

DOMESTIC

Violence and Abuse is Everyone's Concern



- Clergy
- Teachers
- Professional Church Workers
- Members of Congregations
- Social Service Providers



A recent study commissioned by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found that 1 in 3 women and 1 in 4 men in the United States have experienced a form of Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) in their lifetime.

Individuals who have experienced IPV are **more likely to engage in other behaviors, SUCH AS DRUG ABUSE, ALCOHOLISM, AND SUICIDE ATTEMPTS.**

IPV can range from single or occasional acts of violence to **MORE FREQUENT AND INTENSIVE ACTS OF VIOLENCE** that are characterized by **one partner attempting to develop and maintain control over the other.**



Domestic Violence and Abuse

Domestic violence and abuse can be found in family and intimate relationships including spouse or intimate partner, child, elder and dating. Types of abuse may be actual or threatened physical, psychological, emotional, sexual, economic or neglect.

The term domestic violence is used most commonly to describe spousal abuse. This includes a pattern of violent and coercive behavior by one adult in an intimate relationship over another adult. The abuse may consist of repeated severe beatings or include more subtle forms of abuse, like threats and intimidation.

The four basic types of domestic violence are:

- › **Physical Assault** — Hitting, shoving, kicking, restraining and pushing. These assaults can occur frequently or infrequently, but generally escalate over time.
- › **Sexual Assault** — Any unwanted or declined sexual acts which are forced by a partner. This can include marital rape.
- › **Psychological Assault** — Control of the partner and the partner's activities, verbal and emotional abuse, threats, intimidation and forced isolation from family and friends.
- › **Attacks against Property and Pets** — Hitting or punching holes in walls and doors; destroying household objects (especially treasured objects); maiming, abusing or killing beloved pets.



Abuse is not God's punishment for an individual's sins. Nobody deserves to be abused. Jesus endured the punishment that we deserve. He paid in full, once and for all (*see 1 Peter 3:18*).

What does God say about domestic violence and abuse?

- › There can be no doubt that God hates any kind of discord. He created the world and all of its creatures to live in peace and harmony.
- › That peace and harmony was broken by the fall into sin in the Garden of Eden.
- › In spite of the fall into sin, God did not give up on His creation. He made a promise to those two people whom He had placed in the Garden as the crowning glory of creation and as the stewards of it all.
- › His promise: Redemption would come through His Son who would be born into a family.
- › From the very beginning there has been abuse and violence in families. Cain killed his brother Abel. Joseph's brothers sold him into slavery. Jesus faulted the Pharisees for their treatment of their parents. Husbands are directed to love their wives as they love their own bodies and be willing to die for them as Christ died for the church. Parents are warned not to provoke their children to anger.
- › In spite of the imperfections and the sinfulness of families and households, God remained true to His promise and sent His Son into the family of Mary and Joseph.
- › Certainly, God would have families and households serve as "safe havens" for people of all ages — from infants to the elderly.
- › Families and households are to be the places where God's love and salvation are demonstrated, lived and passed from one person to the other. Anything that deters from this is an affront to God and is against His will.

What can I do to help if I learn of an abusive situation?

- › Listen. Tell the adult or child that the abuse is not his or her fault and it is not God's will for it to occur.
- › Tell the individual that help and assistance are available.
- › Refer the individual to an appropriate resource in your community — a domestic violence program with a safe home or shelter, a family counselor or counseling agency/program and support groups in the community.
- › In cases of child or elder abuse, professionals working in helping fields may be obligated by law to report the case to the appropriate child or adult protection authorities. Your knowledge of reporting procedures and telephone numbers for protection agencies is crucial.

What are good sources for more information on domestic violence and abuse?

- › LCMS Web Site lcms.org/socialissues
- › National Domestic Violence/Abuse Hotline thehotline.org
800-799-SAFE (7233)
- › National Resource Center on Domestic Violence nrcdv.org
- › National Clearinghouse on Family Violence, Canada
<http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/sfv-avf/index-eng.php>
- › On the Internet, check for resources by topic. For example: domestic violence, spouse abuse, elder abuse, intimate partner violence.
- › PLEASE NOTE THAT YOUR COMPUTER CAN BE MONITORED AND IS IMPOSSIBLE TO COMPLETELY CLEAR.