



Intimate Partner Violence Facts Versus Myths

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What is Intimate Partner Violence?

Intimate partner violence is a **pattern** of abusive behavior in an intimate relationship where one partner tries to **control** and dominate the other. The behavior may be verbally, psychologically, physically or sexually, financially or technologically abusive with the victim left feeling scared, confused, dependent and insecure.

Assaulting, threatening, harassing, strangling or stalking an intimate partner is a crime in the state of Connecticut.

The Frequently Told Story:

Seduction and Charm



- Interested in “me”, supportive, and loving...
- Intimacy, the importance of “us”, *sacred* relationship...

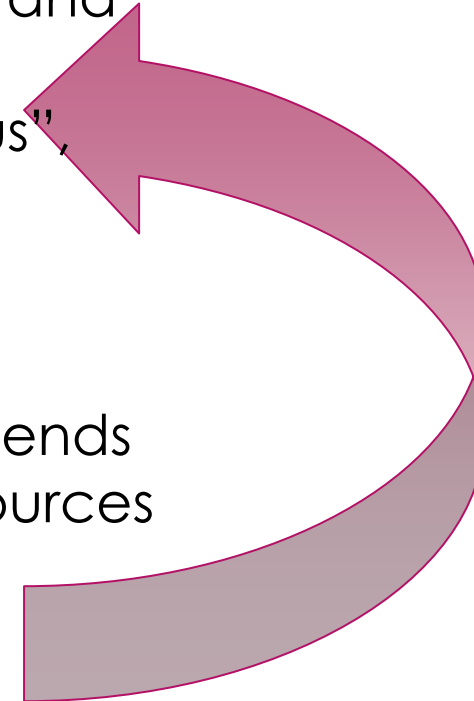
Isolation



- Move away from others
- Less contact with family and friends
- Limit access to finances or resources

Violence or the Threat of Violence

- Availability of weapons
- Physical or sexual assault



“Why does she/he stay?”

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- **Hope that things will get better.**
 - **On average, victims deal with DV 5-7x before leaving**
 - Disappointing friends, family or community.
 - **Lack of resources to care for self or child(ren).**
 - Religious or cultural beliefs.
 - **Immigration Status.**
 - Belief that they can keep themselves and child(ren) safe.
 - **Fear of being hurt or killed.**

Myth Versus Fact

- ▶ **MYTH:** Domestic violence is rare.
- ▶ **FACT:** Domestic violence affects **1 out of 4 women** at some point during her lifetime. Men can also be victims of domestic violence, but women make up about 97% of domestic violence survivors. Domestic violence happens equally in heterosexual and homosexual relationships.

Myth versus Fact

- ▶ **Myth:** Intimate partner violence only occurs in working or poorer families.
- ▶ **Fact:** Intimate partner violence happens in all communities, from all social and cultural groupings.

- ▶ **Myth:** Violent men cannot control themselves, their behaviour is “out of their control”
- ▶ **Fact:** If men cannot control their violent behaviours then they would try to dominate and control everybody including their bosses, their work friends and all other people they come into contact with.

- ▶ **Myth:** Women enjoy being abused, otherwise they would leave the situation.
- ▶ **Fact:** There are many reasons why women do not leave violent situations. They fear social isolation, community stigma and financial problems. Also after long-term abuse, their self esteem is very low and they do not have the support systems to build their confidence.

Myth versus Fact

- ▶ **Myth: Loving caring partners do not use violence.**
- ▶ **Fact: Violence can happen even in the most loving and caring relationships.**

- ▶ **Myth: Only small numbers of women have experienced domestic & family violence.**
- ▶ **Fact: one in three to five women will experience domestic & family violence.**

- ▶ **Myth: Alcohol and stress are to blame for domestic violence.**
- ▶ **Fact: Alcohol and stress are not an excuse for domestic violence, it only acts as a excuse. It is up to the person who commits domestic violence to accept responsibility.**

Myth versus Fact

- ▶ **Myth:** Intimate Partner Violence is rarely spoken about, it is a private family matter.
- ▶ **Fact:** Domestic Violence is a crime. It is not part of any relationship.

- ▶ **Myth:** Intimate Partner Violence only happens where there is unemployment and poverty in the family.
- ▶ **Fact:** Women from all backgrounds, all ages, all cultures, employed and unemployed are likely to be victims of domestic violence.

- ▶ **Myth:** Women know their rights and can leave the situation if they want to.
- ▶ **Truth:** A strong sense of silence and secrecy often go with Domestic Violence. Women fear speaking out. The violence causes low self-esteem and no one wants their family to break up. Most women hope the violence will stop.

- ▶ **Myth:** Some women provoke violence and they are part of the problem.
- ▶ **Fact:** No family deserves violence, dealing with problems in ways that don't involve violence is the key, not blaming the victim.

Causes and Excuses

- Financial pressure on the family causing stress.
- Drug & alcohol abuse by one or more family members.
- Gambling by either partner.
- Abuse within extended families, generational abuse.
- Typical and acceptable “male” behaviour.
- Culturally acceptable behaviour.

Indicators

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Indicators

- Over protective of children and avoidance of discussing children.
- Current or previous separation in the relationship.
- Extensive use of medications.
- Lack of self esteem or self confidence.
- Problems with sleep & sleeplessness.
- Nervous or withdrawn behaviours.

HELP LINE

- ▶ **If you or someone you know is a victim of domestic abuse, call 1-800-799-SAFE, or visit the National Domestic Violence Hotline for help.**



QUESTIONS

References

- ▶ References Available Upon Request at tluckett@wmcarey.edu