



UNDERSTANDING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE:

AM I ABUSED?



**Domestic
Violence
Services**

OF BENTON &
FRANKLIN COUNTIES

- What is domestic violence?
- Where do I get help?
- How do I help someone I know?

RIGHTS IN A RELATIONSHIP

⦿ The right to respect and goodwill from your partner. ⦿

⦿ The right to emotional support. ⦿

**⦿ The right to be heard by your partner ⦿
and be responded to with courtesy.**

**⦿ The right to have your feelings and experiences ⦿
acknowledged as real and valid.**

**⦿ The right to clear and informative answers ⦿
to questions that concern you.**

⦿ The right to live free from criticism and judgment. ⦿

⦿ The right to live free from accusation and blame. ⦿

⦿ The right to encouragement. ⦿

⦿ The right to live free from emotional and physical threats. ⦿

⦿ The right to be respectfully asked, rather than “ordered.” ⦿

⦿ The right to live free from angry outbursts and rage. ⦿

Information in packet courtesy of: Molly Kuespert, M.Ed., LMHC, *Getting Free* by Ginny McCarthy, *Why Does He Do That* by Lundy Bancroft, www.ncadv.org, www.endabuse.org, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (samsha.gov), Domestic Abuse Intervention Project (duluth-model.org).

WHAT IS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE?

Domestic Violence is a pattern of power and control. Domestic violence comes in many forms, including emotional, verbal, physical, sexual, and/or financial abuse. It is a common myth that it is only domestic violence when there is physical abuse, in fact many victims never experience physical violence. **Emotional and verbal abuse are the most common forms of domestic violence and are often more damaging and difficult to recover from than physical violence.**

Many women ask if they are abused. The following checklists were developed by Ginny McCarthy, author of Getting Free to help the individual define the behaviors of their intimate partner.

EMOTIONAL ABUSE

Emotional abuse is sometimes harder to define and recognize. How many of these things has your partner done to you?

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ignores your feelings. | <input type="checkbox"/> Ridicules or insults women as a group. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Continually criticizes you, calls you names, shouts at you. | <input type="checkbox"/> Ridicules or insults your most valued beliefs, your religion, race, heritage, or class. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Withholds approval, appreciation or affection as punishments. | <input type="checkbox"/> Refuses to socialize with you. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Humiliates you in private or public. | <input type="checkbox"/> Keeps you from working, controls your money, makes all the decisions. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Regularly threatens to leave or tells you to leave. | <input type="checkbox"/> Takes car keys or money away. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Constantly accuses you of having affairs. | <input type="checkbox"/> Threatens to hurt you or your family. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Manipulates you with lies and contradictions (crazy-making). | <input type="checkbox"/> Punishes or deprives the children if you leave him. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Emotional blackmail. | <input type="checkbox"/> Tells you about his affairs. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Refuses to work or share. | |

Below are more in depth breakdowns of four facets of emotional abuse:

Verbal Abuse

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Talks to you as if you were a child. | <input type="checkbox"/> Constant put-downs. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ridicules your appearance. | <input type="checkbox"/> Threatens to kill you, himself or others. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Threatens to take children and leave. | <input type="checkbox"/> Belittles important things you've accomplished |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tells you that you are stupid, ugly and dumb... | <input type="checkbox"/> Tells you that you are an unfit mother. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Embarrasses you in public. | <input type="checkbox"/> Tells your children hurtful thing about you. |

Isolation

- Won't let you have or use phone or listens in on phone calls.
- Won't allow you to attend family functions or to invite people over.
- Maintains a good public image so other won't believe you.
- Gets others to turn against you.
- Moves you away from family and friends.
- Insists you come home immediately after work.
- Creating conflict and drama with friends and family so you are embarrassed to be around them or avoid them to not cause trouble.

Financial Control

- Doesn't provide enough money to buy groceries or pay other bills.
- Puts all bills solely in your name.
- Destroys your possessions.
- Makes you account for every penny spent.
- Controls the checkbook and/or all knowledge of assets/finances
- Doesn't provide adequate clothing, food or housing.
- Spends family funds on drugs or alcohol.

Intimidation / Threats of Violence

- Being physical without actually hurting you
 - Raises his fist at you.
 - Punches walls.
 - Kicks in doors.
 - Destroys your personal things.
 - Blocking your path.
 - Driving recklessly.
 - Towering over you.
- Keeps you awake all night.
- Bullying (threatening to do or not do something to make you do what he wants)
 - Threatens to take the children and leave.
 - Threatens to kill you, himself or other loved ones.
 - Cruelty to animals and/or children
- Being on the offensive so you are constantly fearful of setting him off.

