

Clear Reflections Psychotherapy, PLLC

Traci Breniser Wilson, MA LLP

Domestic Violence Awareness Month



Domestic violence can be defined as a pattern of behavior in any relationship that is used to gain or maintain power and control over an intimate partner.

Abuse is physical, sexual, emotional, economic or psychological actions or threats of actions that influence another person. This includes any behaviors that frighten, intimidate, terrorize, manipulate, hurt, humiliate, blame, injure or wound someone.

1. 1 in 4 women (25%) has experienced some kind of domestic violence in her lifetime.
2. About 50% of female victims report having an injury of some type, but only 20% of them seek medical assistance.
3. About 1 in 5 high school students reports being physically and/or sexually abused by a dating partner.
4. 40% of girls age 14 to 17 report knowing someone their age who has been hit or beaten by a boyfriend.

Domestic violence can happen to anyone of any race, age, sexual orientation, religion or gender. It can happen to couples who are married, living together or who are dating. Domestic violence affects people of all socioeconomic backgrounds and education levels.

- You may be in an emotionally abusive relationship if your partner:
- Calls you names, insults you or continually criticizes you.
- Does not trust you and acts jealous or possessive.
- Tries to isolate you from family or friends.
- Monitors where you go, who you call and who you spend time with.
- Does not want you to work.
- Controls finances or refuses to share money.
- Punishes you by withholding affection.
- Expects you to ask permission.
- Threatens to hurt you, the children, your family or your pets.
- Humiliates you in any way.

If you think your friend or family member may be suffering:

- Let your friend know you believe them.
- Listen to what your friend is saying. Interrupting and saying things like, "I would never put up with that!" is unhelpful and may actually do harm.



October Is Domestic
Violence Awareness Month

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- Tell your friend they don't deserve to be hurt and that they are not to blame. No one deserves to be mistreated and there is no excuse for abuse.
- Point out the unfairness of how your friend is being treated and what your fears for them are.
- Allow your friend to feel the way they do.
- Find out what your friend wants to do about their relationship and support them no matter what they decide.
- Let your friend know abuse usually gets worse over time.
- Tell your friend you'll be there if they ever need you.
- Expect your friend to be confused, about their feelings and about what to do. Expect them to change their mind, maybe even a few times.
- Watch your body language and respect your friend's right to personal space. If your friend has been hurt, they may not want to be hugged.

Traci Breniser Wilson is a clinical psychologist with offices in Brooklyn, MI. She has 30+ years of experience and specializes in eating disorders, weight loss, depression, anxiety, marriage repair and enrichment, addiction, grief and loss, Christian therapy, and goal achievement. For more information on this topic or other mental health questions, feel free to contact Traci.

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