

Domestic Violence Awareness Month: A Survivor's Story

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October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month. In case you didn't know, domestic violence is properly defined as "violent or aggressive behavior within the home, typically involving the violent abuse of a spouse or partner," according to the dictionary definition. This violence can be physical, emotional and/or sexual and may include stalking. It is a very dark and scary situation that affects the abused, those who witness and bystanders alike.

The only way we can put an end to domestic violence is by speaking up and getting help. Whether you yourself are a victim or a witness, you should never stay quiet.



Domestic Violence Statistics/Facts:

- Every 9 seconds in the U.S., a woman is assaulted or beaten.¹
- On average, nearly 20 people per minute are physically abused by an intimate partner in the United States. During one year, this equates to more than 10 million women and men.²
- 1 in 3 women and 1 in 4 men have been victims of [some form of] physical violence by an intimate partner within their lifetime.²
- 1 in 5 women and 1 in 7 men have been victims of severe physical violence by an intimate partner in their lifetime.²
- 1 in 7 women and 1 in 18 men have been stalked by an intimate partner during their lifetime to the point in which they felt very fearful or believed that they or someone close to them would be harmed or killed.²
- On a typical day, there are more than 20,000 phone calls placed to domestic violence hotlines nationwide.³
- Women between the ages of 18 and 24 are most commonly abused by an intimate partner.¹
- 19% of domestic violence involves a weapon.¹
- Domestic victimization is correlated with a higher rate of depression and suicidal behavior.¹
- Only 34% of people who are injured by intimate partners receive medical care for their injuries.¹

- 1 in 15 children are exposed to intimate partner violence each year, and 90% of these children are eyewitnesses to this violence. 4

Domestic Violence Tips:

- Call the police.
- Get outside support, whether from family, friends, or professionals who deal with this.
- Find a safe haven.
- Get medical help if needed.
- Create a safety plan.

Where to get help:

- Right here on campus! Head to Student Services Building Room 210, where counseling services are located. Their number is 607-778-5210.
- The police. Calling 911 should always be your first option.
- Domestic Violence hotline: (866) 813-2598 – available 24/7
 - National Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-799-7233 available 24/7
 - loveisrespect hotline: 1-866-331-8453 available 24/7
- Websites:
 - <http://www.ncadv.org/>
 - <http://www.domesticviolence.org/>
 - <http://www.crisistextline.org/>
 - <https://www.plannedparenthood.org>
 - <http://www.thehotline.org/>

Lastly, I was fortunate enough to get some words of wisdom from a domestic violence survivor, whom shall remain anonymous.

I'm so thankful for having the amount of support I did during that time period. You don't always realize at first that it's really happening to you and that you're a member of a domestic violence relationship. This is the person you love, and now suddenly they're hurting you. It's hard to fully process at first.

My partner would manipulate me into thinking it was out of love or my fault, and that's what they do, you know. They're master manipulators. Regardless of what is said, their actions will always overpower that, and that's when you realize: okay, this is not okay and it's not going to stop. I realized you can't help somebody who doesn't want it and if I'm being honest, for a while, I didn't want it. I had that much hope in that person that it would stop and things would change.

It wasn't until I tried to get some distance that the violence transferred from me to threats to my family. Then

boom! That was the moment it all clicked for me. For me it was like wow, this person is hurting me and now trying to hurt the ones I love. I tried to get away and the person burned all the photo albums of my mother. It was scary; they were erasing people out my life figuratively, which mentally messed with me. However, I had an amazing loving family who showed me that I must always love myself first. Love is not pain.

There are people out there who love you in ways that do not and will not ever hurt. It takes a strong person to get up and walk away from domestic violence. You just have to understand you are stronger than them, and part of that is reaching out to others to help you out of it. My life has been amazing since. Looking back on it now, women and men alike have all the strength and willpower in the world. You just have to realize it.

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