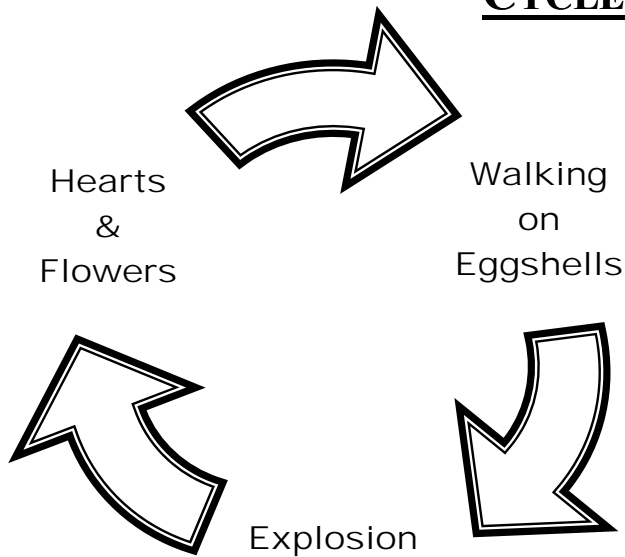
PHYSICAL ABUSE

- Pushes or shoves you.
- Holds you to keep you from leaving.
- Slaps or bites you.
- Hits or punches you.
- Throws objects at you.
- Locks you out of the house.
- Abandons you in dangerous places.
- Refuses to help when you were sick, injured or pregnant.
- Subjects you to reckless driving or keeps you from driving.
- Demands or pressures you for sex.
- Threatens or hurts you with weapons.

SEXUAL ABUSE

- Criticizes you sexually.
- Insists on unwanted and uncomfortable touching.
- Withholds sex and affection.
- Demands you to strip or participate in sex acts that you are uncomfortable with.
- Publicly shows sexual interest in other women or has affairs with other women.
- Demands or pressures you to have sex after a beating or when you are sick.
- Commits sadistic sexual acts.

CYCLE OF VIOLENCE



In some relationships there is a pattern of behavior. The abuse is rarely a one-time-only event – usually the attacks will increase in number and seriousness.

No matter what you do – the abuser will always find new reasons to explode. The violence isn't about your behavior – it is about the abuser wanting power and control and manipulating you to achieve it.

"Hearts & Flowers": usually follows the explosion and typically the abuser apologizes, "I'm sorry. It will never happen again. I love you." The promises, crying, buying of gifts, or threatening suicide if the victim leaves – you want to believe it. The problem is minimized. The hope is that this time will be different... Things are often very good during this phase – this is the person you love and want to be with – you just want the other phases to stop and everything will be ok!

However, this good period can't last because nothing has changed – the same values, thoughts and habits are all still there. Being kind and loving just becomes a different way to control a manipulate you:

- ♦ His spurts of kindness and generosity help him feel good about himself.
- ♦ He hooks you back into the relationship by being warm and trusting – then uses that against you in the future.
- ♦ He uses the good periods to shape his public image – making it harder for people to believe you.

Remorse: the remorse is often genuine, but what he mostly feels bad about is:

- ♦ He damaged his image in other people's eyes.
- ♦ He feels he should be able to control you without resorting to abuse.
- ♦ He feels entitled to blame his outburst on you, thereby ridding himself of any guilty feelings.

Tension Building: Eventually the cycle begins again with tension building, where you feel like you are “walking on eggshells.” No matter what you do, it isn't right. Because it isn't about your behavior – it is about his need for power and control.

This phase begins with emotional abuse: belittling, nitpicking, jealousy, threats... It may or may not escalate to include forms of physical violence.

Explosion: is when the tension builds to the assault – this may be emotional, verbal, physical or take many different forms.

This cycle will happen over and over...and over again. It is NEVER the victim's fault for the abuse.

RED FLAGS FOR BATTERING PERSONALITY

Abusive men work very hard to create and maintain the fantasy of a perfect relationship. He is often “Mr. Wonderful” in the beginning, and you may have felt very drawn to him because he made you feel special and cared for. It often takes time for his abusive characteristic to be revealed.

Quick Involvement

Extreme Jealousy

Constant Criticism

Controlling Behavior

Sometimes this is done by wearing you down with complaints and nagging rather than obvious behavior so that it seems you are making your own choice. (Such as when you slowly stop hanging out with your best friend because he makes negative comments about her.)

Hypersensitivity

- If you complain about anything, he accuses you of nagging or blames you for starting the fight.
- His feelings are the ones always hurt.

