

Domestic Violence:

Frequently Asked Questions



What is domestic violence?

- Domestic violence is a serious social problem that occurs within the context of a relationship (e.g. boyfriend/girlfriend, husband/wife, LGBT relationships, ex-partners) and refers to a pattern of behaviors utilized to have power and control over a partner. These behaviors occur under the context of physical abuse, emotional and mental abuse, verbal abuse, spiritual abuse, sexual abuse, and/or financial abuse.

Who does domestic violence affect?

- Domestic violence can affect anyone regardless of race, gender, social class, profession, and religious denomination.

Who are the batterers?

- People who batter come from all classes, races, genders, and religious denominations. Although there are some common behaviors that batterers may exhibit, there is no personality profile that they share. There is no such thing as a typical batterer.¹

What are signs of an abusive relationship?

Below are examples of abusive behavior that may be used to have control over a partner. If you are in an abusive relationship, your partner may:

- Call you names or put you down in front of other people.
- Intimidate you; you may feel worried about upsetting you partner or making them angry.
- Hit, slap, choke, push, or kick you.
- Cheat on you.
- Prevent you from seeing friends or family.
- Force you to be intimate.
- Lose their temper and may break or hit things when they are angry.
- Act in extremely jealous manners.
- Control your finances; they may give you an allowance, force you to pay for costs that are not yours, or take your money.

Why does someone stay in the relationship?

Society often places a hidden blame on victims of relationship violence. They will often suggest that, “It’s their fault for staying.” There are many reasons a person may have for not being ready or able to leave an abusive relationship. This person may:

- Be afraid that their partner will put them in physical danger.
- Be afraid that their partner will take away their children.
- Be afraid of being alone.
- Feel that things will get better or that their partner will change.
- Feel shame because of societal or cultural views about separation or divorce.
- Feel tied down to the relationship because of financial barriers.

Is domestic violence directly related to alcoholism?

- Drinking may be a factor, but it is not the cause. Only 1/3 of batterers abuse their partners when drinking.

How can employers respond to domestic violence in the workplace?

In an abusive relationship, the batterer may enter the partner’s workplace environment. This may include stalking, harassment, threats, and physical violence. Additionally, if the abusive relationship has developed among two employees, a restraining order may be placed on one of the partners. Some steps employers may take to address domestic violence in the workplace include:

- Develop domestic violence policies that can assist and meet the needs of those being affected by it.
- Provide domestic violence education to employees.
- Provide company personnel with the proper tools and training to respond to situations involving domestic violence.
- Know of experts or law personnel that can be contacted to assist with a situation involving domestic violence.