

Domestic Violence • Sexual Assault • Stalking

Information & Resources for Survivors & Their Supporters

This packet outlines the basic dynamics of domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking. This information was designed to inform victims and survivors, as well as their family, friends, and supporters. We hope this helps you begin to understand perpetrators and violence and, if necessary, provide ideas on how to plan for the safety of yourself or others.

It is important to acknowledge that abuse can occur in many different types of relationships (such as heterosexual, same-sex, or familial). While the majority of survivors are women, men can also be victims. In these materials, “he” is used for perpetrators and “she” is used for victims for the sake of simplicity.

In this packet you will find:

Domestic Violence

Myths & Facts	2
Warning Signs of an Abuser	3

Sexual Assault

Myths & Facts	5
Statistics	5
Pinpointing Responsibility	6
Types of Rapists	6

Stalking

Statistics	7
------------------	---

Offenders

In the Mind of the Perpetrator.....	8
Cycle of Violence	10

Survivors

How Survivors Cope	12
Healing from Abuse.....	13

Resources

Informative Websites	14
National Hotlines	14

About Mid-Valley Women’s Crisis Service

Mid Valley Women's Crisis Service offers a safe refuge and supportive services for women and children who are victims of domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking. Services are provided to survivors of any race, gender, ethnicity, color, creed, disability, religious belief, or sexual orientation.

Programs and services include:

- ★ 24 - hour crisis intervention hotline
- ★ 24 - hour shelter services that include housing, food, clothing, emergency transportation
- ★ Support services, such as referral and case management
- ★ Individual crisis intervention & advocacy
- ★ Support Groups for women who have been abused

If you would like more information about domestic violence, or if you want to talk to a trained advocate about a particular situation, please call the MVWCS 24-hour crisis hotline:

503-399-7722 or 1-866-399-7722 (toll-free)

You can also contact the office at **503-378-1572** (Monday-Friday, 9am-5pm) or find information online at **www.mvwcs.com**.



Myths & Facts about Domestic Violence

- MYTH *Domestic violence happens only in low-income families.*
FACT **Domestic violence happens in all kinds of families, rich and poor, urban, suburban and rural, in every part of the country, in every racial, religious and age group.**
- MYTH *Alcohol and drugs cause domestic violence.*
FACT **Alcohol and drugs do not cause domestic violence. Domestic violence is a choice. Many abusers will make sure they have alcohol or drugs on hand, in order to use them as an excuse for their actions. Abusers will also claim their actions resulted because they could not have the alcohol or drugs.**
- MYTH *Domestic violence is an anger control issue.*
FACT **Domestic violence has nothing to do with anger. Anger is a tool abusers use to get what they want. We know abusers are actually very much in control because they can stop when someone knocks on the door or the phone rings; they often direct punches and kicks to parts of the body where the bruises are less likely to show; and they are not abusing everyone who makes them “angry”, but waits until there are no witnesses and abuses the one he says he loves.**
- MYTH *Abusers have low self-esteem.*
FACT **Abusers do not have low self-esteem. They believe they are entitled to have power and control over their partner. Abusers will pretend to have low-self esteem, if it will make others believe the violence is not their fault.**
- MYTH *Victims have low self-esteem.*
FACT **Survivors of abuse may have had great self-esteem at the beginning of the relationship, but the abuser uses emotional abuse: calling her names, putting her down, telling her it is all her fault, in order to destroy her self-esteem. Some abusers look for women with low self-esteem, as they believe she will be more likely to blame herself and less likely to report his behavior. Other abusers will seek women with high self-esteem, as they may represent a greater challenge to control over time.**
- MYTH *Some women want to be beaten. They ask for it. They deserve it. Some women go from abuser to abuser – it must be something about them.*
FACT **No one deserves to be abused. Everyone has the right to live free of violence. No one would want to have their partner be abusive. Women who find that their second or third partner are abusers will often be blamed by others for the violence – “it must be something about her” or she will blame herself – “I always seem to pick abusers.” In reality, the abuser uses the tactic of charm early in the relationship to find out that she was previously abused. He uses this information to blame her for the violence – “it must be something that you are doing wrong, or there would not have been two of us” or to silence her – “you are not going to tell anyone, because if you do they will never believe you because you said that before.”**

