



Domestic violence takes many forms; help is available

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Domestic violence is generally categorized into three different types: child abuse, elder abuse or partner abuse.

Partner abuse is defined as any type of abuse between a married couple, a couple who lives together or a couple who are in (or were in) an intimate relationship with each other.

Historically, the primary perpetrator of the violence is the male, although there are certainly situations where the opposite is the case.

Domestic violence is thought to be the most underreported crime in the United States. Three to four million women are abused each year, according to the National Clearinghouse on Domestic Violence. Thirty percent of female homicide victims are killed by their partner or ex-partner, according to the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Women are particularly vulnerable when they are leaving or just after they have left a relationship. There is a complex interaction of cultural and societal norms along with a tradition of domestic violence being a "private affair" that leads to the continuation of this problem. Not until modern times has domestic violence even been considered a crime.

Domestic violence is a learned behavior and is not caused by excessive drinking or drug use. The best predictor of domestic violence is when an individual grows up in a violent family. Some characteristics of men who are violent toward women are:

- They tend to want to dominate the relationship; they want to have the power and control in the

relationship;

- They tend to have more traditional views of the roles of men and women;
- They tend to have a quick temper and are angered easily;
- They tend to be jealous;
- They tend to manipulate and threaten others;
- They may abuse alcohol and or drugs.

This is certainly not a complete list of characteristics, and we need to remember that not all abusers are the same and may vary significantly in their personalities.

When we think of domestic violence we usually think about some type of assault, such as hitting, slapping or physical restraint in some way.

However, there are other forms of violence as well.

Emotional abuse and intimidation are usually how the abuse begins. Often, there is the isolation of one's partner to control and abuse.

Financial or economic abuse occurs when the abuser controls the money a couple has. Coercion and threats are used to gain control. Sexual abuse is used to humiliate and control.

Abuse also takes place through the manipulating of children, which might include custody issues and visitation schedules.

Domestic violence often will take place in a cycle. A violent event will occur, followed by an apology and a period of harmony and calm between the couple. Over time, tension begins to build, leading to another violent

episode. The pattern repeats itself, often time and time again.

Help is available today, unlike in the past, for both victims and perpetrators of domestic violence.

Since 1981, women and children have been able to seek shelter from an abusive situation at Albion Fellows Bacon Center. Services include temporary housing along with counseling and support groups.

For more information, or assistance call (812) 422-5622. Similar services also are available at the YWCA by calling (812) 422-1191.

Help also is available for men who have a domestic abuse history. They can participate either voluntarily or by court requirement in the Domestic Abuse Intervention Program (DAIP). This program includes counseling and education about domestic violence, with emphasis on changing the abusive, controlling behavior. For more information or referral to DAIP, call the Mulberry Center at (812) 423-4700.

It's never too late to seek help from a professional. Remember to keep yourself and your family safe and know that you are not alone. Help is available in our community.

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