Entitlement

- He overvalues his time and efforts (at work or at home), and devalues yours.
- Expects you to always be focused on his needs and feelings.
- Feels put upon if you ask anything of him.
- No matter how much you try to do it is never enough.
- Demands his needs be met at all times - what ever he wants, when ever he wants.
- Narcissism (he is the center of the universe)

Manipulation

- Dr. Jekyll & Mr. Hide - changing his mood abruptly and frequently.
- Acting like he is the only one who knows what is best for you and your children.
- Getting you and/or others to feel sorry for him.

Crazy Making

- Denying the obvious about what he is doing or feeling.
- Changing the subject in a fight.
- Telling you that you are the one overreacting, are crazy and need counseling.
- Twisting words – insisting that you are saying, thinking or feeling things you are not.

Intimidation

- Cruelty to animals and/or children
- “Playful” use of force in sex

Isolation

Lack of Accountability

- Blames others for his feelings, his problems, abusive behavior.

Abusers typically deny, minimize, make excuses, and blame others for their behavior.

EFFECTS OF ABUSER BEHAVIOR ON WOMEN

Studies have shown there are no personality characteristics that are universally shared by any majority of victims.

The trauma of experiencing abuse on a regular basis can impact a person tremendously and may result in many different effects. Often these symptoms of trauma are used as reasons why victims are to blame for the abuse.

- ◇ Low self-esteem and lack of confidence.
 - Difficulty making decisions.
 - Difficulty trusting yourself or others.
 - Fears about life.
 - Self-blame, guilt or shame.

- ◇ Feelings of helplessness and hopelessness.
 - Feeling trapped
 - Dependence – “I can’t be on my own.”
 - Confusions – “Why do I stay?”
 - Despair

- ◇ Mental health problems.
 - Depression
 - Anxiety
 - PTSD
 - Obsessive Compulsive Disorders

- ◇ Health problems or chronic illness.
 - The stress of living with trauma can cause physical symptoms.

- ◇ Coping abuse
 - Substance abuse
 - Gambling
 - Eating disorders (including overeating)
 - Compulsive spending or shoplifting
 - Excessive working out
 - Sexually acting-out
 - Cutting or self-harm

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND DRUG & ALCOHOL ABUSE

Many women facing issues of domestic violence also face issues of drug or alcohol abuse; their own or their partner's.

Both Domestic Violence and Chemical Dependency:

- Involve power & control dynamics.
- Impact entire families, often harming multiple generations.
- Thrive in silence and isolation.
- Carry great social stigma and shame.
- Involve denial, including minimizing and rationalizing.

Substance abuse can increase the risks of dealing with domestic violence:

- Abuser may be more willing to use violence when using.
- You may be less able to remember your safety plan when you use.
- You may be more likely to be arrested because of drug use or drug related crimes.
- You may be judged more harshly by other systems such as police, courts and CPS if you use.

Substance abuse can be used as a weapon by an abuser:

- He takes risks while intoxicated endangering you and/or the children.
- He forces you to assist in illegal behaviors.
- He threatens to return to alcohol or drug use if you do not meet his demands.
- He blames you for problems caused by his addiction.
- He pressures and manipulates you into becoming substance involved.
- He threatens to tell others about your addictions. (Especially to police, courts or CPS)

Relapse Prevention / Safety Planning

- List people, places and things that help you stay safe and clean (including phone numbers and help-lines).
- List people, places and things to avoid if you are trying to stay safe & clean.
- If you must be exposed to people, places and things that are dangerous or triggers for you, list what you can do to increase support for your safety and sobriety.
- If you are going to use, make plans for children, safety, housing, safe sex, and things that may reduce harm.

BUILDING SELF ESTEEM

Things You Can Do Right Away—Every Day—to Raise Your Self-esteem

- Pay attention to your own needs and wants.
- Take time to do things you enjoy.
- Get something done that you have been putting off.
- Do things that make use of your own special talents and abilities.
- Dress in clothes that make you feel good about yourself.
- Give yourself rewards
- Spend time with people who make you feel good about yourself— people who treat you well. Avoid people who treat you badly.
- Make your living space a place that honors the person you are.
- Begin doing those things that you know will make you feel better about yourself—like eating healthy, beginning an exercise program or keeping your living space clean.
- Do something nice for another person.
- Make it a point to treat yourself well every day.

Get rid of negative self-talk

You may think these thoughts or give yourself these negative messages so often that you are hardly aware of them. Pay attention to them. Carry a small pad with you as you go about your daily routine for several days and jot down negative thoughts about yourself whenever you notice them.

