

The Sad Reality of Domestic Violence

“I cannot believe that she puts up with that crap!” “I don’t know why he takes that kind of abuse from her!” “I hate that the kids have to hear and see all that cussing and name calling.” Have you ever said that about one of your friend’s relationships? Sadly most of us have witnessed domestic violence or its effects on a loved one, friend, co-worker, or even a child. Others reading this column wake up in an abusive home regularly.

Domestic abuse statistics are staggering: <http://www.brookecountysheriff.com/articles/pdv.htm>

- More than 1 in 3 women say they are abused by an intimate partner at some point in their lives.
- Domestic Violence is the leading cause of serious injury to women - More common than muggings, rapes and car crashes combined.
- In West Virginia, a domestic homicide occurs every 14 days
- The leading cause of death in pregnant women is homicide, often related to domestic violence.

Domestic violence is often hidden. Victims are often embarrassed to go out in public with bruises or black eyes. They make up “excuses for injuries” if they do visit the emergency room or a friend asks about the injury. Sadly many are forced to withdraw from relationships with their own friends and family so that this secret abuse can be hidden.

It is common for the abuser to tell the victim that the abuse is actually the victim’s own fault and would not have happened if the victim would have not made them mad. After hearing this long enough some victims begin to believe that this is true. They give up on accepting their own thoughts. Verbal abuse may not leave visible bruises and black eyes, but it certainly leaves scars.

I have worked with clients who have been controlled by jealousy. There was great insecurity and mistrust in those relationships. Every move these clients made was monitored. Some even lost jobs since their lover constantly came to the work-site or phoned and texted nonstop. Their abusers would make life miserable for them if they were not constantly available. Sadly this acceptance of control is especially common in teen dating and is mistaken for “love.” Another common element of domestic violence is the famous “I won’t do it again.” Abusers are known to be manipulators. They abuse and apologize and then abuse again and again. Others may have sincerely meant it at the time they promised but lack the ability to control their rage. This is especially true of those suffering with mental illnesses such as PTSD or drug, alcohol, and gambling addictions.

Domestic violence seems to repeat itself in families. Client often excuse the abuse saying “I am of %%% nationality and this is the way we treat our women.” Others ignorantly quote scripture as an excuse- totally dismissing teachings His about love. I am sure God is very displeased that anyone would dare distort HIS word to justify such sinful actions.

The lies and silence which perpetuate domestic violence are being exposed during Domestic Violence Awareness Month. Our local YWCA has been holding educational awareness activities all month. They also offer Anger Management Focus Groups, Domestic Violence Support Groups and a host of other programs including a BIPP- Batterers Intervention and

Prevention Program. Group. Other helpful area resources are The Lighthouse in Weirton , WV, the Hancock Brooke Ohio Counties Victim Assistance Program in Wheeling, WV, the Women' s Tri-County Help Center in St. Clairsville, OH, and various Veterans Programs. Remember "Love is patient, love is kind.....it is not easily angered..."