

LET'S STOP DOMESTIC VIOLENCE!

We have heard and read much about Domestic Violence (DV) in the last few months. I think it is important to share with you who have not yet experienced DV, what this crime looks like.

Symptoms of DV - Misuse of Power and Control

Abuse in a relationship is any act used to gain power and control over another person. Women who are abused physically are often isolated. Their partners tend to control their lives to a great extent as well as verbally degrade them. Here are some warning signs of DV. Do you recognize any?

PHYSICAL AND SEXUAL ABUSE

Hair pulling, biting, shaking, pushing, pinching, choking, kicking, confinement, slapping, hitting, punching, using weapons, forced intercourse, unwanted sexual touching in public or in private and deprivation of food or sleep.

EMOTIONAL ABUSE

Insulting her in public or in private, putting down her friends and family, making her feel bad about herself, and name calling. Playing mind games, humiliating her, making her feel guilty. Treating her like a servant, making all the big decisions, being the one to define men's and women's roles.

ECONOMIC ABUSE

Preventing her from getting or keeping a job, making her ask for money, giving her an allowance, taking her money. Not letting her know about or have access to family income, not allowing her a voice in important financial decisions, demanding exclusive control over household finances.

COERCION AND THREATS

Making or carrying out threats to do something to hurt her, threatening to leave her, or to commit suicide.

Threatening to report her to welfare, making her drop charges, making her do illegal things.

INTIMIDATION

Making her afraid by using looks, gestures, or actions, throwing or smashing things, destroying property.

Abusing pets.

Dangerous driving.

Displaying weapons.

CHILDREN

Making her feel guilty about the children, using the children to relay messages, using visitation to harass her, threatening to take the children away.

ISOLATION

Controlling what she does, who she sees, what she reads, & where she goes. Limiting her outside involvement. Refusing to let her learn to drive, go to school, or get a job. Not allowing her to freely use the car or the telephone.

JEALOUSY AND BLAME TO JUSTIFY ACTIONS

Minimizing, Denying, Blaming. Making light of the abuse and not taking her concerns about it seriously. Checking up on where she's been or who she's talked to. Accusing her of infidelity. Saying the abuse didn't happen. Shifting responsibility for abusive behavior. Saying she caused it.

Why is it so important to Get Help?

THE DANGER IS REAL.

If you are controlling or have a controlling partner, don't ignore these behaviors. They are not the result of stress, anger, drugs or alcohol. They are learned behaviors that one person uses to dominate, intimidate and manipulate. They are destructive and dangerous.

If the abuse continues without outside help, the abusing partner may risk being arrested, going to jail, or losing the relationship.

Domestic violence hurts all family members. When a person is abusive, he or she eventually loses the trust and respect of his or her partner. Abused partners are afraid to communicate their feelings and needs.

Everyone has the right to feel safe in a relationship. With help, people who are abusive can learn to be non-violent.

Learn the Warning Signs

Disagreements develop from time to time in relationships. Domestic violence is not a disagreement. It is a whole pattern of behaviors used by one partner to establish and maintain power and control over the other. These behaviors can become more frequent and intense over time.

The abusive person is responsible for these behaviors. That person is the only one who can change them. Don't wait until you and the ones you love get hurt. **You Are Not Alone.** Consider getting some help. Talk with friends about your situation. Most of all, seek professional help!

Resources are available at: www.paininthepew.com.