

LA CASA, INC



*We welcome you to our shelter door
Here you can stay in fear no more
Within these walls no unkind words are spoke
Here we offer only hope
Your broken bones will heal and the bruises fade
And given time you will no longer be afraid
Here you can make plans to start anew
And when you leave a part of us also goes with you
So be brave of heart and courage strong
For tomorrow brings a brand new song... Author, Marisa*



**You are NOT Alone!
We Can Help.**

Programs for Families Experiencing Domestic Violence

Administration/(505) 526-2819
FAX/ (505) 526-8542
P.O. Box 2463
Las Cruces, NM 88004

24 Hour Service Hotline
(505) 526-9513
And Toll Free in NM Only
1 (800) 376-2222
In Anthony Area: (505) 882-3008

What Is Domestic Violence?

Domestic violence can occur in families of all ages, regardless of income levels, nationalities or cultural beliefs. Relationships are characterized as domestically violent when one person is subjected to abuse by their partner. In the *majority* of cases, it is women who are the victims of domestic violence, and men who are the perpetrators of abuse. Domestic violence covers a wide range of behaviors. These behaviors are about one person attempting to gain or maintain power and/or control over the other in a relationship. This goes beyond a “heated domestic argument” because in an argument there is no identifiable victim. In a domestic violence situation, there is always a readily identifiable victim.



In the *majority* of cases, it is women who are the victims of domestic violence, and men who are the perpetrators of abuse. Nearly 1 in 3 women experience at least one physical assault by an intimate partner by adulthood. Domestic violence is not just about physical violence. Domestic violence is a pattern of controlling abusive behavior – emotional, sexual, financial, psychological or physical. It is a pattern that can be prevented and it is something that can happen to anyone. We, at La Casa, can help by providing education, advocacy, and support. On the following pages you can learn more about domestic violence, what it is, and whom it involves.

Throughout this packet, we may sometimes refer to victims as women and may refer to offenders as men. We do this because 90-95% of domestic violence victims are women and as many as 95% of domestic violence perpetrators are men. However, men *can* be victims and women *can* be perpetrators, and domestic violence also very often occurs in same-sex relationships. While we take all forms

of abuse seriously and serve *all* victims of domestic violence, we recognize that overwhelmingly domestic violence involves men abusing women.

Who Are The Victims?

There is no specific type of domestic violence victim nor does a victim of domestic violence cause or “provoke” the violence to happen. The violence is *a result of the abuser’s behavior*, not the victim’s.

Domestic Violence happens to people from all different backgrounds of all ages, races, cultures, sexual orientations, religions, economic levels, and educational levels. Anyone can be a victim of domestic violence. However, 90-95% of domestic violence victims are women.



Children are severely impacted by domestic violence, either by witnessing the abuse or by being abused themselves.

Who Are The Abusers?

There is no typical abuser. In public, they may appear to be caring to their partner and family and may be abusive only when others are not there to witness the abuse. Remember, abusive behavior is a choice, *not* an accident. Offenders come from many different backgrounds and all have different life experiences, but the tactics they use to control their partners are similar. Remember, being stressed out, or using alcohol or drugs does *not* cause someone to be abusive.

How Do Children Ask For Help? Adults can usually describe how violence at home is affecting them and can say things like, "I'm afraid," "I'm angry," or "I feel guilty." It is much harder for children to describe their feelings in words. They often act out their feelings instead of saying them. Many behaviors that anger or worry adults are really children's ways of asking for help with something that is bothering them. Children never know what to expect at home. Their parent's mood can change instantly from loving to enraged. It is the children who tend to get caught in the middle and are hurt or killed "by accident" merely because they are in the line of fire. When a child is injured, the physical scars can readily be seen, but it is the emotional scars, perhaps not so obvious, that have the most devastating results-the results of having to witness violence against someone you love.

Hearing, seeing, or knowing about family violence affects the children!



All children, who live in homes where domestic violence is occurring, are affected by it.

Because you know your children, you can notice when your children begin any of these problem behaviors or have sudden changes in their usual behaviors. If a troublesome behavior continues for a month, it is not "just a phase," and the child could use some help.

Infants: Sleep disturbances, like sleeping too much or not sleeping restfully; feeding disturbances, like always wanting to eat or hardly ever wanting to eat; continual fussing and crying; inability to be comforted; easily startled.

Toddlers/Preschoolers: Chronic stomach aches and headaches; nausea; night terrors; difficulty going to bed; inability to be comforted; general sadness; not knowing how to play.

Elementary Age: School problems such as difficulty concentrating, school phobias, problems with peers; inability to share; frequent injuries and reckless behavior; constant difficulty leaving a parent; bed wetting and thumb sucking; aggressive or intimidating behaviors; cruelty to animals or smaller children.

Junior High/High School: Destruction of property; truancy; aggressive or violent behavior; running away; substance abuse; suicide talk, threats or attempts; nightmares; weapons; depression (having no friends and not participating in any outside activities).

Any Age: Physical complaints such as headaches, stomach aches, sleep problems, eating problems, constant sadness or nervousness, withdrawal and isolation.

Fear and Tension: Children may grow up being afraid of just about everything and trusting no one!

Nightmare In The Home! *Daily violence and anger create a living nightmare for children. Children in violent homes experience Fear, Tension and Confusion and Hopelessness*



Confusion: Children often receive mixed messages. At school they learn that hitting is wrong, at home they learn hitting is used to "solve" problems.