Myths & Facts about Domestic Violence (cont')

MYTH *Boys who witness violence will grow up to be abusers.*

FACT **Studies have found that 30% of male child witnesses choose to become abusers as adults. This means that 70% do not become abusers and are committed to ending the cycle of violence in their lives. The majority of children, male and female, who witness domestic violence become advocates for children when they grow up; committed to raising their children without the use of violence and going into professions where they work to end violence against all children.**

Young men in our society must never feel they are destined to become violent. We send a dangerous message to young men and boys when we imply they are fated to become violent and we give abusers an excuse for their behavior.

Warning Signs of an Abuser

Abusive people, including sexual offenders and stalkers, typically think they are unique, really so different from other people that they do not have to follow the same rules everyone else does. Rather than being unique, abusers and sexual offenders have a lot in common with one another, including their patterns of thinking and behaving. Some of their characteristics are:

Charm

Abusers can be very charming. In the beginning, they may seem to be Prince Charming or a Knight in Shining Armor. He can be very engaging, thoughtful, considerate and charismatic. He may use that charm to gain very personal information about her. He will use that information later to his advantage.

For example; he will ask if she has ever been abused by anyone. If she says, "yes", he will act outraged that anyone could treat a woman that way. Then when he becomes abusive, he will tell her no one will believe her because she said that before and it must be her fault or two people would not have hit her.

Another example; he may find out she experimented with drugs in her past. He will then threaten that if she tells anyone about the abuse he will report her as a drug abuser and she will lose her children. The threat to take away her children is one of the most common threats abusers use to maintain power and control over their victims.

Isolation

Abusers isolate their victims geographically and socially. Geographic isolation includes moving the victim from her friends, family and support system (often hundreds of miles); moving frequently in the same area and/or relocating to a rural area.

Social isolation usually begins with wanting the woman to spend time with him and not her family, friends or co-workers. He will then slowly isolate her from any person who is a support to her. He dictates whom she can talk to; he tells her she cannot have contact with her friends or family.

Warning Signs of an Abuser (cont')

Jealousy

Jealousy is a tool abusers use to control the victim. He constantly accuses her of having affairs. If she goes to the grocery store, he accuses her of having an affair with the grocery clerk. If she goes to the bank, he accuses her of having an affair with the bank teller. Abusers routinely call their victims a whore or a slut.

Emotional Abuse

The goal of emotional abuse is to destroy the victim's self-esteem. He blames her for his violence, puts her down, calls her names and makes threats against her. Over time, she no longer believes she deserves to be treated with respect and she blames herself for his violence. For some survivors of domestic violence, the emotional abuse may be more difficult to heal from than the physical abuse.

Control

Abusers are very controlled and very controlling people. In time, the abuser will control every aspect of the victim's life: where she goes, how she wears her hair, what clothes she wears, whom she talks to. He will control the money and access to money. Abusers are also very controlled people. While they appear to go into a rage or be out of control we know they are very much in control of their behavior.

The following are the reasons we know his behaviors are not about anger and rage:

- He does not batter other individuals - the boss who does not give him time off or the gas station attendant that spills gas down the side of his car. He waits until there are no witnesses and abuses the person he says he loves.
- If you ask an abused woman, "can he stop when the phone rings or the police come to the door?" She will say "yes". Most often when the police show up, he is looking calm, cool and collected and she is the one who may look hysterical. If he were truly "out of control" he would not be able to stop himself when it is to his advantage to do so.
- The abuser very often escalates from pushing and shoving to hitting in places where the bruises and marks will not show. If he were "out of control" or "in a rage" he would not be able to direct or limit where his kicks or punches land.

