

Facts About Domestic Violence

Domestic violence is a serious problem nationally. It is a type of abuse. It involves injuring someone, usually a spouse or partner, but it can also be a parent, child, or other family member.

Domestic violence is the most common cause of injury to women ages 15 to 44. Victims may suffer physical injuries such as bruises or broken bones. They may suffer emotionally from depression, anxiety or social isolation.

It is hard to know exactly how common domestic violence is, because people often don't report it. There is no typical victim. It happens among people of all ages. It affects those of all levels of income and education.

Unfortunately, domestic abuse often is not easily recognized.

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF:

- Are you ever afraid of your partner?
- Has your partner ever actually hurt or threatened to hurt you physically or someone you care about?
- Does your partner ever force you to engage in sexual activities that make you feel uncomfortable?
- Do you constantly worry about your partner's moods and change your behavior to deal with them?
- Does your partner try to control where you go, what you do, and who you see?
- Does your partner constantly accuse you of having affairs?
- Have you stopped seeing family or friends to avoid your partner's jealousy or anger?
- Does your partner control your finances?
- Does he/she threaten to kill him/herself if you leave?



- Does your partner claim his/her temper is out of control due to alcohol, drugs, or because he/she had an abusive childhood?

If you answer yes to some or all of these questions, you could be suffering abuse. Remember you are not to blame, and you need not face domestic violence alone.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE BEING ABUSED

While you cannot stop your partner's abuse – only he or she can do that – you can find help and support for yourself:

- Talk with someone you trust: a friend or relative, a neighbor, co-worker, or religious or spiritual advisor.
- Tell your physician, nurse, psychiatrist, or therapist about the abuse.
- Call the National Domestic Violence Hotline (1-800-799-SAFE) or Alternative for Battered Women (232-7353; TTY:232-1741).
- Call 9-1-1, if you are in danger.

Remember, you know the situation better than anyone else. Don't let someone talk you into doing something that isn't right for you.

This article contains information from the American Psychiatric Association.