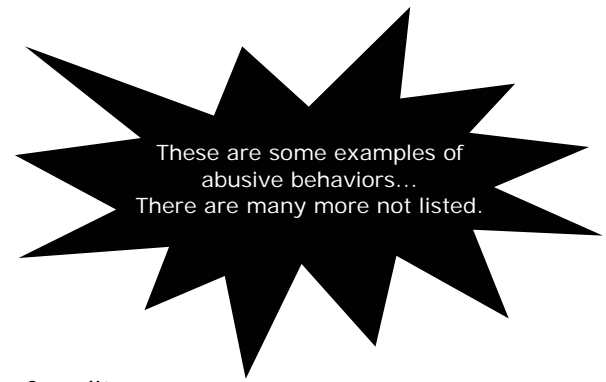
Hopelessness: The children often blame themselves for the violence but feel powerless to prevent or stop it. They often develop a **LOVE-HATE** relationship with their parents. They may feel protective of an abused parent, but may also resent him/her for not stopping the abuse. They may feel guilty for not being able to rescue their family or for loving someone who is abusive.

La Casa can help you identify if your children are at risk and help employ strategies that will both protect and heal these innocent victims of domestic violence, the ones most powerless, *the children from violent homes.*

Domestic Violence Consists Of:

Psychological/Emotional Abuse:

- Jokes, insults, name calling, humiliation
- Put downs of your roles or abilities
- Degrading or controlling your choices (clothing, food, etc.)
- Demanding of all attention/resentful of children
- Threats of outing a partner
- Lack of cause and effect between actions and consequences
- Unpredictable consequences of actions
- Questions your sense of reality/causes you to question sense of reality
- Minimizes or denies abuse
- Threats against or to take children/threats to harm you
- Threatens to commit suicide



Social/Environmental Abuse:

- Uses gender "myths" and "roles"
- Uses culture, religion, nationality, profession, gender, and/or sexual identity to maintain control
- Destroys/damages items belonging to you
- Controls major decisions
- Controls money/finances
- Makes you economically dependent
- Tracks you or monitors your activities and/or whereabouts
- Denies your ability to work/gets you fired
- Limits your outside activities
- Threatens to hurt your extended family/friends/
- Eliminates support system/alienates your family/friends
- Threatens deportation
- Destroys/maims/hurts a family pet
- Tells you that you are hysterical, paranoid, psychotic, mentally ill, suicidal/homicidal



Physical Abuse:



- Throwing household items
- Grabbing, pushing, shoving, shaking, pulling hair, slapping, biting, pinching, bruising, hitting, punching, kicking
- Targeted hitting
- Use of household objects as weapons
- Restraining you
- Deprivation (food, sleep, medical needs, etc.)
- Strangulation /Hands around your neck
- Lacerations/Cutting you
- Imprisonment
- Threats or use of conventional weapons, such as guns or knives

Sexual Abuse:

- Demanding monogamy from you, while insisting on freedom for self
- Jealousy, assumes you are with others sexually
- Unwanted/forced touching/rape, forced sex, sex against your will
- Forced to look at/engage in pornography
- Coerced/demanding sex following pregnancy/surgery

Controlling Behavior – Offenders may attribute their controlling behavior as “concern for partner”. They may assume all control of finances or prevent their partner from coming and going as the victim wishes.

Quick Involvement – Sometimes battered persons know their partner for less than a year before getting married, engaged or living together. The offender may pressure their partner to commit quickly to the relationship. Later, a victim may feel guilty for wanting to slow down or end the relationship.

Unrealistic Expectations – Offenders may expect their partner to meet all of their needs, to “tend” to them emotionally or domestically.

Isolation – Offenders may isolate their victims by severing their ties to outside support and resources. Offenders may accuse others such as the victim’s friends and family of being “trouble-makers” and trying to “ruin” their relationship. They may block their partner’s access to the use of vehicles, work, or their home telephone.

Jealousy – Offenders may justify or equate jealousy with love. They may question and/or accuse their victims about who they talk to, may accuse the victim of flirting or having affairs or become jealous of the time spent with others which often creates isolation for the victim.

Blames Others for Problems – Offenders may blame others for their shortcomings. They may blame the victim or potential victim for almost anything that goes wrong.

Blames Others for Feelings – Offenders may use feelings to manipulate their victims. Common phrases to look for: “You’re hurting me by not doing as I want.” “If you loved me, you would...”

Use of Children – Offenders may expect children to perform beyond their capability and may punish them excessively if they don’t (for example, spanking a 2-year old for wetting a diaper).

Cruelty to Animals – Offenders may kick, throw or hurt the family pet or deprive them of food.

Use of Force in Sex – This includes restraining partners against their will during sex; acting out fantasies in which the partner is helpless; forcing sex when the partner is asleep; or demanding sex when the partner is ill or tired.

Verbal Abuse - Offenders may say things that are intended to be cruel and hurtful, curse or degrade their partner or put down their partner’s accomplishments.

Rigid Sex Roles – The victim, will be expected to serve. For instance, an offender may see women as inferior to men, responsible for menial tasks, stupid, and unable to be a whole person without a relationship.

Dual Personality – “Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde” – Abusive behavior and moodiness, which can shift quickly to charming are typical of people who batter their partners.