Myths & Facts about Sexual Assault

- MYTH *"It can't happen to me." Rape is an isolated, infrequent event that only happens to certain kinds of people.*
- FACT **Anyone can be sexually assaulted. Studies show that sexual assault happens to people of all ages, people of color, lesbians/gays, people with disabilities, and people of every racial, ethnic, religious, economic and social background.**
- MYTH *"She asked for it." Women often provoke rape by their own behavior: wearing low-cut clothing, going out alone, staying out late, being drunk, kissing, etc.*
- FACT **No one asks to be sexually assaulted. People have the right to be safe from sexual violence. The offender, not the survivor, must be held responsible for this crime.**
- MYTH *Most sexual assaults are committed by strangers in out of the way places.*
- FACT **70-80% of sexual assaults are committed by someone the survivor knows. More than 50% of all rape/sexual assault incidents were reported by victims to have occurred at their home or within 1 mile of their home.**
- MYTH *Women frequently "cry rape".*
- FACT **The FBI reports that false accusations account for only 2% of all reported sexual assaults. This is no higher than false reports for any other crime.**

Sexual Assault Statistics

- Every two minutes, somewhere in America, someone is sexually assaulted.
(RAINN calculation based on 2006 National Crime Victimization Study, Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice)
- One out of every six American women have been the victims of an attempted or completed rape in their lifetime.
(Prevalence, Incidence and Consequences of Violence Against Women Survey, National Institute of Justice and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 1998)
- 15% of sexual assault victims are under age 12
- 29% are age 12-17
- 44% are under age 18
- 80% are under age 30
(Sexual Offenses and Offenders, 1997; National Crime Victimization Studies through 2005)

According to 2005 National Crime Victimization Study, 60% of sexual assaults are not reported to the police. Of the 40% of sexual assaults that are reported, probability statistics show:

- There is a 50.8% chance that an arrest will be made.
- If an arrest is made, there is an 80% chance of prosecution.
- If there is a prosecution, there is a 58% chance of a felony conviction.
- If there is a felony conviction, there is a 69% chance the convict will spend time in jail.
- Therefore, even in those 40% of rapes that are reported to police, there is only a 16.3% chance the rapist will go to prison.
- Factoring in unreported rapes, about 6% rapists will ever spend a day in jail. That means 15 out of 16 will walk free.

(Probability statistics compiled by NCPA from US Department of Justice Statistics)

Sexual Assault: Pinpointing Responsibility

A pervasive and devastating myth about rape is that the victim is in some way responsible for the crime. We have often heard people (including, unfortunately, some defense attorneys and judges) say, "What was she doing out alone?" or "She shouldn't have been drinking" or "She shouldn't have been wearing those clothes."

The reality is, a rapist is responsible for the rape. The Mid-Valley Women's Crisis Service refuses to accept that sexual violence is ever the appropriate consequence for going out alone, drinking, or wearing certain clothing, any more than banks should be blamed for bank robberies because they intentionally keep a lot of money in their vaults.

Those who blame the victim also fail to take into account that most victims of sexual assault or rape are assaulted by someone they know and believe to be trustworthy; that many sexual assaults occur in the victims' homes where they believed themselves safe; that victims often are children or the elderly; and that the crime is planned in detail and the victim is powerless to change the plan.

Types of Rapists

There are two basic types of rapists: rapists unknown to the victim and rapists known to the victim. Both types of rapists commit rape because they want to and they can. It is not true that rapists rape to have sex. Many times rapists have a consenting partner with whom they can have sex.

Rapists unknown to the victim

The rapist unknown to the victim typically is a stranger. He frequently has a knife or other weapon. He threatens the victim during the attack and may injure her severely. He tells her he will hurt her in the future.

Rapists unknown to the victim direct enormous hatred toward women. They want to degrade, humiliate, and use power over their victims. Only 20 to 30 percent of rapists fit into this category. For victims, dying is a major fear during the attack.

Rapists known to the victim

This rapist is someone the victim knows: a friend, a date, an acquaintance, a relative, a husband or partner. He rarely threatens the victim with physical violence beyond the sexual assault itself, and does not usually injure the victim.

Research shows that 70 to 80 percent of rapists know their victims. Their goal is to have power and control over the victim. For many victims, in their efforts to cope after the rape, the major issue is the violation of trust the rape represents.

