

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

What is Domestic Violence?

Domestic violence is physical, emotional, sexual or economic abuse between intimate partners.

Why does it happen?

Domestic violence happens when one partner chooses to act in a way that is hurtful, frightening or threatening to their partner. Domestic violence is the responsibility of the person who is behaving violently or abusively. It is not the responsibility or fault of the person who is abused, no one can force or provoke another person to be violent.

Who does it happen to?

Domestic violence happens in all kinds of homes – rich or poor. Although both women and men can experience this violence, it happens much more frequently to women. It may be happening to your mother, sister, daughter, friend, colleague or neighbor.

Types of domestic violence

There are many types of domestic violence, many of the kinds are not physical or cannot be noticed easily. This does not mean that they are less damaging or serious. All types of domestic violence are unacceptable. Here are a few of the most common types:

Physical

- Pushing
- Hitting
- Slapping
- Grabbing
- Beating
- Hair pulling
- Kicking
- Choking
- Burning
- Twisting arms
- Use of any type of weapon
- Banging head on the floor or wall

Emotional

- Shouting
- Swearing
- Insults

- Threatening violence
- Name-calling
- Humiliating
- Embarrassing
- Belittling
- Making fun of her
- Criticizing
- Accusing her of affairs
- Threatening to hurt the children
- Locking her out of the house
- Extreme jealousy
- Threatening to leave
- Constant questioning about her activities
- Having affairs

Sexual

- Forcing sex / marital rape
- Unwanted touching
- Grabbing sexual parts of her body
- Making her do sexual things against her will
- Coercion
- Hurtful sex
- Unfaithfulness
- Inserting objects into private parts
- Refusal to have protected sex

Economic

- Withholding family finances
- Stopping her from getting or keeping a job
- Making her ask for money or an allowance
- Demanding her money
- Not allowing her to have money

Indicators of Domestic Violence

Women experiencing violence may show some of the following characteristics or behaviors:

- Lack of self-confidence
- Reducing or ending her participation in activities
- Not wanting to see friends
- Visible physical injuries
- Making excuses for physical injuries
- Sadness and loss of energy
- Loss of appetite or inability to sleep

Children may experience violence directly or be witness to other violence in the home. Children living in violent homes may show some of the following characteristics or behaviors:

- Sleeping problems or nightmares
- Problems in school
- Fear of the dark
- Clinging to mother or siblings
- Increased violent behavior
- Difficulty in getting along with other children
- Withdrawal from activities, play or friends
- Verbal abuse or talking back
- Shyness
- Oversensitive or easily upset

What are the consequences of domestic violence?

Domestic violence hurts us all. Women in abusive relationships cannot fully participate in community life. Their energy, ideas, skills, talents and opinions to their families, communities, places of worship, and the political process are lost when their bodies and minds are consumed by domestic violence.

For an abused woman, violence causes health problems, sadness, isolation and a loss of self-confidence.

In families, domestic violence creates an unpredictable and frightening environment. Children learn to fear their fathers and worry about their mothers. Children growing up in violent homes learn that violence and aggression are acceptable ways of expressing emotion or resolving conflicts. These children are more likely to commit acts of violence on the street and in their own homes as adults.

Our community also pays a high price for domestic violence. Businesses lose money due to sick days and the ill health of female employees who are being abused. Substantial financial and human resources must be used for domestic violence intervention including law enforcement, health services, court and legal proceedings, and social services.

What can you do to prevent domestic violence?

Becoming informed about domestic violence is an important first step in addressing the problem. Learn as much as you can about the

issue and share your knowledge with others. When more people understand and refuse to accept domestic violence it becomes more and more difficult for men to keep abusing. Here are other specific suggestions to prevent domestic violence:

- If you know a woman who is experiencing domestic violence, reach out to her. Let her know you are there for her and that you are ready to give her non-judgmental emotional support. Remember, she must make her own decisions about her life, do not try to force her to do anything. Guide her to services in the community that could also help her.
- If you know a man who is violent toward his partner, find an appropriate time and talk with him about it. Do not ignore the problem. Ignoring it means you agree with it. Share with him healthier ways of expressing emotion or dealing with conflict. Encourage him to utilize the services in the community that can help him. If he is reluctant to go, offer to accompany him. Make it clear to him that the violence is unacceptable.

You can also:

- Be aware of the indicators of domestic violence, if you notice them in a person, ask her about it in a private and appropriate moment.
- Talk about domestic violence with your friends, family, neighbors and colleagues. With them, brainstorm what you can do to prevent violence.
- Teach your children non-violence ways of resolving conflicts.
- Show your children and others by example that violence is never okay.
- Raise the issue of violence at your place of worship. Discuss ways in which the religious community can take action against violence.
- Contact your local organization and ask how you can help.

Name and contact information of your organization