

MYTHS & FACTS ABOUT DATING/DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

- MYTH:** This will never happen to me.
- FACT:** Some people think that they would break up at the first sign of abuse or that they would never get into a relationship with an abusive person in the first place. The problem is that many abusers are excellent manipulators, who challenge boundaries and force victims into vulnerable positions. Domestic violence happens to people of every educational and socioeconomic level. Domestic violence happens in all races, religions, and age groups. Domestic violence occurs in both heterosexual and same-sex relationships.
- MYTH:** Domestic violence only happens to women who are poor, dependent or uneducated.
- FACT:** Domestic violence does not discriminate. People from every socioeconomic class, every race, every education level, every geographic region, every religion have reported being the target of domestic and dating violence. It is important to note, however that although women from all financial backgrounds are victimized, poor women tend to be both more vulnerable to abuse and less likely to have the means to leave the abusive situation. Women who are more financially dependent on their partners tend to experience more abuse. Additionally, abusers routinely sabotage their partner's economic mobility to keep them dependent.
- MYTH:** Domestic violence is a private family matter.
- FACT:** Domestic Violence is everyone's business. Keeping domestic violence secret helps no one, has been shown to harm children, incurs substantial costs to society, and serves to perpetrate abuse through learned patterns of behavior.
- MYTH:** Most of the time, domestic violence is not really that serious.
- FACT:** Domestic violence is an illegal act in the U.S. and is considered a crime with serious repercussions. Although there are aspects of domestic violence (example: emotional, psychological, spiritual abuse) that may not be considered criminal in a legal sense, serious and long-lasting physical, emotional and spiritual harm can, and often does, occur. Each and every act of domestic violence needs to be taken seriously.
- MYTH:** Victims provoke their partners' violence.
- FACT:** Whatever the problems exist in a relationship, the use of violence is never justifiable or acceptable. There is NO EXCUSE for domestic violence.
- MYTH:** Domestic violence is an impulse control or anger management problem.
- FACT:** Abusers act deliberately and with forethought. Abusers choose whom to abuse. For example, an abuser will selectively batter their partner but not their boss.
- MYTH:** It is easy for a victim to leave their abuser, so if he/she doesn't leave, it means he/she likes the abuse or is exaggerating how bad it is.
- FACT:** Fear, lack of safe options, and the inability to survive economically prevent many victims from leaving abusive relationships. Threats of harm, including death to the victim and/or children, keep many battered women/men trapped in abusive situations. The most dangerous time for a victim is when he/she attempts to leave the relationship, or when the abuser discovers that he/she has made plans to leave.

MYTH: Anger management programs are briefer, more cost effective than, and just as successful as certified batterer intervention programs.

FACT: Although briefer and less expensive than certified batterer intervention programs, anger management programs are not effective to address the deep-rooted issues of batterers.

MYTH: Tough love is the best way to help a victim of violence.

FACT: Pushing someone to leave is counterproductive. The best thing to do is listen and to communicate that you are worried about their safety and are willing to locate resources for them.

MYTH: Jealousy is a sign of love.

FACT: In reality, jealousy is one of the first warning signs of an unhealthy relationship. It is a sign of insecurity and distrust. We all can feel jealous from time to time, but using jealousy as an excuse to control a dating partner is abuse. If you start to feel jealous, it's important to communicate openly and honestly with your partner.



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Love
Shouldn't
Hurt