Stalking Statistics

Stalking in America

- 1,006,970 women and 370,990 men are stalked annually in the U.S.
- 1 in 12 women and 1 in 45 men will be stalked in their lifetime.
- 77% of female victims and 64% of male victims know their stalker.
- 87% of stalkers are men.
- 59% of female victims and 30% of male victims are stalked by an intimate partner.
- 81% of women stalked by a current or former intimate partner are also physically assaulted by that partner.
- 31% of women stalked by a current or former intimate partner are also sexually assaulted by that partner.
- 73% of intimate partner stalkers verbally threatened victims with physical violence and almost 46% of victims experienced one or more violent incidents by the stalker.
- The average duration of stalking is 1.8 years.
- If stalking involves intimate partners, the average duration of stalking increases to 2.2 years.
- 56% of women stalked took some type of self-protective measure, often as drastic as relocating (11%).
- 26% of stalking victims lost time from work as a result of their victimization, and 7% never returned to work.

[Tjaden & Thoennes. (1998). "Stalking in America," NIJ.]

Study of Stalkers

- 2/3 of stalkers pursue their victims at least once per week, many daily, using more than one method.
- 78% of stalkers use more than one means of approach.
- Weapons are used to harm to threaten victims in 1 out of 5 cases.
- Almost 1/3 of stalkers have stalked before.
- Intimate partner stalkers frequently approach their targets, and their behaviors escalate quickly.

[Mohandie et al. "The RECON Typology of Stalking: Reliability and Validity Based upon a Large Sample of North American Stalkers." (In Press, *Journal of Forensic Sciences* 2006).]

Stalking and Intimate Partner Femicide (Femicide is the murder of a woman)

- 76% of intimate partner femicide (murder) victims had been stalked by their intimate partner.
- 67% had been physically abused by their intimate partner.
- 89% of femicide victims who had been physically abused had also been stalked in the 12 months before the murder.
- 79% of abused femicide victims reported stalking during the same period that they reported abuse.
- 54% of femicide victims reported stalking to police before they were killed by their stalkers.

[McFarlane et al. (1999). "Stalking and Intimate Partner Femicide," *Homicide Studies*].

This information on this page is from the Stalking Resource Center's *Stalking Fact Sheet*.

In the Mind of the Perpetrator

Abusers, rapists and stalkers all use similar forms of criminal thinking:

Excuse Making

Instead of accepting responsibility for his actions, the abuser tries to justify his behavior. For example, "I was molested as a child" or "I was drunk when I did it" or "When she said no, I thought she meant yes."

Blaming

The offender shifts responsibility for his actions from himself to others, a shift that allows him to blame the other person for "causing" his behavior. For example, "She was acting provocatively" or "She pushes my buttons."

Redefining

In a variation on the tactic of blaming, the abuser redefines the situation so that the problem lies not with him but with the outside world in general. For example, "It is society's fault."

Success Fantasies

The offender believes he would be rich, famous, or extremely successful if only people were not holding him back. He uses this belief to justify his assault.

Lying

The perpetrator uses lies to control the information available and therefore to control the situation. The perpetrator also may use lying to keep other people, including his victim, off-balance psychologically. For example, he tries to appear truthful when he's lying, he tries to look deceitful even when he's telling the truth, and sometimes he reveals himself in an obvious lie.

Assuming

Perpetrators often assume they know what others are thinking or feeling. Their assumption allows them to justify their behavior because they "know" what the other person would think or do in a given situation. For example, "I could tell she wanted me to do it."

Above the Rules

As mentioned earlier, a perpetrator generally believes he is better than other people and so does not have to follow the rules that ordinary people do. That attitude is typical of convicted criminals, too. Each inmate in a jail typically believes that while all the other inmates are criminals, he himself is not. An offender shows "above the rules" thinking when he says, for example, "I don't need intervention. Nobody knows as much about my life as I do. I can stop anytime I want to."

Making Fools of Others

The perpetrator combines tactics to manipulate others. The tactics include lying, upsetting the other person just to watch his or her reactions, and encouraging fights between or among others. Or, he may try to charm the person he wants to manipulate, pretending a lot of interest or concern for that person in order to get on her or his good side.

