

Domestic Violence...What is It?

As domestic violence awareness has increased, it has become evident that abuse can occur within a number of relationships. The laws in many states cover incidents of violence occurring between married couples, as well as abuse of elders by family members, abuse between roommates, dating couples and those in lesbian and gay relationships.

In an abusive relationship, the abuser may use a number of tactics other than physical violence in order to maintain power and control over his or her partner:

Emotional and verbal abuse:

Survivors of domestic violence recount stories of put-downs, public humiliation, name-calling, mind games and manipulation by their partners. Many say that the emotional abuse they have suffered has left the deepest scars.

Isolation:

It is common for an abuser to be extremely jealous, and insist that the victim not see her friends or family members. The resulting feeling of isolation may then be increased for the victim if she loses her job as a result of absenteeism or decreased productivity (which are often associated with people who are experiencing domestic violence).

Threats and Intimidation:

Threats -- including threats of violence, suicide, or of taking away the children -- are a very common tactic employed by the batterer.

The existence of emotional and verbal abuse, attempts to isolate, and threats and intimidation within a relationship may be an indication that physical abuse is to follow. Even if they are not accompanied by physical abuse, the effect of these incidents must not be minimized. Many of the resources listed in this book have information available for people who are involved with an emotionally abusive intimate partner.

For additional information on the domestic violence call [1-800-799-SAFE](tel:1-800-799-SAFE).