

Recognizing Domestic Violence

A Guide for Caregivers

Jetta Fuzy, RN, MS,



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DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

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NOTICE TO THE READER

Though the guidelines contained in this text are based on consultations with health care professionals, they should not be considered absolute recommendations. The instructor and readers should follow employer, local, state, and federal guidelines concerning health care practices. These guidelines change, and it is the reader's responsibility to be aware of these changes and of the policies and procedures of her or his health care facility/agency.

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This in-service deals with domestic violence, which occurs between family members, partners, friends, or people living together.

Domestic violence is emerging as one of the most important social issues of our decade. It has affected the very core of family life in this country, from the destruction of relationships to the increase in teenage violence and crime.

Health caregivers, particularly those in long term care facilities, assisted living facilities, and private homes, may be exposed to the volatile situation created by domestic violence and abuse. All health caregivers are required by law to report suspected violence, abuse, neglect, or exploitation of a person under their care. Your nursing assistants and home health aides must know how to recognize these situations and respond to them immediately. By reporting suspected violence, abuse, or neglect they may help bring about changes in the lives of those in their care. During this in-service be certain your participants clearly understand their responsibilities when dealing with suspected domestic violence.

NOTE: Domestic violence is a very emotional subject. Some participants may be making personal discoveries during this class. It is possible that they may begin to recognize abuse in their own lives or the lives of their friends or relatives for the first time. It is also important to watch for anger from former victims of domestic violence.

Sometimes these affected persons will attempt to take control of a class in order to work out past domestic violence issues. As a health care instructor, you can encourage your participants to talk to you or someone else about their concerns.

Please note that limited permission is granted to photocopy the handouts for use at the site originally purchasing this in-service. Photocopying other parts of this in-service, including the lesson plan, is expressly prohibited.

To use the handouts, photocopy the number needed for your group. Consider using different colors of paper to organize the different handouts or to make some stand out.

Convert transparency masters to acetates for use with an overhead projector. You can do this by purchasing transparency film at an office supply store and photocopying the transparency masters onto the acetates, or you can have a copy company do it for you. If overhead projection is not convenient for your presentation area, you may wish to copy the information from the transparency masters onto a chalkboard or flip chart.

We hope you find this in-service helpful. And, as always, we welcome your comments and suggestions.

U.S. Statistics of Interest

Prevalence of Domestic Violence

- 28% of all annual violence against women is perpetrated by intimates.
- 90 - 95% of domestic violence victims are women.
- 5% of all annual violence against men is perpetrated by intimates.
- As many as 95% of domestic violence perpetrators are male.
- Domestic violence is repetitive in nature: about 1 in 5 women victimized by their spouse or ex-spouses reported that they had been a victim of a series of at least 3 assaults in the last six months.
- A 1993 national poll found that 34% of the people polled had directly witnessed an incident of domestic violence, compared to 19% for mugging and robberies combined.
- 14% of American women acknowledge having been violently abused by a husband or boyfriend.

Characteristics of Victims of Domestic Violence

- Battered women are more likely than other women to consider suicide.
- Pregnancy is a risk factor for battering.
- Battering can lead to alcoholism and drug abuse for the victim.

- Most women in alcohol rehabilitation programs are victims of partner or parental abuse.

Race and Domestic Violence

- Race is not indicative of who is at risk of domestic violence. Domestic violence is statistically consistent across racial and ethnic boundaries.

Age and Domestic Violence

- Women ages 19-29 reported more violence by intimates than any other age group.

Homosexuality and Domestic Violence

- Domestic violence occurs within same-sex relationships with the same statistical frequency as in heterosexual relationships. The prevalence of domestic violence among gay and lesbian couples is approximately 25 - 33%.
- Each year, between 50,000 and 100,000 lesbian women and as many as 500,000 gay men are battered.
- While same-sex battering mirrors heterosexual battering both in type and prevalence, its victims receive fewer protections.

Children and Domestic Violence

Each year, an estimated 3.3 million children are exposed to violence by family members against their mothers or female caretakers.