Ask yourself the following questions about each negative thought you have noticed:

- Is this message really true?
- Would I say this to another person? If not, why am I saying it to myself?
- What do I get out of thinking this thought? If it makes me feel badly about myself, why not stop thinking it?

You can work on changing your negative thoughts to positive ones by —

- Replacing the negative thought with the positive one every time you realize you are thinking the negative thought.
- Repeating your positive thought over and over to yourself, out loud whenever you get a chance and even sharing them with another person if possible.
- Writing them over and over.
- Making signs that say the positive thought, hanging them in places where you would see them often—like on your refrigerator door or on the mirror in your bathroom—and repeating the thought to yourself several times when you see it.

You can also fold a piece of paper in half to make two columns, use one side to write negative thoughts and the other side to write the corresponding positive thought. For example:

<u>Negative Thought</u>	<u>Positive Thought</u>
I am not worth anything.	I am a valuable person.
I have never accomplished anything.	I have accomplished many things.
I always make mistakes.	I do many things well.
I am a jerk.	I am a great person.
I don't deserve a good life.	I deserve to be happy and healthy.
I am stupid.	I am smart.

It helps to reinforce the positive thought if you repeat it over and over to yourself when you are deeply relaxed, like when you are doing a deep-breathing or relaxation exercise, or when you are just falling asleep or waking up.

Changing the negative thoughts you have about yourself to positive ones takes time and persistence. If you use the following techniques consistently for four to six weeks, you will notice that you don't think these negative thoughts about yourself as much. If they recur at some other time, you can repeat these activities. Don't give up. You deserve to think good thoughts about yourself.

Make affirming lists

Making lists, rereading them often, and rewriting them from time to time will help you to feel better about yourself. If you have a journal, you can write your lists there. If you don't, any piece of paper will do.

Make a list of —

- At least five of your strengths, for example, persistence, courage, friendliness, creativity
- At least five things you admire about yourself, for example the way you have raised your children, your good relationship with your brother, or your spirituality
- The five greatest achievements in your life so far, like recovering from a serious illness, graduating from high school, or learning to use a computer
- At least 20 accomplishments - they can be as simple as learning to tie your shoes, to getting an advanced college degree
- 10 ways you can "treat" or reward yourself that don't include food and that don't cost anything, such as walking in woods, window-shopping, watching children playing on a playground, gazing at a baby's face or at a beautiful flower, or chatting with a friend
- 10 things you can do to make yourself laugh
- 10 things you could do to help someone else

Unhealthy Relationship

Healthy Relationship

Coercion and Threats:

- ◆ Making and/or carrying out threats to do something to hurt you.
- ◆ Threatening to leave you, commit suicide, report you to CPS.
- ◆ Making you drop charges.
- ◆ Making you do illegal things.

Negotiation and Fairness:

- ◆ Being willing to compromise.
- ◆ Accepting change
- ◆ Seeking mutually satisfying resolutions to conflict.

Intimidation:

- ◆ Making you afraid by using looks, actions, and gestures.
- ◆ Smashing things. Destroying your property.
- ◆ Abusing pets.
- ◆ Displaying weapons.

Non-threatening behavior

- ◆ Feeling safe to be yourself.
- ◆ Talking and acting so that you feel safe expressing yourself and doing thing.
- ◆ Doesn't try to control your life.

Emotional abuse:

- ◆ Putting you down. Calling you names.
- ◆ Making you feel bad about yourself.
- ◆ Making you think or feel crazy.
- ◆ Making you feel guilty.

Respect

- ◆ Listening to you non-judgmentally.
- ◆ Being understanding.
- ◆ Values your opinions.

Isolation:

- ◆ Controlling what you do, who you see, and who you talk to, what you read, where you go.
- ◆ Limiting your involvement with friends or activities.
- ◆ Using jealousy to justify isolating behavior.

Trust and support

- ◆ Supports your goals.
- ◆ Able to have a life outside of the relationship.
- ◆ Respecting your rights to your own feelings, friends, activities and opinion.

Minimizing, denying and blaming:

- ◆ Making light of the abuse.
- ◆ Not taking your concerns seriously.
- ◆ Saying the abuse didn't happen or is your fault.

Honesty and Accountability

- ◆ Accepts responsibility for abusive behavior.
- ◆ Acknowledge his past use of violence.
- ◆ Communicates openly and truthfully.

Using children:

- ◆ Making you feel guilty about the children.
- ◆ Using the children to relay messages.
- ◆ Using visitation to harass you.
- ◆ Threatening to take the children away.

