

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

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Facts about Domestic Violence:

- Between 2 and 4 million women annually are victimized by domestic violence
- In 1995, at least 21,000 domestic violence crimes against women were reported to the police every week
- Approximately 52% of women visiting hospital emergency rooms report at least one incident of violence during their lifetime
- Most children in homes in which domestic violence occurs witness that abuse and suffer secondary psychological effects, including aggressive behavior and depression
- Male children who witness abuse are more likely to become abuser themselves as adults creating a vicious, intergenerational cycle of violent behavior
- Child abuse is 15 times more likely to occur in families where domestic violence is present
- Men who have witnessed their parents' domestic violence are three times more likely to abuse their own wives than children of non-violent parents, with the sons of the most violent parents being 1000 times more likely to be wife beaters
- Children who witness violence at home display emotional and behavioral disturbances as diverse as withdrawal, low self-esteem, nightmares, self-blame and aggression against peers, family members and property
- Over 3 million children are at risk of exposure to parental violence each year

Potential Indicators of Domestic Abuse

Women: In general, women who are physically abused are often isolated. Their partners tend to control their lives to a great extent as well as verbally degrade them. Some examples follow:

- The woman mentions not being able to use the telephone
- She is forbidden from seeing friends unless he goes along
- She is not allowed in the decision making process at home
- The man has exclusive control over all money and household financial matters

- He won't let her learn to drive, go to school or get a job
- She is limited in her freedom as a child would be. For example "go to the store, get milk and come straight home, it should only take you 15 minutes."
- Many times women complain of non-specific aches and pains that are constant and recurring which may be stress related problems

Common Characteristics of Battered Women:

She may:

- Have low self-esteem
- Believe all the myths about battering relationships
- Be a traditionalist about the home, may strongly believe in family unit and the prescribed feminine sex-role stereotypes
- Accept responsibility for the batterer's actions
- Suffer from guilt, yet deny the terror and she feels
- Have severe stress reactions with psychophysiological complaints
- Use sex as a way to establish intimacy
- Believe that no one will be able to help her resolve her predicament

Common Characteristics of the Batterer:

He may:

- Have low self-esteem
- Believe all the myths about battering relationships
- Be a traditionalist believing in male supremacy and the stereotyped masculine sex role in the family
- Blame others for his actions
- Be pathologically jealous
- Present a dual personality
- Have severe stress reactions during which he uses drinking and battering to cope
- Frequently use sex as an act of aggression to enhance his self-esteem in view of warning virility
- Not believe his violent behavior should have negative consequences

EMERGENCY PHONE NUMBERS:

1. **CHOICES: 224-4663**
2. **THE SOUNDING BOARD: 231-1164**