Past Battering – The offender has been abusive to previous partners. The abusive person is responsible for the problem; circumstances do not make a person an abuser.

Threats of Violence – This consists of any threat of physical force meant to control their partner. While most people do not threaten their mates, a batterer may try to excuse this behavior by claiming that “everyone talks like that.”

Breaking or Striking Objects – The offender may break household items, punch holes in walls or kick doors to scare the victim.

Use of Force During an Argument – The offenders may hold down their partner, physically restrain the victim from leaving, push or shove them, or tell them if they leaves, they will get hurt, or even killed.

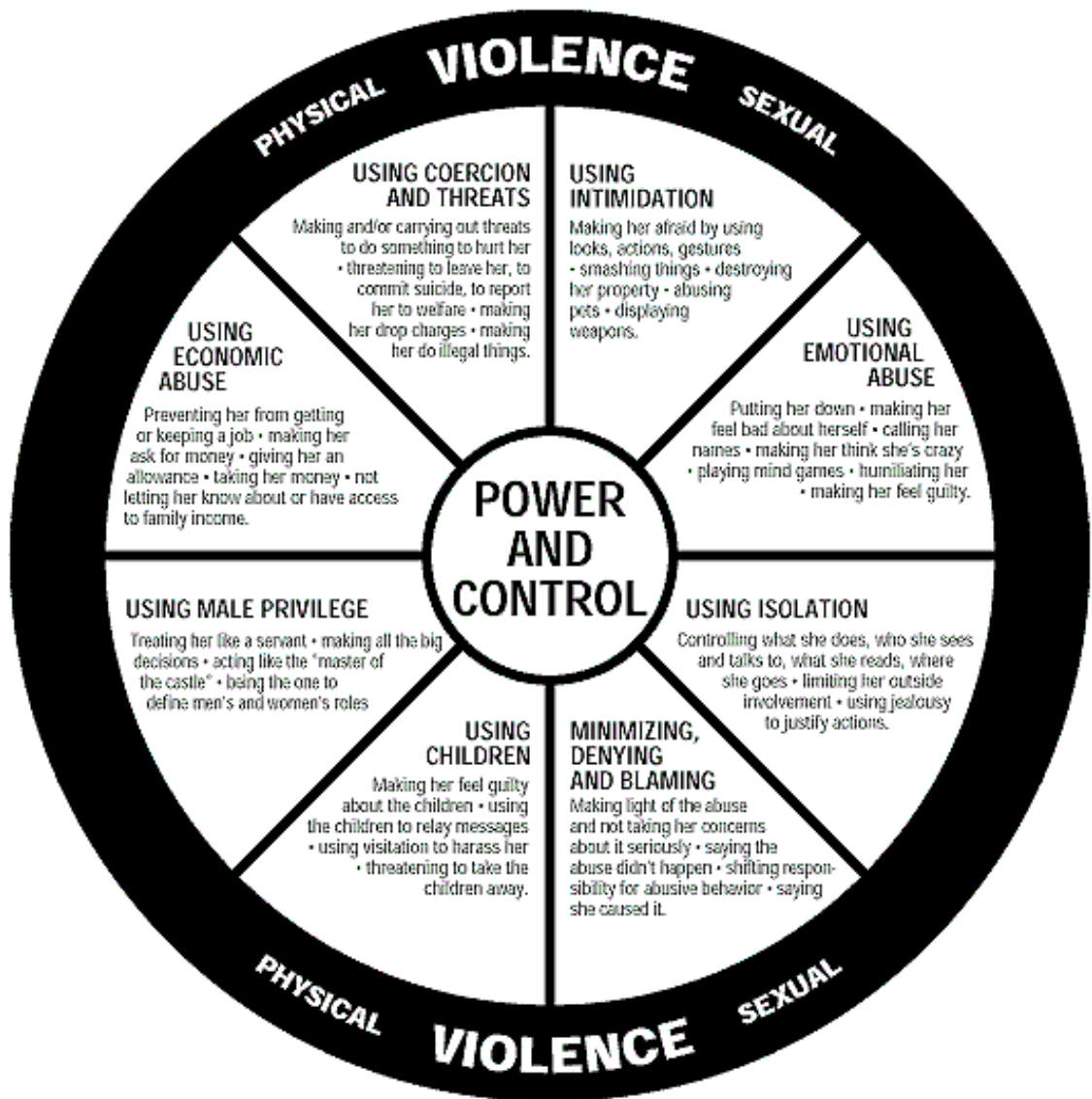
1 IN 4 WOMEN
EXPERIENCE
DOMESTIC
VIOLENCE



DO YOU
KNOW
ONE OF
THEM?

Domestic Violence

Domestic Violence is a pattern of coercive behavior that one partner in an intimate relationship uses to control the other. It is NOT just the result of one person becoming angry and “losing control”, but a way a person attempts to gain control over an intimate partner. Abuse is a *human* problem, NOT a gender problem and can take many forms. Partners may be married, unmarried, heterosexual, gay, or lesbian; living together, separated or dating. **ANYONE CAN BE A VICTIM** regardless of any age, sex, race, culture, religion, education, employment or marital status.



Domestic violence *should not happen to anybody. Ever.*

But it does - and when it does, La Casa can help.

This chart uses the wheel to show the relationship of physical abuse to other forms of abuse. It will help you look at the behaviors abusers use to get and keep control in their relationships. Each part shows a way to control or gain power.