In the Mind of the Perpetrator (cont')

Fragmentation

The abuser usually keeps his assaultive behavior separate from the rest of his life, physically and psychologically. An example of physical separation is the abuser's assaulting family members but not people outside the family. An example of psychological separation is the perpetrator attending church Sunday morning and assaulting his victim Sunday night. He sees no inconsistency in his behavior and feels justified in it.

Minimizing

The perpetrator ducks responsibility for his actions by trying to make them seem unimportant. For example: "It was no big deal" or "I didn't hit her that hard" or "She wanted it anyway."

Anger

Abusers are not actually angrier than other people. Anger is a tool perpetrators use. They deliberately appear to be angry in order to control situations and people.

Power Plays

The abuser uses various tactics to overcome resistance to his bullying. For instance, he berates the victim, calling her a "tease," a "slut," etc. If they have friends or acquaintances in common, he may organize others to shun or criticize her for daring to "accuse" him of rape or assault.

Playing Victim

Occasionally the perpetrator will pretend to be helpless or will act persecuted in order to manipulate the victim into accompanying him or staying with him. Here, the perpetrator thinks that if he does not get what he wants, he is the victim; and he uses the disguise of victim to attack or make fools of others.

Drama and Excitement

Perpetrators make the choice not to have close relationships with other people. They substitute drama and excitement for closeness. Perpetrators find it exciting to start arguments or cause a general state of uproar among others.

Closed Channel

The perpetrator does not reveal much about his real feelings, and he is not open to new information about himself such as insights into how others see him. He is secretive, close-minded, and self-righteous. He believes he is right in all situations.

Ownership

The perpetrator typically is very possessive. Moreover, he believes that anything he wants should be his, and anything that is his he can do with as he pleases. That attitude applies to people as well as to possessions. It justifies his controlling behavior, physically abusive behavior, and taking others' possessions.

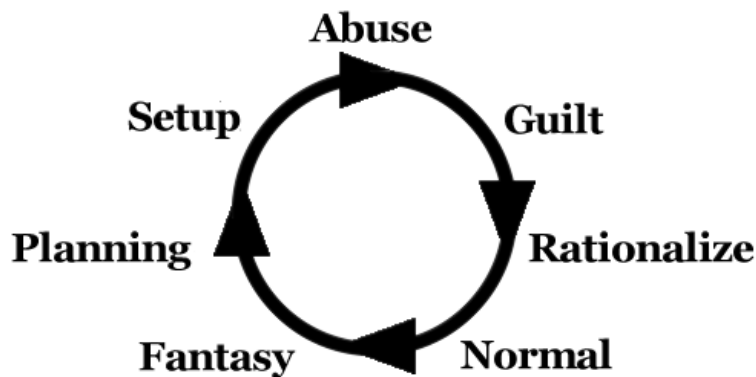
Self-Glorification

The perpetrator usually thinks of himself as strong, superior, and independent. Any action or perceived attitude of another person that does not conform to his glorified self-image is seen as a putdown.

The Cycle of Violence

Sexual assault and domestic violence may seem unpredictable, simply an outburst related just to the moment and to the circumstances in the lives of the people involved. In fact, however, domestic and sexual violence follows a pattern no matter when it occurs or who is involved. The pattern, or cycle, repeats; each time the level of his violence may increase. At every stage in the cycle, the perpetrator is fully in control of himself and is working to control and further isolate his victim. Understanding the cycle of violence and the thinking of the perpetrator helps survivors recognize they truly are not to blame for the violence they have suffered and that the perpetrator is the one responsible.

Six distinct stages make up the cycle of violence: the set-up, the abuse, the perpetrator's feelings of "guilt" and his fear of reprisal, his rationalization, his shift to non-abusive and charming behavior, and his fantasies and plans for the next time he will assault a victim.



Abuse

Abuse can be emotional, physical, sexual, psychological, economic, and social.

Guilt

A non-abusive person experiences guilt very differently than a perpetrator of violence. A non-abusive person feels guilty about how they have impacted the life of the person they harmed (victim-directed guilt). A perpetrator experiences self-directed "guilt". He does not feel guilty or sorry for hurting his victim. He may apologize for his behavior, but his apology is designed so that he will not face consequences or be held accountable. The goal of the guilt stage is to reassure himself that he will not be caught or face consequences.