Responsible Parenting

- ◆ Shares parental responsibility.
- ◆ Is a positive non-violent role model for the children.

Economic Abuse:

- ◆ Preventing you from getting or keeping a job.
- ◆ Making you ask for or taking your money.
- ◆ Spending family money recklessly.
- ◆ Not letting you know about or have access to family income.

Economic Partnership

- ◆ Making money decisions together.
- ◆ Ability to talk about money openly and honestly.
- ◆ Making sure you both benefit from financial arrangements.

Male Privilege:

- ◆ Treating you like a servant.
- ◆ Making all the big decisions.
- ◆ Acting like "master of the house."

Shared Responsibility

- ◆ Mutually agreeing on distribution of household duties.
- ◆ Making family decisions together.

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IMPACTS OF ABUSER BEHAVIOR ON CHILDREN

Even if the child has not directly witnessed abuse, almost all children know that the violence is going on in their home and are affected by it in some way.

There are lots of things we can do to help children when they have witnessed domestic violence. It is normal for people who have been in a violent relationship to NOT want to talk to their kids about it. It is difficult to realize that your children are aware of the violence and are impacted by it. It may seem like not talking about it will help them forget it happened. But not talking about the violence often causes kids to be more confused and scared.

How to Talk to Kids about Domestic Violence:

- ♦ Be patient. Don't push it. Try another time if they don't want to talk/listen.
- ♦ Talk about it at a time when you are both relaxed and won't be interrupted.
- ♦ Remember that you are helping them by talking about it; you are not making it worse.

When you talk to your kids about the violence you might find out they have been more affected than you were aware of. It is not easy to hear about your children's bad feelings and fears. Most parents feel responsible and that they have not been a good parent. Remember that you are doing the best thing you can do right now to help them recover.

Know that when you talk to your children about the violence you are helping them to:

- ♦ Feel safer.
- ♦ Learn that violence isn't their fault.
- ♦ Learn that violence is not the way to solve problems.
- ♦ Feel cared for and understood.
- ♦ Learn that it is OK to talk about their feelings.

It is a lot scarier for kids when no one ever talks to them about the violence.

Resiliency

Most children are very resilient, meaning they can recover naturally with help from their mother and from other supportive, non-violent people in their lives, rather than professionals.

When to Get Counseling for Your Child

If you notice any of the reactions listed below in your children lasting for an extended period of time without improvement, or if they have extreme changes in behavior, it may be necessary to seek counseling for them:

- | | |
|---|---|
| ♦ Withdrawing | ♦ Running away from home |
| ♦ Bullying, threatening or intimidating others | ♦ Intentionally hurting her/himself |
| ♦ Initiating physical fights | ♦ Having frequent nightmares for a prolonged period |
| ♦ Using a weapon | ♦ Showing a sudden change in behavior/personality |
| ♦ Being physically or emotionally cruel to people | ♦ Changes in eating/sleeping patters |
| ♦ Being cruel to animals | ♦ Showing lack of interest in friends/school/etc. |
| ♦ Deliberately destroying others' property | ♦ Grades change at school. |

HELPING CHILDREN DEVELOP IN HEALTHY WAYS

Even though your children may have been affected by domestic violence, they can recover and be emotionally healthy, especially if they receive encouragement and support in the following ways:

1. **Encourage your children:** Notice your children's positive qualities and let them know that you appreciate these.
2. **Set clear limits:** Set limits that are reasonable and appropriate to your children's ages, to help them feel valued and secure.
3. **Set routines and structure:** Children thrive in structured homes, where there is set meal times, play times and bed times. It helps them feel safe and secure.
4. **Listen carefully:** Pay attention to what your children say, and let them know you hear what they are saying.
5. **Be affectionate:** Hug, kiss, pat, and smile at your children. Tell them you care for them.
6. **Allow them to solve problems:** Encourage your children to solve problems and make some decisions for themselves.
7. **Communicate respectfully:** Share your feelings, expectations and needs with your children in a way that is respectful.
8. **Promote independence:** Allow your children to play independently in a safe environment.
9. **Spend time with your kids:** Reading together, talking and listening, or playing together helps children feel cared for.
10. **Arrange for new activities in which your child can succeed:** Set up new activities for your children that they enjoy, like playing on a sports team, or taking music lessons, so that your children learn new skills and gain self-confidence.
11. **Be a positive, non-violent role model for your children:** Maintaining safe, reliable interactions with your children can help them develop self-esteem.
12. **Let your children know they are capable:** Allow your children to have responsibilities and let them know you have confidence in them.
13. **Let your children know they are worthy of love** just for who they are, and not related to their behavior: Tell them you like them, enjoy them, and appreciate them.