Abusive partners often use tactics described in this wheel.

The tactics used are compounded when physical violence is also involved.

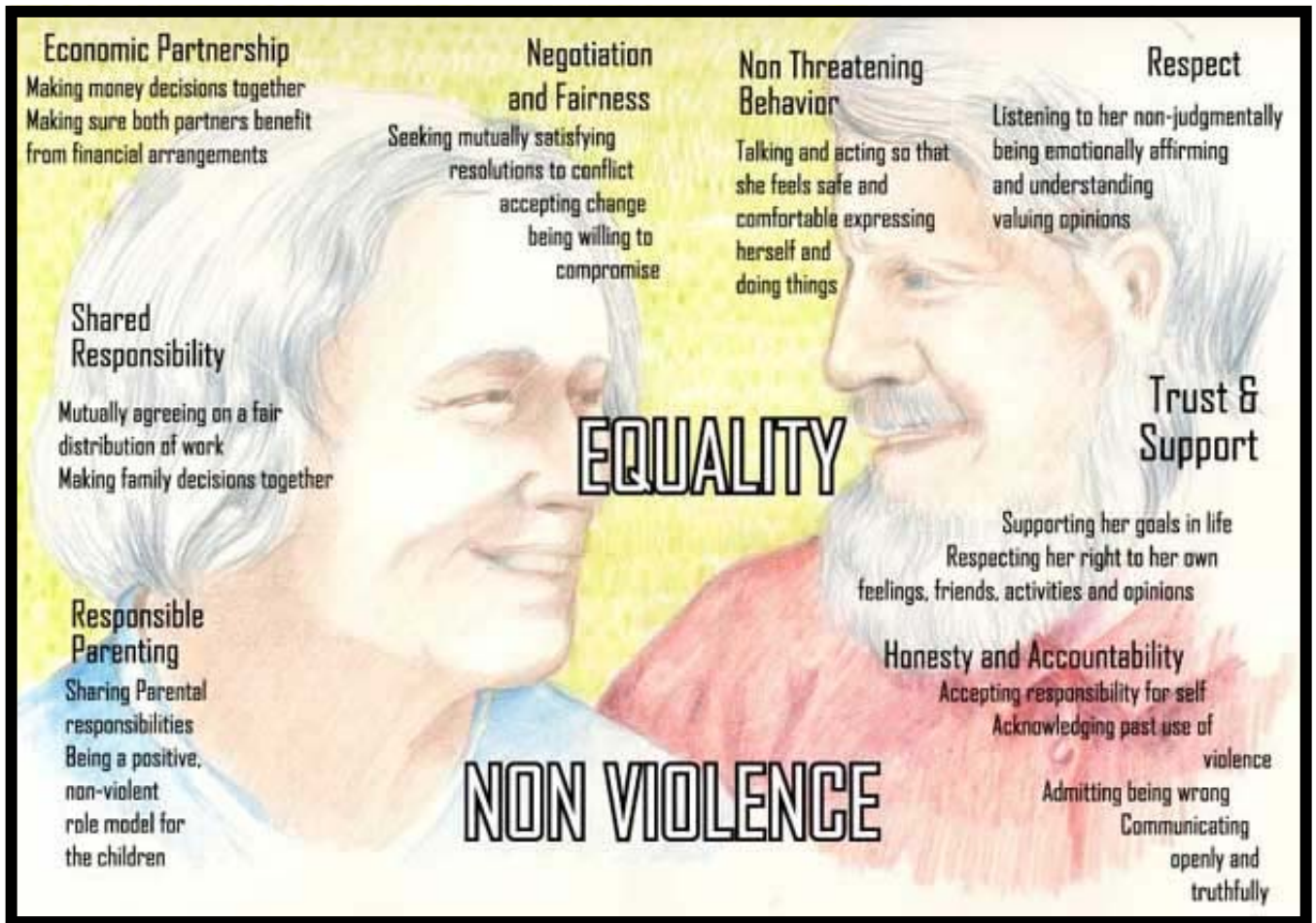
Battering is a choice and is also used to gain power and control over another person.

Physical abuse is only one part of a system of abusive behaviors.

Remember! Abuse is never a one time event.

Equality Wheel

In contrast to the power and control is the equity wheel, also known as the “non violence” wheel. This illustrates the concepts of equality in a relationship.



RELATIONSHIP BILL OF RIGHTS

This is how a healthy relationship functions, where there is an *equal* distribution of power.

EVERYONE HAS THE RIGHT TO BE SAFE FROM VIOLENCE AND ABUSE

- I have a right not to be abused
- I have a right to freedom from fear of abuse
- I have a right to request & expect assistance from police/ social agencies
- I have a right to leave the abusive environment
- I have a right to privacy
- I have a right to legally prosecute my abusing spouse
- I have a right *not* to be perfect

*No one deserves to be abused.
You deserve to be in a relationship that is built on equality and mutual respect.
You deserve to be in a relationship where you can get your needs met, feel safe, and be free from harm.*

The Cycle Of Violence

The cycle of violence can happen many times in an abusive relationship. Each stage lasts a different amount of time in the relationship, with the total cycle taking from a few hours to a year or more to complete. Emotional abuse is present in all three stages.