Rationalization

The perpetrator makes excuses and blames the victim for his behavior. Common excuses usually revolve around the abuser being intoxicated or abused as a child. However, alcohol use and being abused as a child does not cause the perpetrator to be violent. Common victim blaming statements usually focus on the victim's behavior. For example, "If you had the house cleaned, I wouldn't have had to hit you," or, "If you didn't want it, you would not have come to my apartment." The goal of this stage is to abdicate responsibility for his behavior.

The Cycle of Violence (cont')

"Normal" Behavior

During this stage, the perpetrator may use different tactics to achieve his goal to regain power over the victim. The abuser may act as though nothing happened - everything is normal. This can be crazy making for victims, as they do not understand how he could pretend nothing happened. If the victim has visible injuries, she will have to explain how she got them. This is designed to maintain the normalcy of the relationship. The goal of this stage is to keep the victim in the relationship and present the relationship as normal.

Another tactic an abuser may use after he has chosen to be violent is to become the thoughtful, charming, loyal, and kind person with whom the victim fell in love. He may take her out to dinner, buy her flowers and convince her he will change. This can be a huge incentive for women to stay or return to the perpetrator because they believe that he really will change.

Fantasy and Planning

Assault/abuse is planned. In the initial stages, a perpetrator fantasizes or has a mental picture of the next time he will assault the victim. During the fantasy and planning stage, the abuser is the actor, producer, director and the star.

The perpetrator experiences his power from activating the fantasy. The planning phase details more specifically what the abuser will need to have and to do in order to abuse his partner. Perpetrators may spend minutes, hours or days fantasizing about what the victim has done "wrong" and how he is going to make her "pay".

Often, he will fantasize "She wants me" sexually or "She is having an affair". Victims do not want to be sexually assaulted and most abused women do not have the time, energy, or interest in having an affair.

Set-up

This is when the abuser puts his plan into action. For example, he may tell her to go to the store for groceries. What he withholds from her is that she has a certain amount of time to do the shopping. When she is held up in traffic and is a few minutes late, he tells himself he is justified in assaulting her because "You are having an affair with the store clerk." He sets the victim up.

The Full Cycle

Here is an example of the cycle of violence through all its phases:

A man **assaults/abuses** his partner. After he assaults her, he experiences self-directed **guilt**. He says, "I'm sorry for hurting you" or "touching you". What he does not say is, "Because I might get caught." He then **rationalizes** his behavior by saying that his partner "asked for it" or is having an affair with someone. He tells her "It's all your fault." He then acts apologetic, reassuring her that he will not assault her again and makes things appear "**normal**". He then **fantasizes** and reflects on past assaults and how he will proceed this time. He **plans** on where and when he will assault her again and what excuse he will use to blame her for the assault. He **sets her up** by creating a situation to blame her for the assault.

How Survivors Cope

Victims and survivors of sexual assault, domestic violence and stalking have talked about the various ways they have coped. The coping strategies they worked out enabled them to survive. Some of the coping strategies are:

Denial

The survivor tells herself, in effect, that the assault/abuse is not really happening or may deny the impact the violation has had on her. A survivor in denial will say, "This bruise? Oh, it's nothing" or "It really wasn't rape." Denial helps the survivor avoid feelings of terror and humiliation.

Minimization

This is a form of denial. The survivor minimizes when she says, "He couldn't stop himself," or "This isn't really abuse. Abuse is more serious" or "Well, he only hit me once with his fist."

Nightmares

These help the survivor experience some strong feelings such as fear, anger, panic, and shame which she cannot safely share with anyone at the time.

Shock & Dissociation

These two reactions can numb the survivor's mind and body while the assault takes place and for a time afterward. The reactions help her avoid dealing with immediate feelings until she has found safety.

Coping & Support

Even after the survivor finds safety and supportive people, she may continue to use these coping strategies. At some point, the survivor may be interested in receiving counseling or other supportive services. Your local crisis service may offer support groups for survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking. Support group and/or private counseling may be a good first step to begin the healing process. Other types of advocacy, referral, information, and support will be helpful for survivors with financial, medical, social service, or legal needs. It is important for survivors to make their own decisions about whether to use counseling, support groups, and other services available.

