

Domestic Violence

Myths and Facts about Domestic Violence:

Myth: Domestic violence only happens to poor women and women of color.

Fact: Domestic violence happens in all kinds of families and relationships. Persons of any class, culture, religion, sexual orientation, marital status, age, and sex can be victims or perpetrators of domestic violence.

Myth: Some people deserve to be hit.

Fact: No one deserves to be abused. Period. The only person responsible for the abuse is the abuser. Physical violence, even among family members, is wrong and against the law.

Myth: Alcohol, drug abuse, stress, and mental illness cause domestic violence.

Fact: Alcohol use, drug use, and stress do not cause domestic violence; they may go along with domestic violence, but they do not cause the violence. Abusers often say they use these excuses for their violence. (Michigan Judicial Institute, Domestic Violence Benchbook, 1998, p. 1.6 - 1.7)

- Generally, domestic violence happens when an abuser has learned and chooses to abuse. (Michigan Judicial Institute, Domestic Violence Benchbook, 1998, p. 1 - 5)
- Domestic violence is rarely caused by mental illness, but it is often used as an excuse for domestic violence. (Michigan Judicial Institute, Domestic Violence Benchbook, 1998, p. 1 - 8)

Myth: Domestic violence is a personal problem between a husband and a wife.

Fact: Domestic violence affects everyone.

- About 1 in 3 American women have been physically or sexually abused by a husband or boyfriend at some point in their lives. (Commonwealth Fund, Health Concerns Across a Woman's Lifespan: the Commonwealth Fund 1998 Survey of Women's Health, 1999)
- In 1996, 30% of all female murder victims were killed by their husbands or boyfriends. (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 1997)
- 40% to 60% of men who abuse women also abuse children. (American Psychological Association, Violence and the Family, 1996)

Myth: If it were that bad, she would just leave.

Fact: There are many reasons why women may not leave. Not leaving does not mean that the situation is okay or that the victim wants to be abused.

- Leaving can be dangerous. The most dangerous time for a woman who is being abused is when she tries to leave. (United States Department of Justice, National Crime Victim Survey, 1995)

Myth: Domestic violence is not a widespread problem in this county:

Fact: Every 15 seconds a woman in this country is beaten by her current or former husband or partner. Experts agree that domestic violence is a severely underreported crime, with perhaps 1 in 10 assaults being reported.

- Violence occurs at least once in the course of over half of all marriages; and in half of these cases, occurs regularly.
- A woman is six times more likely to be assaulted by her partner in her own home than by a stranger on the street.

Myth: When a man hits his wife or girlfriend, it's usually nothing serious – just a slap or punch.

Fact: 1/3 of all homicides in the U.S. are from domestic violence

- Studies of violence families show that violence escalates over time, becoming more intense and more frequent
- Approximately 4,000 women lose their lives a year as a result of domestic violence
- In 85% of murders of spouses, the police had been called five times or more.
- Domestic violence is the single greatest case of injury to women.

Myth: There are just as many women who batter their husbands as men who batter their wives.

Fact: Studies show that 80 - 97% of victims of domestic violence are women.

Myth: If I don't know anyone being abused, domestic violence doesn't affect me.

Fact: The impact of domestic violence on children increases juvenile crime, gang violence, teen pregnancy and substance abuse. The cost to business is estimated at \$5 billion annually in absenteeism, medical expenses and lost productivity.

Family Violence & Rape Crisis Services

919-542-5445

24-hour Crisis Line: 919-545-0224

Walk-in hours: 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.

200 East St., Pittsboro

144 N. Chatham St., Siler City