Batterer/Offender may:

Partner may:

Phase 1: Tension Building Phase

- Pick fights
- Act jealous & possessive
- Criticize, threaten
- Drink, use drugs
- Be moody, unpredictable
- Be crazy-making

- Feel like they're walking on egg shells
- Try to reason with the batterer
- Try to calm the batterer
- Try to appease the batterer
- Keep silent, try to keep children quiet
- Feel afraid or anxious

Phase 2: Crisis Phase

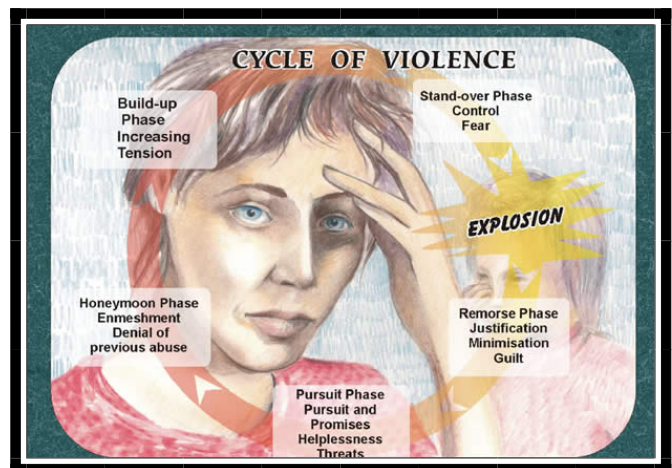
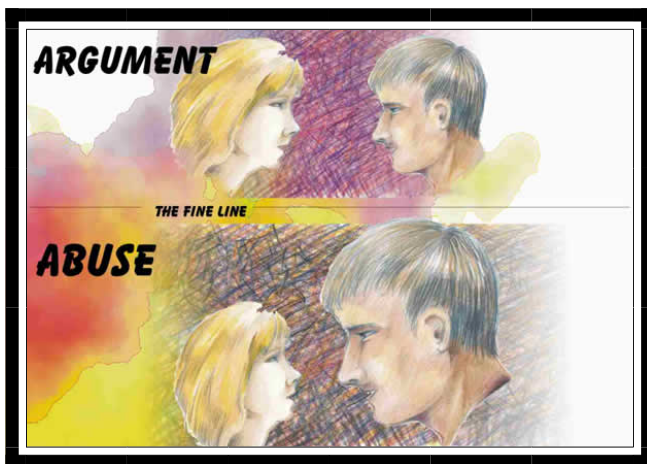
- Verbal Abuse
- Sexual Assault
- Physical Abuse
- Increase control over money
- Restrain partner
- Destroy property, phone
- Emotionally Assault

- Experience fear, shock
- Protects self & children
- Use self-defense
- Call for help
- Try to flee, leave
- Pray for it to stop
- Do what is necessary to survive

Phase 3: Calmer Phase

- Ask for forgiveness
- Promise it won't happen again
- Stop drinking, using drugs
- Go to counseling
- Be affectionate
- Initiate intimacy
- Minimize or deny abuse

- Forgive
- Return home
- Arrange for counseling
- Feel hopeful
- Feel manipulated
- Blame self
- Minimize or deny abuse



A person does not need to have experienced *all* the following behaviors to be in an abusive relationship.

So Why Do They Stay?

Often people say "if my partner ever laid a hand on me I'd be out the door!" but imagine, your own family. Would you really be able to leave your home, neighborhood, friends, pets. And if you did, where would you go? There are many barriers to leaving an abusive relationship.

FEAR

- Fear of retaliation against the victim, children, friends and/or family members.
- Partner may threaten to kill her or other family members if the victim leaves, threaten to kill themselves or escalate their violence in an attempt to hold the victim in the relationship.
- Fear of losing children or placing the children in danger
- Fear of an inadequate or harmful response by the criminal justice system and other institutions.
- Fear that no one will believe them! Batterers are often respected and popular members of the community who keep their violence and controlling behaviors secret from the public.
- Fear of being deported for undocumented persons who are victims of domestic violence.
- Fear of being blackmailed; partner may have threatened to reveal to the authorities any wrongdoing such as alcohol or drug abuse. And, in the same sex relationships, the fear of job loss or losing one's children if the victim's sexual orientation is revealed.
- Fear of losing their support systems. In order to escape their partner's threats of retaliation, many victims have to leave the community which provided them with support. This is especially difficult for victims whose ethnic, racial and/or cultural heritage, language and experiences are affirmed by their community (i.e. Latina, African-American, Jewish, and Native American, etc.)

ISOLATION

- The offender has literally isolated them. For example, an offender may prohibit the battered person from using the phone, may insist on transporting them to work, may read their mail, may forbid the victim from seeing family and friends.

ECONOMIC PRESSURES

- May lack job skills or formal education.
- May face losing house, furniture and all other resources held in the batterer's name or may lack ability to pay security deposit.
- May face difficulty in collecting child support or the possibility of losing custody of the children.
- May fear losing job because of the missed work and disruptions caused by leaving or the need to remain in hiding.
- Partner may threaten to withhold support, interfere with her employment and advise prospective landlords that she is not credit-worthy.

**Leaving
is a
Process**

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY PRESSURES

- May experience pressure to keep the family together for cultural and/or religious reasons.
- May perceive leaving as a failure to make the relationship work.
- May face being ostracized by friends who feel uncomfortable choosing which person in the couple they should support.
- Lack of information and available resources; believes they are alone and that no one can help.
- Lack of access to Legal Counsel, Advocates and Courts: if a battered victim is fortunate enough to have shelter, they still need a trained advocate or attorney to facilitate their access to the civil and criminal courts. La Casa has these resources!

