

October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month

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“ Domestic Violence violates the most basic of human rights - to be safe within your own body and in your home. It’s a real danger that many women and girls face each day.” (J Poisson, THR Oct 29, 2003).

In the 1980's the Surgeon General C. Everett Koop led the first national effort to raise awareness of family violence as a public health problem. Domestic Violence is the leading cause of injury to women’s ages 13 - 44 and accounts for more than muggings, stranger rapes and motor vehicle accidents combined.

The Senate Judiciary Committee in 1990 stated “ If every women victimized by domestic violence were to join hands, the string of women would span from New York to Los Angeles and back again.” It is estimated that 20% to 50% of all females presenting to Hospital Emergency Departments are battered women (Ellis, 1990). In most populations, one in four women may be physically or sexually abused. Battering is now recognized as the single most common cause of injury to women in the United States.

Domestic Violence is a pattern of behavior that may include: the use of physical or sexual force, economic, emotional and/or psychological abuse exerted by one family member against another (this is also true in same sex relationships). The GOAL is to establish and maintain POWER AND CONTROL over their victims. Most victims are unaware that Domestic Violence is a CRIME, punishable by incarceration depending on the level and outcome of their crime.

Battering is a pattern, not a single incident with the underlying issue being power and control. I cannot state enough that Power and Control is maintained by the man against the women for many reasons, the most being that the man grew up in this environment at home and feels that this is normal.

The following is a check list that you can use to help you determine if you or someone you know is being abused. If your partner does things that make you uncomfortable or afraid and that isolates you from family or friends, you may be abused. This list should also be used by girls ages 16 - 24 as this is now the largest growing population being abused by their boyfriend.

Does Your Partner...

1. Constantly criticize you and your ability as a wife or partner, mother or employee?
2. Behave in an overprotective way or become extremely jealous?
3. Threaten to hurt you, your children, pets, friends, family members or himself?
4. Prevent you from seeing family or friends?

5. Gets suddenly angry or lose his temper?
6. Destroy personal property?
7. Deny you access to family resources like the car, bank accounts, credit cards or control all finances and force you to account for what you spend?
8. Intimidate or manipulate you or your children?
9. Hit, punch, slap, kick, shove or bite you?
10. Prevent you from going where you want to, when you want to?
11. Makes you have sex that makes you feel uncomfortable?
12. Humiliate, put you down, or embarrass you in front of others?

If you answer “yes” to any of these questions, you maybe a battered woman. You are not alone-millions of women are abused by their partners every year.

There are many services that are available to women who are victims of Domestic Violence.

The major focus of all services available is to **MAINTAIN YOUR SAFETY!**

All of the agencies will offer a safe place for you, your children and at times your pet(s). The agencies are anonymous, however they are there to help and assist you through the process of getting your life back together.

If you are in a current active domestic violence abuse call 911. The police will come and take you to a safe place, take you to an Emergency Department to receive medical care if needed. A copy of the police report can be given to you in case you decide to take your abuser to court and prosecute.

In Orange County now has a an Orange County Family Justice Center (FJS) which opened in July of 2007. Think of it as a “one-stop-shopping”, comprehensive service program for victims of violence and their families. Child abuse cases are also decided here. A victim is now able to have all of the court services to assist them in one area instead of going from one court to another. This helps maintain the victims safety.

Numbers available for Domestic Violence help

1. 911
2. Safe Holmes of Orange County, a not- for- profit agency that provides a multitude of services for victims. Telephone Number 1-800-503-HOPE (4673) This is a secure hot line number.

3. New York State Hot Line Numbers for Adult Domestic Violence
English: 1-800-942-6906
Spanish: 1-800-942-6908