*When working with a victim of domestic violence, sexual assault or stalking, a support person (family, friend, colleague) may not understand the decisions she is making. It is important to remember: **You don't know what you don't know.** Maybe the victim doesn't want to report abuse to the police because the abuser threatened to take the kids or harm her parents. Maybe she won't report a sexual assault, because the rapist told her he would kill her if she did. There might be facts she doesn't share with anyone because she is embarrassed, ashamed, or worried telling would put her or them in more danger.*

No matter what coping strategies a survivor uses, it is important she be assured that she did what was right for her in the moment. It is common for victims to blame themselves, saying "If only I did/didn't... he wouldn't have..." Survivors should be told that this is not the case. The perpetrator is the only person who could have stopped the abuse by making a different choice.

Healing from Abuse

A survivor of sexual assault, domestic violence or stalking may experience at least some of the following feelings and reactions:

- Fear of the offender's return
- Frustration with the legal process
- Destruction of her trust in people, even those in no way connected to the assault
- Criticism and/or some level of shunning from her family and friends as well as from society in general
- Physical scars and/or disabilities
- HIV/AIDS or other sexually transmitted diseases
- Pregnancy
- Feelings of extreme isolation
- Flashbacks, memories of past traumas that feel as if they are taking place in the current moment
- Sleep disorders
- Loss of self-esteem
- Guilt that she in some way caused the assault
- Loss of a sense of control
- Loss of a sense of security in her surroundings

Just as most women do not report their assault to authorities, many victims will not tell anyone at all. Choosing to deal with the assault on their own, many survivors feel that keeping the assault quiet is their only way to regain control of their lives. Fear of being blamed for the assault, and a sense of isolation, contributes to the decision not to tell anyone, at least not right away.

Whether or not the survivor confides in someone, she may be in a kind of shock for days, weeks or months. The survivor may have a feeling of surrealism, an inability to process what is happening. An assault survivor may appear calm but feel out of control. All of these reactions may mean the survivor is in shock. Shock anesthetizes the mind and body to help the victim survive the assault.

If she has just been assaulted, your first concern should be that the survivor is safe, that she has a safe place to stay and safe people surrounding her. Encourage her to call your local crisis hotline.

Every survivor's healing process is different. If a victim discloses an assault, it is important she receive support on her terms. No one else should make decisions for her or tell her what to do. She gets to make her own choices, including who she tells, where she goes, and what help she requests. It is important that a survivor is reassured that whatever decision she makes for herself (and her children) is the right decision for her at that time.

Receiving support from family, friends and/or colleagues can be a vital part of a survivor's healing process. "This wasn't your fault" and "I'm here for you" and are some of the most important words a survivor can hear.

Resources

If you have additional questions, please contact your local victim advocacy program!

Find Advocates in Your Area

Oregon Coalition of Domestic & Sexual Violence

503-230-1951

www.ocadsv.com

Protective Orders in Oregon (& other free legal information)

Oregon Law Help

www.oregonlawhelp.com

(click on "Protection from Abuse")

Domestic Violence Information

National Coalition Against Domestic Violence

www.ncadv.org

National Domestic Violence Hotline

1-800-799-SAFE (7233)

www.ndvh.org

Sexual Assault Information

RAINN (Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network)

1-800-656-HOPE (4673)

www.rainn.org (information and online hotline available)

Stalking Information

Stalking Resource Center (through The National Center for Victims of Crimes)

202-467-8700

www.ncvc.org/src

src@ncvc.org

Additional Reading & Videos

The Matcho Paradox by Jackson Katz (www.JacksonKatz.com)

Why Does He Do That? by Lundy Bancroft (www.LundyBancroft.com)

Straight Talk About Criminals & Inside the Criminal Mind by Dr. Stanton E. Samenow

(<http://members.cox.net/samenow/>)

The Undetected Rapist (DVD) by Dr. David Lisak (www.legalmomentum.org)