LOVE and HOPE

- Many battered victims love their partners and want the relationship to continue but the violence to end. Their commitment should be respected and affirmed with intervention focusing on *stopping* the violence.
- Hope for change and that the batterer's treatment is successful. Battered victims are reluctant to leave when their partners are in treatment. They believe the treatment will motivate them to change. Therefore, it is very important that victims are referred by law enforcement to domestic violence programs so that they can be informed about treatment programs for batterers and evaluate whether these programs are likely to effect the change that will make life safe for them.

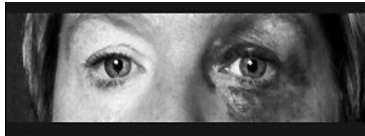
I Think My Friend May Be In A Violent Relationship. What Should I Do?

If you have a friend you think may be in an abusive relationship, don't look the other way; talk to them about it. You don't have to be an expert to talk about abuse, you just need to be a friend and show you care. Let your friend speak confidentially about their situation. You may be the only person with whom they feel comfortable. Show you care in these ways:

- Believe them, listen to them, do not judge or blame them.
- Do not minimize their struggle.
- Give them La Casa's hotline # for domestic violence victims.
- Help when you can with transportation, child care, or groceries.
- Let them keep important papers and extra clothes at your house
- Assure them that they are not responsible for the abuse. Tell them it's not their fault. You can never make someone else hurt you. There's no excuse for it -- not alcohol or drugs, financial pressure, depression, jealousy or any behavior of the victim's.
- Tell them they deserve to be safe. Physical violence in a relationship is never acceptable. Remind them that no one deserves to be beaten.
- Ask direct questions about their situation, gently. Give them time to talk. Ask again a few days later. Don't rush into providing solutions.



Listen, without judging!



NO EXCUSE!

- Try not to get frustrated if you reach out to a friend and they stay with the batterer or goes back. Ending any relationship is a process that takes time, so it's even harder in a violent relationship.
- Often battered persons believe their abuser's negative messages about themselves. They may feel responsible, ashamed, inadequate and afraid they will be judged by you.
- Make sure your friend knows they are not alone. Millions of people of every age, race and religion face abuse, and many find it extremely difficult to deal with the violence. Emphasize to your friend when they want help, it is available. Let your friend know that domestic violence tends to get worse and become more frequent with time and that it very rarely goes away on its own.
- Educate yourself! You will become frustrated unless you understand the dynamics of domestic violence. If you want to talk with someone yourself to get advice about a particular situation, contact La Casa or any domestic violence agency. You will not be able to help a battered person unless you are well informed. **Be there, but BE CAREFUL!** If you make promises, make sure you are able to follow through, but think carefully about what you are willing and able to do.

What Are Signs I Can Look For?

Have you seen evidence of injuries? Do they miss work frequently? Does their partner show an unusual amount of control over their life? Have you noticed changes in their children's behavior? Does their partner embarrass or ridicule them in public?

Common Myths about Domestic Violence, a Friend's Perspective



"But Why should I get involved in her problem--isn't it just a family matter?"

Domestic violence is not just a family problem, it is a crime which should concern everyone.

"It can't really be that bad."

Domestic violence is that bad and the most common source of injury to women, more common than automobile accidents, muggings, and rape by a stranger combined. It increases in severity and frequency over time. Over 2 million American women are beaten in their homes each year.

"She must be provoking him."

She is a victim and is not to blame. No one deserves to be beaten.

"He has a drinking problem. Maybe if he just got help for it, he'd stop abusing her."

Alcohol and drug use may intensify violent behavior, but it does not cause battering. Men are abusive with and without alcohol and drugs. Abusers want all the power and control in the relationship and that is their motivation; not the substances they use or abuse.

"If she wanted my help, she'd ask for it; She seems distant, I don't know if we're still friends."

Your friend may not feel comfortable revealing her situation to you. She may be embarrassed or humiliated. Women in violent homes are often isolated from friends and family by their abusers. The abuser wants total control and does not want her talking to others. It is important to continue to reach out to her, and let her know you care.

Teen Dating Violence

Your teen years should be some of the most exciting times where you will date, make special bonds and friendships and important lifelong decisions. Although dating can be one of the best things about being a teenager, it brings new feelings and experiences-many of them not all good. If you or someone you know is overly possessive, controlling or critical, these can be warning signs of potential abuse.

Are You In A Violent Relationship?

- Is he extremely jealous when you talk to others?
- Does he blame you for "pushing his buttons"?
- Does he isolate you from your friends and family?
- Does he constantly accuse you of flirting with others?
- Has he bragged about the mistreatment toward other partners?
- Has he threatened to harm himself if you end the relationship?
- Does he insist in getting serious about a relationship too fast?
- Is he always calling, paging and "checking up" on you insisting to know where you are and who you're with?



Is Your Friend In A Violent Relationship?

- Does she constantly apologize for his behavior?
- Are her friends and family uneasy and concerned for her safety?
- Does he call her names or put her down in front of others?
- Does she cancel plans at the last minute for unrealistic reasons?
- Has her weight, grades or appearance changed dramatically?
This may be due to depression which indicate abuse.
- Have you seen him become violent or lose his temper quickly?
- Is she giving up things that used to be important to her such as hanging out with friends or joining in activities?

