

THE FACTS

- Every 15 seconds, a man in the United States is kicked, bitten, hit with a fist or object, beaten up, or has a weapon used or threatened to be used against him by a female partner—nearly 2 million men each year.
- Men incur 24%-43% or more of physical injuries, and 20%-35% of those requiring medical attention.
- Victimized men suffer high rates of anxiety, depression, PTSD, and substance abuse.
- When *either* parent is abused, child witnesses are at risk for emotional and conduct problems and to later abuse their own adult partners and children.

WHAT MEN SHOULD DO

Never be provoked into retaliating with physical or verbal abuse yourself.

Always seek medical help for injuries. Talk to your doctor about your health. If you are seeing a mental health counselor, tell them about your domestic violence concerns (they may not ask). Many counselors believe it only happens to women.

Keep a record. Record dates and times of incidents and keep copies of medical records and police reports. Take photographs of injuries. Keep these documents in a safe place. Seek legal advice.

Call the police. *Insist* that they record your injuries and take a report, that it is recorded accurately, and that they make an arrest if appropriate.

Reach out, get support. Don't be afraid to ask for help from others; doing so is not a sign of weakness—it's a sign of strength. Tell a friend. Get counseling, or find a support group. You are not alone.

RESOURCES

Stop Abuse for Everyone. Visit www.safe4all.org for information and resources. SAFE provides a nationwide network for obtaining resources and connecting with other men.

Domestic Abuse Helpline for Men and Women. (888) 743-5754. Information/referral line.

Family Violence Treatment & Education Association. Visit www.FAVTEA.com for resources, information and up-to-date research.

Victims of Crime. (800) 842-8467. Provides referrals for legal help and other resources.

California Alliance for Families & Children www.cafcusa.org. Family law assistance.

Valley Oasis Shelter, Lancaster, CA (661) 945-5509. Accepts male victims and their children.

Abused Men: The Hidden Side of Domestic Violence. Read this book by Philip Cook (Praeger Publishing, 1-800-225-5800).

What Abused Men Report:

"I was writhing, crying in the corner...she kicked me in the groin at least 12 times."

"She spent our entire life savings without telling me."

"She held a knife to my balls, threatened to cut them off."

"She has jumped on my back, clawed and scraped me, and I've gotten the s--- beat out of me. I can never please her."

"I started the car and she stood behind the car with the baby...Then she put the baby on the ground behind the car where I couldn't see her so I wouldn't leave."

Source: Hines, D., Brown, J., & Dunning, E. (2007). Characteristics of callers to the Domestic Abuse Helpline for Men. *Journal of Family Violence*, 22 (2), 63-72.

ARE YOU
(Or Someone
You Care About)

A
MALE VICTIM
OF INTIMATE
PARTNER ABUSE?



Yes, it happens to men, too.

**STOP ABUSE
FOR EVERYONE**

www.safe4all.org

**FAMILY VIOLENCE
TREATMENT & EDUCATION
ASSOCIATION**

www.FAVTEA.com

WHAT ARE THE SIGNS OF DOMESTIC ABUSE?

Is this your home?

If any of the following have happened to you, you are experiencing domestic abuse. If several are happening, you and your children are possibly in serious danger.

Do you:

- Change your behavior because you are afraid that emotional abuse or physical violence might result if you don't? Do you often feel like you are "walking on eggshells"?
- Feel that no matter what you do, you can't do anything right?

Does your partner:

- Tell you that you are worthless?
- Ridicule your sexual performance or tell you that no one else would want you?
- Turn the children against you?
- Hurt (or threaten to hurt) your children?
- Become out of control and get extremely angry and then try to make up afterwards?
- Prevent you from sleeping? Are you worried about being attacked in your sleep?
- Ever deliberately destroy or damage some things of value to you?
- Throw things at you or break objects during an argument?
- Show signs of extreme jealousy by constantly checking up on you? Accuse you unjustly of flirting with others or having affairs? Is it hard for you to maintain relationships with others because your partner doesn't approve of them?
- Stand in the doorway to keep you escaping her abuse, or threaten to call the police and have you arrested, even though she initiates the assaults?

- Sometimes spend large sums of money and refuse to tell you why or what the money was spent on? Do you know what the family's assets are and where important records are kept? If you wanted to know, would your partner make it difficult for you to find out?
- Ever kick you in the testicles?
- Ever bite, hit you with a hard object, scratch you, slap you, hit you with her fist, throw hard objects at you, throw hot liquids on you, or threaten you with a knife or gun?
- Frequently threaten you with never seeing your children again if you leave, because "women always win custody"?

HOW MEN COPE

Take on a macho, "I can handle it" attitude.

Even if you have been physically hurt much worse (e.g., on the playing field, at work), that is not the same thing as being physically attacked by your intimate partner, which also hurts emotionally. Allowing this pattern to continue can result in depression, substance abuse, even suicide. (At its worst, it has resulted in death at the hands of a partner or someone induced to kill by the partner.)

"Men Don't Tell." This is the actual title of a CBS TV movie about male victims of domestic abuse. Keeping silent (not confiding to a friend, relative or professional) is a common reaction of both male and female victims of domestic violence—it's embarrassing. Men, however, face a greater degree of disbelief and ridicule than do most women in this situation, which helps enforce the silence. When asked about visible injuries by friends or medical personnel, they make excuses and explain them as due to accidents or being hurt while playing sports.

Hiding from it. Men often escape from a bad home life that they are afraid of by spending extra time at work, staying in "their space" (garage, den) at home, or even sleeping in the car or at a friend's place.

WHY MEN STAY

Fear of failure—Men have been told that "to be a man" they must be responsible, and be a provider. If they leave the family, they are abandoning responsibility and they see themselves as failures as to what a man is supposed to be.

Fear for the children—Many men stay in abusive relationships because they must act as protector for the children from abuse. They fear leaving because they assume the legal system will not grant them custody because they are a man, and fear that visitation in the hands of a controlling spouse will never be easy, or that they may never see their children again.

Few resources— There are 24-hour crisis lines and shelters available for female victims of domestic violence, but hardly any such services for men. When abused men call the advertised services they often find there is no help available and are even treated rudely. Only one or two shelters (out of nearly 2,000) in the United States offer beds for male victims. The result for families is that *when abused men are denied services, their children are also denied services.*

"On the whole, men do indeed have a more powerful left hook. The problem is that the dynamic of domestic violence is not analogous to two differently weighted boxers in a ring. There are relational strategies and psychological issues at work in an intimate relationship that negate the fact of physical strength. At the heart of the matter lies human will. Which partner - by dint of temperament, personality, life history - has the will to harm the other?"

- Patricia Pearson, *When She Was Bad: Women and the Myth of Innocence*, p. 117.