



Myths and Facts about Domestic Violence

MYTH: Domestic violence is not common.

FACT: Every 9 seconds in the United States, a woman is battered by her husband or partner. The FBI estimates it will happen to 1 out of every 2 women in their lifetime.

MYTH: Domestic violence happens only in low-income families.

FACT: Domestic violence happens in all kinds of families, rich and poor, urban and suburban and rural, in every part of the country, in every racial, religious and age group.

MYTH: All domestic violence is physical.

FACT: Being abused may include physical violence, but victims may also be abused verbally, emotionally, and/or psychologically. These forms of abuse can be just as terrifying, and often result in low feelings of self-esteem, depression, and loneliness for the victim.

MYTH: Domestic violence happens only once or twice in a relationship.

FACT: Abusers usually escalate violent behaviors in frequency and intensity over time.

MYTH: Victims provoke their partners' violence.

FACT: Victims never control an abuser's violence. Victims are never to blame for such abuse. Whatever problems exist, violence is never justified or acceptable.

MYTH: Children aren't aware of, or affected by, the violence in their homes.

FACT: Studies show that in 50-70% of cases where one parent is abusing the other, the children are also being abused. Children suffer emotional, cognitive, behavioral, and developmental impairments as a result of witnessing domestic violence in the home.

MYTH: Drug and alcohol abuse causes domestic violence.

FACT: Abusers frequently make excuses for their violence, claiming loss of control due to alcohol or drug use. Although drug or alcohol abuse may intensify existing violent behavior, it does not cause domestic violence.

MYTH: Attending an Anger Management class will teach the abuser how to stop battering.

FACT: Anger management methods are never appropriate for use with abusers, as they do not accurately reflect the cause of battering. Further, anger management theory suggests that the reason the abuser batters is because he has been provoked. It fails to account for premeditation, diffuses responsibility, implies that there is a quick fix, and misrepresents the depth of the problem in the community.

MYTH: All domestic violence Advocates are "Man-haters".

FACT: Most men are "good men." Those who choose to abuse their partners haven't learned how to be a "good man." Advocates stress the importance of equality between men and women.