

Introduction to **Domestic Violence**



**Mayor's Office
to Combat
Domestic Violence**

Last updated February 2013

Contents

- Defining domestic violence
- Prevalence
- Examples of power and control
- Why victims stay
- How you can help

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WHAT IS
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE?

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Defining Domestic Violence

Domestic Violence:

- Is a pattern of abusive behavior that occurs between family members and/or intimate partners to gain power and control
- Can take the form of physical, sexual, psychological, or economic abuse

Defining Domestic Violence

Domestic violence:

- Occurs in every country, in families of all races, cultures, religions, and income levels
- Can happen to people of all ages, genders, and sexual orientations

HOW OFTEN
DOES DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HAPPEN?

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Domestic violence statistics

- In the U.S., nearly 1 in 4 women reports experiencing violence by a current or former spouse or boyfriend at some point in her life.¹
- Globally, the United Nations reports that up to 70% of women experience some form of gender-based violence in their lifetime (according to country data available)²

¹ <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/PDF/wk/mm5705.pdf>

² <http://saynotoviolence.org/issue/facts-and-figures>

Domestic Violence Statistics

New York City

- In 2012 in NYC, police responded to 263,207 domestic violence incidents; this averages to over 720 incidents per day¹
- In 2012 in NYC, there were 69 family related homicides¹
- In 2011 in NYC, 10.4% of male and female high school students reported being hit, slapped, or physically hurt on purpose by a boyfriend/girlfriend within the past year²

¹ Statistics provided by NYPD

² NYC High School Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2011

WHAT ARE EXAMPLES OF
POWER AND CONTROL?

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Power and Control

Psychological/Emotional Abuse

- Extreme jealousy
- Name calling including racial slurs
- Hiding or destroying important belongings
- Putting person down
- Frequent demands to know where s/he is and with whom
- Alienation from family and friends
- Public humiliation

Power and Control

Physical Abuse

- Hitting, punching, kicking, slapping, pushing, strangling
- Withholding medications
- Attempting to force miscarriage
- Scratching, biting, pulling hair, tripping
- Refuse to help when sick, injured or disabled
- Using or threatening to use weapons

Power and Control

Sexual Abuse

- Forced sexual activities with abuser and/or others
- Forced prostitution, exotic dancing
- Threatening to sexually abuse children
- Refusing to use or allowing ~~ing~~ contraception use
- Public display of extramarital affairs
- Forcing victim to watch batterer have sex with others
- Forcing cruel and/or harmful sexual acts

Power and Control

Economic Abuse

- Forcing person to work “under the table”
- Taking person’s earned income
- Preventing person from getting or keeping a job
- Forcing person to work
- Making person beg for money
- Giving person an allowance
- Maintaining control of ALL family finances

WHAT ARE EXAMPLES OF
POWER AND CONTROL
EXPERIENCED BY SPECIFIC POPULATIONS?

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Power and Control

Immigrants

To exert power and control, the abuser may:

- Isolate victim from those who speak same language
- Not allow victim to learn English
- Fail to file papers or threaten to withdrawal papers to legalize immigration status
- Threaten to call immigration
- Threaten to take children back to country of origin

Note: the Violence Against Women Act allows some battered immigrants to obtain lawful permanent residence without their partner's cooperation.

Power and Control

In LGBTQ Relationships

To exert power and control, the abuser may:

- Threaten to reveal the sexual orientation of the victim to friends, family members, employers, church community, and law enforcement officials.
- Minimize or justify abuse by stating that it cannot be domestic violence because it is a same-sex relationship.
- Make the abuser feel shame about sexual activity or gender identity.
- Ridiculing or questioning partner's identity.

Power and Control

Older Victims

To exert power and control, the abuser may:

- Illegally or improperly use the elder's funds, property, or assets.
- Inappropriately use drugs and physical restraints to punish the older person.
- Treat the elder like a child.
- Isolate the elderly person from family, friends, or regular activities.
- Refuse or fail to provide life necessities such as meals and water, clothing, shelter, personal hygiene care, and medication.

Power and Control

People with Disabilities

To exert power and control, the abuser may:

- Isolate the victim from family, friends, and other community members.
- Refuse or fail to provide basic life necessities such as food and water, medication, personal hygiene care, shelter, and comfort.
- Threaten the victim with total abandonment.
- Refuse to transport the victim to essential medical appointments.
- Withhold financial support or deposit the victim's funds into their own personal account.
- Withhold the use of a TTY device.

Power and Control

Teens

To exert power and control, the abuser may:

- Threaten to expose the victim's sexual activity to others students.
- Humiliate the victim in front of peers at school or after school.
- Destroy the victim's homework.
- Limit or control who the victim sees.
- Decide what school activities the victim may participate in.
- Manipulate or make threats to have sex or rape the victim.
- Control the victim through emails or texts.

WHY DO
VICTIMS STAY
IN ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIPS?

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Why Victims May Stay

- For sake of children
- Economic dependence
- Religious pressure
- Family pressure
- Fear of being alone
- Fear of retaliation
- Cultural constraints
- Fear of authorities
- Loyalty to abuser
- Love
- Duty & responsibility
- Shame & humiliation
- “Things will get better”
- Feels deserve treatment
- Language barriers
- Social isolation

Survival

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Why Victims May Stay

“Why doesn’t the victim just leave?”

What is wrong with this question?

- It blames the victim for the abuser’s behavior
- It implies that domestic violence is not a societal problem, but a “family issue”
- It assumes that leaving is a safe option

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

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How to Help

If you know someone who is in an abusive relationship:

- Listen without giving advice, unless it is asked for, and believe what they tell you
- Acknowledge their feelings. Do not tell them how they should feel
- Let them know you are concerned about their safety
- Do not pressure them to leave their partner- this could be dangerous
- Don't assume that they will identify as a "victim of domestic violence." Ask questions such as "Do you feel afraid of your partner?"
- Let them know that help is available and they can call 311 for the City's Domestic Violence Hotline or visit one of the City's Family Justice Centers
- Call 911 if you witness physical violence

How to Help

- Call 311 for the City's Domestic Violence Hotline
- Call 911 in emergencies
- Learn more: visit www.nyc.gov/domesticviolence