Often you may see an increase acting out or misbehavior after you are separated from your partner.

Throwing tantrums or having "fits" are a natural emotional healing process in children. Crying, especially loud sobbing with lots of tears, is a form of release and healing for feelings of grief or fear.

While this may be overwhelming, take pride in the fact that you have created a safe environment for your children to finally have the freedom to express all their emotions, both good and bad.

How to Assist Children in Releasing Painful Emotions

- Offer loving attention and name what the child is feeling.
- Keep child safe – away from hazards. Hold the child if it helps them feel more secure.
- Express love, and let them see you are not afraid.
- Do not permit child to break things, throw things or hit anyone. Provide safe items to hit or kick such a pillow.
- Allow tantrum to go on until it ends by itself.
- Lovingly refuse to give into demands.
- Children may cry after the source of distress has passed because it is only them that they are safe to release the fear.

"No One Deserves to be Abused"

IMPACTS OF ABUSER BEHAVIOR ON YOUR PARENTING

Your partner's behavior may be affecting your ability to parent by undermining your authority and damaging the relationship between you and your child. Children learn from the abusive man's behavior that disrespecting you is acceptable. This behavior can destroy any source of strength, pride or self-confidence that you have in your ability to parent. It also ensures that the abuser maintains control of the home and is the primary influence on family members.

- Does your partner overrule you?
- Does your partner make jokes / tease / put you down in front of children?
- Does your partner interfere with your parenting?
- Does your partner reward the children for inappropriate behavior toward you?
- Does your partner forbid you to go to the aid of your child?
- Does your partner punish the children when mad at you?
- Does your partner play favorites between the children?
- Does your partner sabotage your relationship with your children?
- Do your children act as if they don't respect you?
- Do your children ignore limits you attempt to set for them?
- Is your partner rude or domineering to you in front of the children?
- Does your partner overrule or undercut your parenting decisions?
- Does your partner think you are not a very good mother, especially when it comes to big or tense issues?
- To control your children, do you have to threaten to tell their father that they did?
- Do your children listen to their father more then they listen to you?

You have the right to fully equal say over how your children are to be raised, including:

- What style of discipline they will experience.
- What their routines will be.
- What freedoms they will be permitted.
- How they are allowed to express their emotions.
- What people they can spend time with, including your friends and relatives.
- What schools and religious institutions they will attend.
- What types of extracurricular activities they can participate in.
- How to approach every other aspect of the complex and highly demanding process of deciding how best to help children flourish.

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MYTHS, EXCUSES, AND REALITY

Men abuse because it works!

Abuser's behavior is driven by their values of entitlement and privilege. They learn that they can ensure that their feelings and needs are always the focus in the relationship by using tactics of power and control.

Why does he do that?

Battering is a choice. Just like they chose not to abuse their bosses, neighbors, pastor, friends, or other family members, they chose to abuse their partners because they get what they want when they do it.

Myths & Excuses about Battering:

Both abusers and many other people blame victims and make excuses for the abuser's behavior.

He is angry.

If a man had an "anger control problem" he wouldn't be able to reserve that side for his partner only.

He was drunk or wasted.

Even while intoxicated, abusers continue to make choices about their actions; other wise everyone who drank or used would be abusive. Abusiveness and addiction are two distinct problems requiring separate solutions.

He can't handle stress.

Abusers can be very popular, successful, and have a lot of power in their jobs. For those that aren't, rarely does their behavior improve because their life situation has improved. Everyone has stress in their life, but not everyone chooses to abuse because of it.

He is insecure.

This myth is rewarding for an abuser, because it gets his partner, his therapists, and others to cater to him emotionally, and the more positive attention he receives the more he demands.

He was provoked.

Abusive men often have a distorted view of themselves as victims. This serves the purpose of redirecting the focus from their behavior by blaming the victim.

He lost control.

While a man is on an abusive rampage, verbally or physically, his mind maintains awareness of some level of what would look bad, get him in trouble, or hurt himself or his valuables which demonstrates a large level of control. An abuser's problem is not that he loses control of himself, but that he takes control of his partner

Will he ever stop?

Abusive men can change *if* they want to; *if* they recognize that their behavior is wrong, and that their belief that they have the right to control their partner through abuse is wrong. However, few men are willing to do this.

Why does he stay the same?

Because he benefits from being the one in power and having control:

- He gets to have his way without compromise.
- He has someone to blame for his problems.
- He has someone to care for him & do all the work.
- He gets public status of partner and/or fatherhood without sacrifice.
- He is often in a better financial position
- He gets to be the center of attention.
- His careers, education or goals are the priority.
- He is exempt from the rules that apply to his partner.
- People are often supportive of his abusive attitudes.

