



Domestic Violence

The Facts:

- 960,000 incidents of violence against a current or former spouse, boyfriend, or girlfriend per year. (US Dept. of Justice, Violence by Inmates: Analysis of Data on Crimes by Current Spouses, Boyfriends, and Girlfriends. March 1998)
- 3.9 million women are physically abused by their husbands or live-in partners per year. (The Commonwealth Fund, First Comprehensive National Health Survey of American Women. July 1993)
- One out of every four women is a victim of domestic violence at least once in her lifetime. (www.domesticviolence.com)
- **Every fifteen seconds, a woman is physically assaulted within her home in the United States.** (Survivor's Handbook for Battered Women. SAFE House Susan McGee)
- Women ages 19-29 report more violence by intimates than any other age group. (www.abnet.org/domviol/stats.html)
- Six out of seven domestic assaults are not reported to the police. (www.abnet.org/domviol/stats.html)
- **Domestic violence is the primary cause of homelessness in 46% of US cities surveyed.** (US Conference of Mayors 1998)
- In 1996, approx. 1,800 murders were attributed to intimates; nearly three out of four of these deaths were female victims. (US Dept. of Justice, Violence by Inmates: Analysis of Data on Crimes by Current Spouses, Boyfriends, and Girlfriends. March 1998)
- Only 3% of the male victims were known to be slain by wives or girlfriends. (Federal Bureau of Investigation, Crime in the United States 1995: Uniform Crime reports)
- **78% of stalking victims are women.** Women are significantly more likely than men (60% and 30% respectively) to be stalked by intimate partners. (Center for Policy Research, Stalking in America, July 1997)
- Slightly more than half of female victims of intimate violence live in households with children under the age of twelve. (US Department of Justice, march 1998)
- 40% of teenaged girls (ages 14-17) report knowing someone their age that has been hit or beaten by a boyfriend. (Children Now/Kaiser Permanente Poll, December 1995)
- Source: www.umich.edu/~mserve/ProjectServe/HTML/IEA_domviolence.html

Why do they stay?

FEAR - Of more serious injury or death or of trying to make it on her own.

SHAME - Of having a failed marriage, Traditional responsibility for the home rests with the wife (e.g., if she had been a better cook.), Social stigma, "It's not supposed to happen in families like mine!"

HOPE - Every time abuser apologizes, the victim wants to believe, when abuser isn't being abusive - abuser is nice, if victim could be a better spouse or partner, maybe victim could control abuser's violence.

MONEY - Abuser controls the money - the checking account and credit cards are in abuser's name only, the victim may not have a job, abuser gives victim an allowance and demands receipts for everything spent.

DEPENDENCE ON BATTERER - The more dependent a batterer makes the victim, the less likely the victim will leave, batterer may force the victim to give up working outside the home, batterer may not allow the victim to go to school, batterer may sell or disable the victim's car, batterer may isolate the victim from family and friends, batterer may disable or remove phones from the house when he is leaving the house.

CHILDREN - The victim wants the children to have two parents, the victim both stays and leaves because of children, a batterer may threaten or abuse the children as a means of intimidating and controlling the victim's behavior, people who choose not to report violence may not realize that they risk losing custody of their children, and abused children may remain silent out of fear that the batterer will retaliate and further abuse their mother, themselves, or their siblings. Child welfare agencies and domestic violence services routinely function along parallel tracks with no coordination. At times they are in conflict with each other, as child welfare agencies' commitment to keeping victims safe. In the extreme, victims whose children have been abused may be taken to court for failing to protect their children, with no investigation into whether the person may have been abused.

LOVE - Victim may stop loving the batterer despite the abuse, battering doesn't usually occur every day. About 1 in 5 women victimized by their spouse or ex-spouse reported that they had been a victim of a series of at least 3 assaults in the last 6 months. Batterers can at times be very loving and caring, lavishing gifts on the victim, writing personal notes and poems, or doing other things that are very romantic.

VICTIMS IN RURAL AREAS - Referral services may be located in towns or cities miles from home. Victims may be reluctant to make long-distance phone calls that will be listed on the monthly bill. Public transportation is scarce. Victims may fear that their batterer will check the mileage on vehicles. Police officers are often miles from the scene of abuse, and it may take hours for them to respond. Families residing in rural move less frequently, often staying in the same county, or even the same house, for generations. Physical safety means leaving behind family, friends, and all that is familiar. Because some adults and children seldom leave the immediate communities in which they live, they may not know that domestic violence and child abuse are crimes. Close relationships among community members may lead victims and children to seek assistance from family members or friends rather than from police, advocates, or other services. Orders of protection may be issued only at courthouses during limited hours on specified days of the week. Circuit-riding prosecutors and judges who try and hear cases throughout the district or state may only be available periodically.

For more information:

- **Department of Justice**
 - Office on Violence Against Women:** <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/vawo/>
 - Office for Victims of Crime:** - <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ovc/>
- **Domestic Violence:** <http://www.domesticviolence.com/>
- **Violence Against Women Online Resources:** <http://www.vaw.umn.edu/>
- **NOW Legal Defense and Education Fund:** <http://www.nowldef.org/>
- **National Coalition Against Domestic Violence:** <http://www.ncadv.org/>
- **The National Center for Victims of Crime:** <http://www.ncvc.org/>