1 in 3 teenagers have experienced violence in a dating relationship

A violent relationship doesn't always mean black eyes or broken bones.

Violence is about power and control.

Teen dating violence often is hidden because teenagers typically:

- Are inexperienced with dating relationships
- Want independence from parents
- Have romanticized views of love
- Are pressured by peers to have dating relationships

Teen dating violence is influenced by how teenagers see themselves and others.

Young men may believe:

- "Masculinity" is physical aggressiveness
- They "possess" their partner
- They should and can demand intimacy
- They may lose respect if they are attentive and supportive toward their girlfriends

Young women may believe:

- They are responsible for solving problems in their relationships
- Their boyfriend's jealousy, possessiveness and even physical abuse, is "romantic"
- Abuse is "normal" because their friends are also being abused
- They think they can "cure" the abusive boyfriend

Teenagers can choose better relationships when they learn to identify the early warning signs of an abusive relationship, learn they have choices and believe that they are valuable people who deserve to be treated with respect.

If you are being abused by someone whom you are dating, it is not your fault and you are not alone. It is important that you get help. An abusive relationship can be extremely dangerous and will not end simply because your boyfriend or girlfriend says that they are going to stop. The abuse *will* likely worsen over time.



What Is The Goal of Domestic Violence Treatment?

With Dona Ana County being the second most populated county in the state of New Mexico occupying 3,804 square miles, with a population of approximately 163,000 our focus is on responding to the needs of the battered individuals of our community. Our goals are as follows:

- To end abuser's violent and abusive behavior
- Increase victim safety
- To hold offenders accountable

ANGER MANAGEMENT <i>Inappropriate</i>	DOMESTIC VIOLENCE TREATMENT <i>Appropriate</i>
GOAL <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Control and express anger appropriately 	GOAL <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • End violent and abusive behavior • Increase victim safety • Hold batterer accountable
ASSESSMENT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At intake 	ASSESSMENT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete domestic violence evaluation/referral • Confidential information from victim and/or current partner • History of violent behavior, etc.
FOCUS OF TREATMENT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills in the awareness and appropriate expression of anger and other emotions • Communication skills • Conflict resolution skills • Stress management 	FOCUS OF TREATMENT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change in belief system which supports the use of violence in intimate relationships • Identification of physical, sexual, psychological abuse • Offender held accountable for all abusive behaviors • Confrontation of denial, minimization and victim blaming • Examination of societal and personal beliefs that support violence • Impact of battering on family • Non-violent, non-controlling relationship skills
LENGTH OF TREATMENT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determined by provider 	LENGTH OF TREATMENT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum 24 month by law • Must meet exit criteria set by law

La Casa's Programs:



La Casa Provides counseling and a safe place to stay for victims of domestic violence and their children since 1981.

Emergency Shelter, South Valley Outreach Counseling Program, Transitional Housing Program, Non-Resident Counseling Program, Children's Program, Men's Program, Outreach/Education, Civil Legal Services, Specialized Parenting Program, Volunteer Program, Educational Program, Educational Services Program

It is hard to decide to leave. When you are ready, you must have a safety plan. Call La Casa, Inc. at 526-2819 or our hotline at 1-800-376-2272 to get help and form a safety plan.

WARNING: Abusers try to control their victim's lives. When abusers feel a loss of control - like when victims try to leave them - the abuse often gets worse. Take special care when you leave. Keep being very careful especially after you have left.

If you consider leaving your abuser, think about...

- Four places you could go if you leave your home, people who might help you if you left, think about people who will keep a bag for you., think about people who might lend you money, can they care for your pets.
- Opening a bank account or getting a credit card in your name.
- Practice how you would leave and take your children with you safely. There are times when taking your children with you may put all of your lives in danger. Try doing things that get you out of the house - taking out the trash, walking the family pet, or going to the store.
- You need to protect yourself to be able to protect your children.
- Putting together a bag of things you use everyday. Hide it where it is easy for you to get. Keep change for phone calls or getting a cell phone.

Many victims of domestic violence ask these questions about leaving. Your life and your safety are most important. Trying to bring your children with you is important. Everything else is secondary.

Can I take my children with me when I leave?

- Yes. If you can do it safely, take your children with you. It may be more difficult later.
- It is very important to get legal custody of the children as soon possible. Our legal advocates can help you with questions you may have.
- If you do not have your children with you, it may be difficult filing for temporary custody later because the parent who has physical possession of the children may have an advantage getting temporary custody. Your partner may try to kidnap, threaten or harm the children in order to get you to return.

If you are in immediate danger and cannot take your children, contact the police immediately to arrange for temporary protective custody. (This does not mean you will lose custody. Permanent custody will be decided later by a judge.)

Where do I go?

- Stay with a friend, relative or a domestic violence shelter. The staff can help you get legal help and provide counseling/emotional support.
- If you are a woman, do not stay with a man unless he is a relative. (Living with a man you are not married to could hurt your chances of getting custody of your children and spousal support. It could also cause conflict with your abuser.)

The victim is the best judge of whether real changes are happening or not. Below are some positive changes in the abuser's behavior that may indicate that treatment is helping to change their behavior.