- In homes where partner abuse occurs, children are 1,500 times more likely to be abused.
- 40-60% of men who abuse women also abuse children.
- Head trauma is the most frequent cause of death in children.
- A recent review showed that up to 95% of children under age one admitted to a hospital with head injuries got those injuries as a result of child abuse.
- Child abuse is higher in single parent families. (National Violence Survey of 6,000 households).
- Homicide is the leading cause of death in children under age one.

Elderly and Domestic Violence

- 71% of domestic violence crimes involving elder victims are abuses by spouse or intimate.
- One in 25 elderly persons in the U.S. is physically abused by his or her adult children.

Health Care Response to Domestic Violence

- An estimated 1.5 million medical visits are the result of domestic violence at a cost of \$31 billion per year.

- Women receive medical treatment more often due to domestic violence than injuries from rape, auto accidents, and mugging combined.
- Although battered women comprise 20 - 30% of ambulatory care patients, only 1 in 20 is correctly identified as such by medical practitioners.
- The use of emergency room protocols for identifying and treating victims of domestic violence has been found to increase the identification of victims by medical practitioners from 5.6% to 30%.

Law Enforcement and Domestic Violence

- Every state allows its police to arrest perpetrators of misdemeanor domestic violence incidents upon probable cause, and more than half of the states and the District of Columbia have laws requiring police to arrest on probable cause for at least some domestic violence crimes.
- Female victims of domestic violence are 6 times less likely to report crime to law enforcement as female victims of stranger violence.
- The varying effect of arrest on abusers may be related to the amount the batterer has to lose from facing the social consequences of arrest. The single most consistent result of studies of the effect of arrest on batterers is that unemployed suspects become more violent after an arrest, and employed suspects do not.

- One study showed 80% of women with temporary protection orders said the order was somewhat or very helpful in sending the batterer a message that his actions were wrong. less than 50% of the women thought that the batterer believed he had to obey the order.

Violent Behavior and Homicide

- If stalking occurs within an intimate relationship, it typically begins after the woman attempts to leave the relationship.
- 88% of victims of domestic violence fatalities had a documented history of physical abuse.
- 44% of victims of intimate homicides had prior threats by the killer to kill victim or self. 30% had prior police calls to the residence. 17% had a protection order.

- Of women killed in 1992, their relationship to the killer was known in 69% of homicides. Of this percent, 28% were killed by spouse, ex-spouse, boyfriend or ex-boyfriend.
- Of men killed in 1992, their relationship to the killer was known in 59% of homicides. Of this percent, 3% were killed by spouse, ex-spouse, girlfriend or ex-girlfriend.

NOTE: Animal shelters outnumber domestic violence centers by approximately 10 to 1.

Introduction and Assessment

Estimated Time: 10-15 minutes

Tools: Handout Intro-1 Assessment A
Handout Intro-2 Assessment A Answer Key
Handout Intro-3 Key Terms
Handout Intro-4 Note-Taking Worksheet

Learning Activity: **Lecture and Discussion**

**Distribute
Handout Intro-1
Assessment A**

Ask the participants to complete the assessment. If you decide to use this assessment as a post-test at the end of the in-service, withhold the answers for now. Use the assessment to lead into a discussion of domestic violence.

**Distribute
Handout Intro-3
Key Terms**

**Distribute
Handout Intro-4
Note-Taking
Worksheet**

Encourage participants to take notes during the lecture, as this will help them learn and remember the information.

Assessment A

Name: _____ Date: _____

Answer (T) True or (F) False to the following statements.

1. _____ Domestic violence is a crime.
2. _____ Domestic violence only involves a wife and husband.
3. _____ The use of drugs and alcohol can make some people more violent.
4. _____ About the same number of women and men are victims of domestic violence.
5. _____ Children who are victims of domestic violence almost always tell someone what is happening to them.
6. _____ There are ways to tell if a victim of domestic violence is at risk of being murdered by the abuser.
7. _____ Very few injuries among women that are caused by domestic violence are bad enough to require emergency medical treatment.
8. _____ A "mandatory arrest" means that police can arrest a person for domestic violence, even if the victim doesn't ask.
9. _____ Many battered women do not report domestic violence.
10. _____ Health caregivers are not required to report to their supervisors if they think someone in their care is a victim of domestic violence.