Understanding Domestic Violence
A-B Tech
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HELPMATE, INC

A domestic violence agency working with our community to eliminate abuse and fear
HELPMATE SERVICES
Free & Confidential!

- 24-Hour Hotline: 828-254-0516
- Individual Counseling
- Weekly Support Groups
- Temporary Emergency Shelter
- Court Advocacy
- Child & Family Advocacy
- Case Mgmt. & Referrals
- Community Education
- Professional Training
Domestic Violence Statistics

- According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics Crime Data Brief, men account for approximately 15% of the victims of reported intimate partner violence (February, 2003)

- 1 in every 4 women will experience domestic violence in her lifetime (National Institute of Justice & Centers of Disease Control and Prevention, 2000)

- Women ages 16-24 experience the highest per capita rates of non-fatal intimate partner violence (Bureau of Justice Report: IPV, May 2000)

- So far this year in N.C.—54 women, men, and children have been killed as a result of family violence (NC Coalition Against Domestic Violence)
Statistics Related to Children

 Witnessing violence between one’s parents or caretakers is the strongest risk factor for repeated patterns of victimization and violent behavior in the next generation (Break the Cycle, 2006)

 There is a common link between domestic violence and child abuse. Among victims of child abuse, 40% report domestic violence in the home (World Health Organization, 2002)

 Infants and small children who are exposed to violence in the home experience so much added emotional stress that it can harm the development of their brains and impair cognitive and sensory growth (Journal of Development & Psychopathology, 2003)

 The U.S. Advisory Board on Child Abuse and Neglect suggests that domestic violence may be the single major precursor to child abuse and neglect fatalities in this country (1995)
Domestic Violence Does Not Discriminate!

It can happen to anyone regardless of:

- Age
- Socio-Economic Status
- Education Level
- Race or Ethnicity
- Sexual Orientation
- Religious Beliefs
WHAT IS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE?
Definition of Domestic Violence

- It is a *pattern* of coercion and control perpetrated by a current or former intimate partner against the other. It usually includes one or more of the following forms of abuse:
  - EMOTIONAL / PSYCHOLOGICAL
  - SEXUAL
  - PHYSICAL
  - ECONOMIC
Domestic Violence:

- Is about power and control
- Is rarely an isolated incident
- Increases & worsens with time
- Is between intimate / formerly intimate partners
- Can also involve family members
- Is a learned behavior
Characteristics of An Abusive Personality

- Wants quick involvement
- Displays jealousy & accusatory behavior
- Exhibits controlling behavior
- Has unrealistic expectations
- Attempts to isolate
- Externalizes blame
- Can be cruel to animals or children
- Has a past history of domestic violence
- Verbal / mental abuse
- “Dr. Jekyll / Mr. Hyde”
- Uses threats of violence
- Breaks objects
- Uses force during arguments
CYCLE OF ABUSE

Tension Building

Explosion

Reality Phase

Honeymoon
A VICTIM SEEKS HELP OR LEAVES THE RELATIONSHIP 7-10 TIMES ON AVERAGE BEFORE LEAVING THEIR ABUSIVE PARTNER PERMANENTLY

Leaving an abusive relationship is often a very gradual process. It is important to be supportive and to give information about local resources that can help.
Examples of Physical & Sexual Abuse
Nonviolence

Negotiation and Fairness
Seeking mutually satisfying resolutions to conflict • accepting change • being willing to compromise.

Non-threatening Behavior
Talking and acting so that she feels safe and comfortable expressing herself and doing things.

Economic Partnership
Making money decisions together • making sure both partners benefit from financial arrangements.

Respect
Listening to her non-judgmentally • being emotionally affirming and understanding • valuing opinions.

Shared Responsibility
Mutually agreeing on a fair distribution of work • making family decisions together.

Trust and Support
Supporting her goals in life • respecting her right to her own feelings, friends, activities and opinions.

Responsible Parenting
Sharing parental responsibilities • being a positive non-violent role model for the children.

Honesty and Accountability
Accepting responsibility for self • acknowledging past use of violence • admitting being wrong • communicating openly and truthfully.
Why Victims Stay:

**Situational factors**
- Economic dependence
- Fear (of greater physical danger, of losing custody of children, of homelessness, of court processes, etc)
- Lack of alternative housing
- Lack of job skills
- Lack of outer support systems
- Cultural or religious beliefs
- Language barriers
- Rural isolation

**Emotional factors**
- Fear of loneliness
- Fear that partner will not be able to make it alone
- Love
- Belief or hope that partner will change
- Guilt or self-blame about failure of relationship
- Shame
- Insecurity over potential independence and lack of emotional support
Research shows that children who live in households affected by DV often experience multiple layers of emotional, developmental, and behavioral problems. These issues may be short-lived or may last well into adulthood.
Effects on Young Children

- Sleep & eating difficulties
- Diarrhea & stomach aches
- Separation anxiety
- Failure to Thrive
- Learned Helplessness
- Poor motor & cognitive abilities
- Delay in verbal development
- Delay in social skills
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Withdrawal
- Excessive aggressiveness, anger, or fearfulness
- Academic difficulties
- Often diagnosed with learning disabilities
- May get caught in the crossfire during assaults
EFFECTS ON ADOLESCENTS

- May attempt to run away
- Sexual precocity & pregnancy
- Suicidal or homicidal thoughts
- Substance abuse
- Eating disorders
- Poor development of communication and social skills
- Avoids getting close to others (may be embarrassed of home situation)
- Poor development of empathy levels due to lack of parental responsiveness
- More negatively influenced by media messages
- May try to physically stop the violence and get hurt as a result
- At much greater risk for being involved in an abusive dating relationship
LONG-TERM EFFECTS ON CHILDREN & ADOLESCENTS

- PTSD
- Low self-esteem
- Depression / Anxiety
- Criminal behavior
- Drug & alcohol addictions
- Boys who witness DV are more likely to become abusers
- Girls who witness DV are more likely to become victims
Safety Plan

- Keep an extra set of car keys in a place where your abuser cannot find them.
- Keep your cell phone on you at all times.
- Keep a bag of personal belongings and a list of important phone #s in a separate place in case you need to leave quickly.
- Gather copies of important documents: social security cards (for you and your children), birth certificates, marriage license, immigration papers, etc. Keep some paycheck stubs for income verification.
- Open a savings account in your own name.
- Keep a list of prescription #s so you can refill medications if you have to leave quickly.
- During arguments, avoid rooms that might have potential weapons (i.e. the kitchen) and begin moving in the direction of an exit during arguments so you can get out quickly if you need to.
- Develop an escape plan and go over this plan with your children. Teach your children how to dial 911 and come up with a code word that will signal to them that they need to call for help.
THANK YOU!
Helpmate appreciates the opportunity to create awareness about domestic abuse!