

DANGEROUS MYTHS

I shouldn't get involved—It's none of my business.

Not getting involved won't make the violence disappear; it only ensures that more will suffer.

Why doesn't she just leave him?

Many factors make it difficult for the victim to escape: financial problems, breakup of the family, impact on the children, pressure from family members, fear of future violence, concern for what will happen to the abuser, and feeling responsible for the abuse.

She doesn't look like a battered woman.

Domestic violence may involve verbal, mental, emotional, or sexual abuse, social isolation, or financial dependence. 95% of domestic violence survivors are women. 5% of the victims are men. Clothing covers some bruises others are felt in the heart.

At least the children weren't abused.

Nearly 75% of men who abuse their partners also abuse their children. The batterer may force the children to witness the abuse, as a means of asserting his control. Children who grow up in abusive households are 42% more likely to perpetuate the cycle of violence as adults.

It's the victim's fault.

No one has the right to inflict bodily injury upon another. Blaming a victim won't save his or her life – it only justifies the abuser's behavior.

He hits her because he drinks.

Substance abuse does not cause domestic violence but it may be a contributing factor. Batterers will abuse their partners whether they are drunk or sober. Treating the alcoholism – without treating the violence – will only result in a sober abuser.

DID YOU KNOW?

Abuse takes many forms:

- ◆ emotional torment,
- ◆ verbal,
- ◆ sexual assault,
- ◆ threats and,
- ◆ physical force or injury.

**October is Domestic Violence
Awareness Month
Abuse happens all year long**

Domestic violence is a learned behavior that increases in frequency and severity.

Battery is the single greatest cause of injury to women of all ages, more common than auto accidents, muggings and rapes. Most assaults are never reported.

In this country, a woman is beaten every 15 seconds. One-third of all female homicide victims are killed by their husband or partner. ***One out of four women will be abused during their lives.***

Domestic violence occurs in 33%-66% of all adult cohabitating relationships regardless of age, race, sex, religious affiliation, marital status, education, income or social standing. Similar statistics apply to teenage date abuse.

Abusers tend to exhibit "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" behaviors, showing extremes in both kindness and cruelty. Others seldom see or suspect this person of explosive rage.

Pregnancies have been terminated due to abuse.

Customize by placing a sticker with information for the local shelter here

Women Healing the Wounds



**National Council of
Catholic Women
Responds to Domestic
Violence Against Women**

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF
CATHOLIC WOMEN

National Council of Catholic Women
200 North Glebe Road
Suite 725
Arlington, VA 22203
703-224-0990
www.nccw.org
email: nccw01@nccw.org

WHAT CAN BE DONE

IF YOU ARE A VICTIM:

1. **Call the police** or sheriff. Insist on a report.
2. **Seek medical care immediately.** Let the doctor know you've been abused.
3. **Keep detailed records** of incidents of abuse. Save text & voice mail messages.
4. **Arrange to stay with friends**, family, rent a room, or call the shelter for emergency housing. **Your safety is the bottom line.**
5. **Do not let your partner isolate** you from those who can help you in the future. Talk to someone you trust.
6. **Violence occurs in cycles:**
 - ◆ tension building
 - ◆ blow up
 - ◆ the honeymoon phase where women believe the promise that **"It will never happen again."** Don't let the hope for relief get in the way of protecting yourself from further abuse.
7. If your partner usually prevents you from leaving, prepare for that possibility. **Trust your instincts. Plan Ahead.** If a violent episode is imminent, leave before the attack.

IF YOU KNOW A VICTIM:

1. **Believe her/him.** Doubting or minimizing the abuse only heightens the victims feelings of guilt, fear and helplessness.
2. **Support her/him.** Give them encouragement, information and referrals to agencies/services.
3. **Speak out.** Make the problem of abuse heard. Awareness precedes choice and choice precedes change.
4. Strongly **suggest individual counseling** for the victim. Experts report that counseling the couple together may be too intimidating and dangerous for the victim.
5. **Approach the victim in private.**
6. **Use non-judgmental language** and empathetic approach such as:
 - ◆ "I'm afraid for your safety."
 - ◆ "I'm afraid for the safety of your children."
 - ◆ "We're here for you when you are ready or when you are able to leave."
 - ◆ "You deserve better than this."

BE PREPARED — Have quick access to the following:

1. **This pamphlet.**
2. **A plan** of action.
3. **Important** telephone numbers and addresses.
4. **Cash.**
5. **Blank checks and savings account numbers.**
6. **Change of clothes** for you and your children.
7. **Keys**—have extras made and hide them outside the house.
8. **Personal documents:** medical and income tax records, birth certificates, protective injunctions, tax returns, Social Security numbers of self and children, etc.
9. **Try not to leave without your children.** In most cases, it is easier for you to keep the children if they are already with you.

ACTION ITEMS

- ◆ **Educate** yourselves, your organization, your community.
- ◆ **Invite speakers** from resource agencies to your meetings.
- ◆ **Investigate services** provided by local & state governments and diocesan offices.
- ◆ Read **"When I Call For Help"** and **"Confronting a Culture of Violence"** responses to domestic violence and violence in society by the Catholic bishops.
- ◆ **Advocate** that the medical, legal, and law enforcement communities, clergy, deacons, and parish personnel, including secretaries, receptionists, and religious education teachers be educated on domestic violence issues. **Be a voice for change in public policy.**
- ◆ **Donate to shelters**
 - ◆ personal hygiene kits
 - ◆ towels and bedding
 - ◆ clothing (check with shelter first)
 - ◆ diapers, children's toys
 - ◆ first aid supplies
 - ◆ TV's, recorders, non-violent DVD's
 - ◆ children & adult books
 - ◆ money (in memory of loved one)
- ◆ **Drive victims** to doctor's appointments, counseling and court dates.
- ◆ **Teach life skills:** budgeting, banking, filling out job applications, grooming for the workplace, etc.
- ◆ **Donate** used cell phones and chargers.
- ◆ **Serve** on the board of an abuse shelter.