Below Are Some Signs The Abuser Is NOT Changing:

Tells their partner that they are the abusive one
Pressures their partner to go to therapy or couple's counseling
Tells their partner that they are owed another chance
Insists that their victim's support is necessary for change
Tries to get sympathy from their partner or their children
Minimizes the abuse when talking about it
Expects something from their partner in exchange for being in the treatment program
Pressure their partner to make up their mind about the relationship or to move back in together
Pressures their partner to drop the protection order or is continually violating the order

How does the victim know if their partner is changing?

Some Indicators That The Abuser's Behavior May Be Changing Are:

Does not blame their partner for actions or behaviors and does not minimize the abuse
Has completely stopped saying and doing things which frighten their partner
Doesn't punish the victim or make them feel unsafe when the victim expresses anger
Listens to their partner's opinion and respects it, even if it is upsetting
Respects their partner's wishes about sex and physical contact
Allows their partner to spend time with friends and family without fear of retaliation
Allows their partner to do others things that are important to the victim, such as finding work / school
Makes you feel safe leaving the children alone in their care

2002 Statistics

New Mexico

- 17,397 victims of domestic violence
- 93 of 130 law enforcement agencies reporting
- Estimated minimum of over \$19.3 million in medical care, mental health care and lost productivity costs was a result of domestic violence (1995 unit costs, the most recent costs units available for analysis)
- 4,104 female victims injured from their assaults
- 15.8 incidents of domestic violence for every 1000 persons
- 75% of the victims were female. 95% of the adult-victims served by reporting domestic violence service providers were female
- Victims as reported by law enforcement agencies were predominantly 26-35 years old (27%) and Hispanic (42%) and Caucasian (34%)
- Similarly, adult victims as reported by domestic violence service providers were predominantly 22-40 years old (56%) and Hispanic (50%)
- 3,381 children present at the scene as reported by law enforcement
- Almost 3/4 or 71% of children who witnessed domestic violence incidents were 12 years old and under
- 14% (783) of children victim-witnesses as reported by domestic violence service providers experienced physical abuse and 5% (186) experienced sexual abuse.
- 14 deaths as a result of 13 domestic violence incidents in 2002. Albuquerque (8), Bernalillo County and Santa Fe County (2 each), T or C and Sandoval County (1 each)
- 43% (4123) of the adult victims who sought services from domestic service providers claimed they did not report their incident to law enforcement.
- 24,905 cases of domestic violence is the minimum number of incidents that could have occurred in 2002. Numerous administrative and procedural issues affect accurate reporting by law enforcement.

*Reference: Incidence and Nature of Domestic Violence in New Mexico IV, June 2003
Betty Caponera, Ph.D.*

I Got Flowers Today

*I got flowers today!
It wasn't my birthday or any other special day;
We had our first argument last night;
And he said a lot of cruel things that really hurt;
I know that he is sorry and didn't mean to say the things he said;
Because he sent me flowers today.*

*I got flowers today!
It wasn't our anniversary or any other special day;
Last night he threw me into a wall and then started choking me;
It seemed unreal, a nightmare, but you wake up from nightmares;
And I woke up this morning sore and bruised all over-but I know he is sorry;
Because he sent me flowers today.*

*I got flowers today!
And it wasn't Valentines Day or any other special day;
Last night he beat me and threatened to kill me;
Make-up and long sleeves didn't hide the cuts and bruises this time;
I couldn't go to work today because I didn't want anyone to know-
but I know he's sorry;
Because he sent me flowers today.*

*I got flowers today!
And it wasn't Mother's Day or any other special day;
Last night he beat me again, and it was worse than all of the other times;
If I leave him, what will I do?
How will I take care of the kids? What about money?
I'm afraid of him, but I'm too scared and dependent to leave him!
But he must be sorry;
Because he sent me flowers today.*

*I got flowers today..
Today was a special day-it was the day of my funeral;
Last night he killed me;
If only I would have gathered the courage and strength to leave him;
I could have received help from the Women's Shelter,
If I had only asked for their help;
Maybe I wouldn't have gotten flowers today.*

"Sarah"

My name is Sarah
I am but three
My eyes are swollen
I cannot see,
I must be stupid
I must be bad,
What else could have made
My daddy so mad?
I wish I were better
I wish I weren't ugly,
Then maybe my mommy
Would still want to hug me.
I can't speak at all
I can't do a wrong
Or else I'm locked up
All the day long.
When I awake
I'm all alone
The house is dark
My folks aren't home
When my mommy does come
I'll try and be nice,
So maybe I'll get just
One whipping tonight.
Don't make a sound!
I just heard a car
My daddy is back
From Charlie's Bar.
I hear him curse
My name he calls
I press myself
Against the wall
I try and hide
From his evil eyes
I'm so afraid now
I'm starting to cry

He finds me weeping
He shouts ugly words,
He says its my fault
That he suffers at work.
He slaps me and hits me
And yells at me more,
I finally get free
And I run for the door.
He's already locked it
And I start to bawl,
He takes me and throws me
Against the hard wall.
I fall to the floor
With my bones nearly broken,
And my daddy continues
With more bad words spoken.
"I'm sorry!", I scream
But its now much too late
His face has been twisted
Into unimaginable hate
The hurt and the pain
Again and again
Oh please God, have mercy!
Oh please let it end!
And he finally stops
And heads for the door,
While I lay there motionless
Sprawled on the floor
My name is Sarah
And I am but three,
Tonight my daddy
Murdered me.

Written by
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