Will therapy help?

Abusers who do participate in individual therapy typically get worse as they use therapy to:

- Develop new excuses for their behavior.
- Develop more sophisticated arguments to prove that their partner is mentally unstable.
- Develop more creative ways to make her feel responsible for their emotional distress.

In addition, many therapists guide abusers in identifying and expressing feelings which feeds the abusers selfish focus on himself.

Will medication help?

There is no particular mental health condition that is typical of abusers and some abusers perform normally in clinical evaluation and psychological tests. Some abusers may have a mental health diagnosis but it is their value system that is unhealthy not their psychology.

If they do have a mental health diagnosis, abuser behavior may improve for a while as a result of taking medication prescribed by a psychiatrist but typically this may only stop the most devastating or terrifying behavior but not his overall abusiveness.

Will couples counseling help?

Domestic violence is a criminal act, not a marital problem. We do not recommend couples counseling because the behavior is solely the responsibility of the abusive person, only he alone is capable of changing it.

Couples counseling may have the following unintended effects:

- Allowing the abuser to stay focused on his criticisms of his partner, rather than dealing with his own problems
- Leading to retaliation by the abuser for the victim revealing information during a session,
- Ignoring the denial, minimization and deception of the abuser.
- Ignoring the victim's rights in a relationship.
- Increasing the victim's sense of isolation if the abuse is kept hidden.
- Implying that the victim has responsibility for seeing that her abuser gets help.

Violent behavior must be addressed and stopped before couples counseling takes place.

What will help?

Anger management does not address flawed attitudes and beliefs that reinforce abusive behavior.

Perpetrator treatment is a 12 month program that promotes a change in belief system which supports the use of non-violence in intimate relationships, holds the abuser accountable for all abusive behaviors, confronts denial, minimization and victim blaming, and helps to develop non-violent, non-controlling relationship skills.

Domestic Violence Services

509.582.9841

800.648.1277

“No One Deserves to be Abused”

Revised: 04/10

SAFETY PLANNING

1. Keep an emergency 911 cell phone hidden and charged. DVS can provide one for free.
2. Consider friends and/or neighbors you can tell about the abuse and violence.
3. If safe, keep documentation about abuse. Such as a written diary, photos of injuries or property destruction, save voicemails, copies of e-mails, copies of medical reports.
4. Trust your own judgment and instincts. You know what has worked before, what hasn't worked, and how he might react to something.
5. Talk to someone when you feel down. Attend support groups or counseling to strengthen your relationships with other people.
6. Remember, you cannot stop your partner's abuse, but you can find help and support for yourself. No one deserves to be abused.

If you are leaving, your and your children's life and safety are most important; everything else is secondary.

7. Ask yourself:
 - ✓ How and when can I leave most safely?
 - ✓ Who can I trust to tell that I am leaving?
 - ✓ Would a protection order (restraining order) help?
 - ✓ How can I be safe traveling to/from work or the children's school?
 - ✓ What important phone numbers do I need? Shelter? Friends? Family? Schools?
 - ✓ Where can I go? Friends? Family? Shelter?
8. Set up a routine where it is normal for you to leave for a short time.
9. Have extra money and sets of car keys, clothes, copies of important papers with friends or relatives.
10. Keep change for phone calls with you, possibly open a savings account, rehearse your escape route with a support person, and review your safety plan periodically.
11. If possible, think about taking the following with you when you leave:

<input type="checkbox"/> Birth certificates	<input type="checkbox"/> Driver's license & registration	<input type="checkbox"/> Lease/rental agreement
<input type="checkbox"/> Social security cards	<input type="checkbox"/> Medications	<input type="checkbox"/> Divorce papers
<input type="checkbox"/> School & medical records	<input type="checkbox"/> Copy of Protection Order	<input type="checkbox"/> Insurance papers
<input type="checkbox"/> Money, bank books, credit cards	<input type="checkbox"/> Welfare identification	<input type="checkbox"/> Address book
<input type="checkbox"/> Keys-house, car, office	<input type="checkbox"/> Passports, green cards, work permits	

CAUTION – Often it can get worse when you try to leave or show signs of independence (like going to school or filing for divorce). The batterer may become desperate. Be careful.

