

Education about Domestic Violence

Profile of a Potential Abuser

- Flies off the handle easily and frequently
- Throws things or punches walls and cupboards when angry
- Is angry in traffic and parking, curses other drivers
- Is possessive and jealous, suspicious
- Has a history of abuse as a child, perhaps by a parent
- Witnessed abuse between parents
- Boast about fighting, dominating “settled confrontations”
- Wants to know whereabouts of partner at all times
- Gives advice and expects it to be taken and acted upon. Alternatives between passive and aggressive

Profile of a Potential Victim

- Is either passive or sees the anti-social behavior of others as a challenge
- Believes in going “all out” to help others
- Thinks that love and loyalty will change a partner
- May have come from a violent or emotionally abusive home
- Prefers “exciting” partners to those labeled “dull”
- Believes that one partner is responsible for the happiness of both
- Is confident that commitment to the relationship can solve all its problems
- Feels sorry for people with unhappy past
- Is willing to do anything for the “right” partner
- Gives up friends and interest to concentrate on partner

Profile of an Abusive Relationship

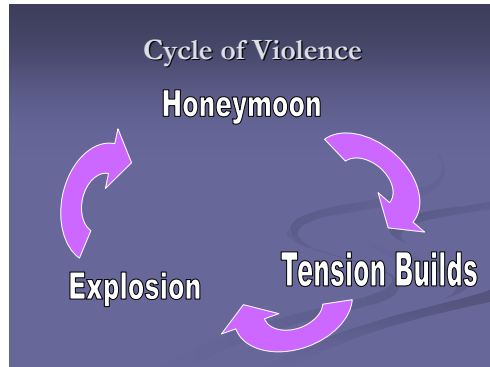
- Little or no courtship before living together
- Early incidents of abuse are overlooked or unrecognized
- Isolation preventing meaningful contacts with others
- Rigid and/or unrealistic expectations of partner’s work, conduct, and beliefs
- Inflexibility in interpersonal relationships
- Inability to communicate

Contributing Factors

- Having children right away or blended families
- Excessive alcohol or drug use
- Job-related stress or economic difficulties
- Interfering in-laws

- Widely divergent belief systems or cultural differences
- Life changes such as pregnancy, job loss, relocation, or death in the family
- Strict adherence to gender stereotypes

What is the “cycle of domestic violence?”



Remember:

- The cycle can cover a long or short period of time
- The violence usually gets worse.

How are the children affected by domestic violence?

All children are affected by the violence in their homes. Regardless of whether or not your children have been physically abused, watching their mother being battered is a frightening experience. Children from violent homes can exhibit a variety of behaviors. Some may “act out” and may be viewed as delinquent. Others work very hard to excel at every endeavor in an attempt to keep the family peace. Living with violence creates intense stress for a child. Below is a list of some behaviors that are frequently associated with children from violent homes.

- **Physical complaints-** headaches, stomachaches, bed wetting or ulcers
- **Eating problems-** Increased or decreased appetite
- **Trouble sleeping-**being tired all the time
- **Hair pulling-** nail biting
- **Physical injuries**
- **School phobias-** impaired concentration
- **Temper tantrums**
- **Nightmares**
- **Fear of men-** and/or their voices
- **Fear of being-** flinching when someone reaches toward them
- **Disruptive behavior-** stealing, aggression
- **Passivity-**Clinging, anxiety
- **Withdrawal-**isolation, loneliness

- **Role reversal-** Child assumes parental roles, protector/caretaker
- **Poor self image**
- **Depression**
- **Suicidal ideation-** and/suicide attempts

Effects of Domestic Violence on Children:

Imitation

Targets of violence

Neglect

Emotional disorders

Self-blame

Low self-esteem

Compensation

Refereeing

Divided loyalties

Lack of trust mixed feelings

Fear of abandonment

Runaways

Poor school performance

Substance abused

Suicide

Signs to look for in a battering personality

The following is a list of personality traits that may indicate a potential batterer. It is not the purpose of the listing to imply that every person with some of these attributes is a batterer or potential batterer.

Jealousy- At the start of the relationship, an abuser will equate jealousy with love. He will question the victim about whom she talks to, accuse her of flirting, or become jealous of time spent with others.

Controlling behavior- In the beginning, an abuser will attribute his controlling behavior to concern for his partner, for example, his partner's safety or decision-making skills. As this behavior progresses the situation will worsen. He may assume all control of finances or prevent his partner from coming and going as she wishes.

Quick involvement-A battered women often has known or dated her abuser for less than six months before getting married, engaged, or living together. He will pressure his partner to commit to the relationship. Later, a victim may feel guilty for wanting to slow the pace or end the relationship.

Unrealistic expectations-An abuser expects his partner to meet all of his needs, to take care of everything for him emotionally and domestic.

Isolation- An abuser will attempt to isolate his victim by severing her ties to outside support and resources. The batterer will accuse others, such as the victim's friends and family, of being "trouble-makers". He may limit his partner's access to use of a vehicle, work, or telephone service at home.

Blames others for problems- An abuser will blame others for his shortcomings. Someone is always out to get him or is an obstacle to his achievements. The victim or potential victim will be blamed for almost anything that goes wrong.

Blames others for feeling- An abuser will use feelings to manipulate his victim. Common phrases to look for: "You're hurting me by not doing as I want," "You control how I feel."

Hypersensitivity- An abusive person is easily insulted. He perceives the slightest setback as personal attacks.

Cruelty to animals or children- This is a person who punishes animals brutally or is insensitive to their pain. He may expect children to perform beyond their capability, for example, whipping a two-year old for wetting a diaper or teasing children or siblings until they cry. **"playful" use of force in sex-** This includes restraining partner against her will during sex; acting out fantasies in which the partner is helpless; initiating sex when partner is asleep; or demanding sex when the partner is ill or tired. He may show little concern for his partner's wishes and will use sulking and anger to manipulate compliance.

Verbal Abuse- This behavior involves saying things that are intended to be cruel and harmful, cursing or degrading his partner, or putting down his partner's accomplishments.

Rigid sex roles- The victim, almost always a woman, will be expected to serve. For instance, a male abuser will see women as inferior to men, responsible for menial tasks, stupid, and unable to be a whole person without a relationship.

Dual Personality- "Dr Jekyll and Mr. Hyde." Explosive behavior and moodiness that can shift quickly to congeniality are typical of people who beat their partners.

Past battering-An abuser will beat any partner he is with if the individual is involved with him long enough for the cycle of abuse to begin. Circumstances do not make a person an abusive personality.

Threats of violence-This consists of any threat of physical force meant to control the partner. Most people do not threaten their mates but an abuser will excuse this behavior by claiming "everyone talks like that."

Breaking or striking objects- This behavior is used as punishment (breaking sentimental possessions) or to terrorize the victim into submission.

Any force during an argument- This may involve an abuser holding down his partner, physically restraining his partner from leaving, or pushing or shoving. Holding someone back in order to make demands, such as “you will listen to me!” is also a show of force.