boy in the Off White Hat*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1984.
- Irwin, Hadley. *Abby, My Love*. A Margaret K. McEldery Book. New York: Atheneum, 1985.
- Magorian, Michelle. *Good Night, Mr. Tom*. New York: Harper & Row, 1982.
- Norris, Gunilla B. *Take My Walking Slow*. New York: Atheneum, 1970.

- Paris, Susan. *Mommy and Daddy are Fighting*. Seal Press, Seattle, WA, 1986.
- Roberts, W. Davis. *Don't Hurt Laurie!* New York: Atheneum, 1970.
- Wohl, Agnes and Bobbie Kaufman. *Silent Screams and Hidden Cries: An Interpretation of Artwork by Children from Violent Homes*. Brunner/Mazel Publishers, New York, 1985.
- Wright, Leslie. *I Love My Dad, But...* Is Five Press, Toronto, Ontario 1989.





## **\*\*Risk Factors for Homicide and for Re-Assault**

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1. **Has the physical violence increased in frequency during the past year?**
2. **Has the physical violence increased in severity during the past year?**
3. **Does he ever try to choke you?**
4. **Are there weapons in the home, especially a gun?**
5. **Has he ever forced you into sex when you did not wish to have sex?**
6. **Does he ever use drugs (“uppers” or amphetamines, speed, PCP, angel dust, cocaine, crack, street drugs, heroin, or mixtures) Has the frequency increased over the past year?**
7. **Does he threaten to kill you? Do you believe he is capable of killing you?**
8. **Is he drunk every day or almost every day?**
9. **Does he control most or all of your daily activities?**
10. **Have you ever been beaten by him when you are pregnant?**
11. **Is he violently and constantly jealous of you? (For instance, does he say, “If I can’t have you no one can.”)**
12. **Have you ever threatened or tried to commit suicide?**
13. **Has he ever threatened or tried to commit suicide?**
14. **Is he violent towards your children?**
15. **Is he violent outside of the home?**

**\*\* Although each person’s circumstance is unique, research done in the District of Columbia and elsewhere shows that the more questions you answer yes to, the greater the chance that you are at risk for being re-assaulted or murdered.**

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**VICTIM WITNESS ASSISTANCE UNIT**  
**in the DOMESTIC VIOLENCE UNIT**  
**United States Attorneys Office**  
**555 4th Street, N.W.**  
**Third floor**  
**Washington D.C.20001**  
**(202) 514-7375**

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