After you or he has left, consider:

12. Change the locks, install dead bolts on doors, outside lighting, or a security system.
13. Tell neighbors or landlord that your partner no longer lives with you and ask if they will call police if he is observed around your home.
14. Tell the people who care for your children. Give names of those who have permission to pick them up from school or activities, and give copies of any protection orders you have.
15. Tell someone at work, give photo and/or copy of protection order to your supervisor or security, ask someone to screen your calls. Have your name removed from automated phone directories.
16. Use different stores, banks etc.

HELPFUL RESOURCES:

Domestic Violence Services of Benton & Franklin Counties:

- 24 hour crisis number and shelter..... 582-9841 or 1-800-648-1277
- DVS & Richland Police Dept. Legal Advocate (*bi-lingual*).....947-6222 or 735-1295
- DVS & Kennewick Police Dept. Legal Advocate.....582-1391 or 378-2558
- CSO Advocate736-2855
- Business office.....735-1295

Legal Assistance:

- CLEAR – free legal advice..... 1-888-201-1014
- Benton County Family Court Facilitator.....located at 7320 W. Quinalt (Courthouse)
- Franklin County Family Court Facilitator..... 1016 N. 4th Avenue, Pasco (Courthouse)
- Mary Santoy, DV Advocate735-3591 or 544-3080 x6040
- Benton County Superior Court.....735-8388
- Benton County District Court.....735-8476
- Franklin County Superior Court.....545-3525
- Franklin County District Court545-3593

Child & Family Counselors in the Mid-Columbia:

- Molly M. Kuespert, Trauma & Domestic Violence Counselor.....308-3233
- Rick Brunk.....735-3132
- Catholic Family & Child Services*946-4645
- Lourdes Counseling Center*943-9104
- Nueva Esperanza*545-6506
- Carmen Cady392-1926
- Leila Frech (bi-lingual).....783-3332

* *accepts medicaid*

Additional Services:

- Crisis Response783-0500
- Community Information Line 211
Refers to a variety of help resources and services
- DSHS Child Support Enforcement374-2000
- Department of Children & Family Services.....737-2800
- Sexual Assault Response Center374-5391
- Benton-Franklin Health Department
 - Kennewick.....586-0207
 - Pasco.....547-9794
 - Richland.....943-2614
- Alcohol and Drug Help Line 1-800-662-4357
- Child Protective Services 1-800-562-5624
To report child abuse or neglect
- Community Action Committee545-4065
Assistance with housing and referrals..... 545-4042
- Food Banks
 - Kennewick.....586-0688
 - Richland.....943-2795
 - Benton City.....588-5454

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP?

You might think that something as simple as talking to a friend about abuse couldn't possibly make a difference, but it really does.

If you think a friend or loved one is being abused, talk to her about it. Listen to her. Let her know you care. You don't have to be an expert. You just need to be a friend. Just knowing that someone cares enough to ask about the abuse can break through the wall of isolation that can exist around victims of relationship abuse.

What if She Decides to Remain in the Relationship?

Sometimes it can be frustrating when a friend returns to a batterer or stays in an abusive relationship. It is important to understand that there are many reasons for these decisions.

Just like ending any relationship is a process, leaving an abusive relationship takes time.

In many cases, the victim fears for her life. She may also want her children to grow up with both parents, and feel guilty, believing that the abuse is her fault. Sometimes a victim's self-esteem is so damaged by the abuse that she thinks she can't make it on her own. Or she may just want the violence to end, not the relationship. Whatever the reason for her decision to stay in the relationship, there are many ways you can help.

- **Listen, without judging.** Often a battered woman believes her abuser's negative messages about her. She may feel responsible, ashamed, inadequate and afraid she will be judged by you. Telling the victim what to do can be just as controlling as the abuser, and often leaving is more dangerous than staying.
- **Tell her the abuse is not her fault.** Explain that violence in a relationship is never acceptable. There's no excuse for it – not alcohol or drugs, financial pressure, depression, jealousy or any behavior of hers.
- **Be honest and supportive.** Tell her you are afraid for her and her children. Tell her you want to help, but don't pressure your friend to leave. Avoid language like "You need to..." "You should..." "Why don't you..." "You have to..."
- **Make sure she knows she is not alone.** If and when she wants help, it is available. Let her know that domestic violence tends to get worse and become more frequent with time and that it rarely goes away on its own.
- **Explain that relationship abuse is a crime,** and that she can seek protection from the police or courts.
- **Suggest that she develop a safety plan in case of emergency.**
- **Think about ways you might feel comfortable helping her.** If she decides to leave her relationship, she may need money, assistance finding a place to live, a place to store her belongings or a ride to a battered women's shelter.
- **Get advice.** If you want to talk with someone yourself, to get advice about a particular situation, contact DVS at 582-9841.