



## CHOICES Programs & Services

CHOICES offers alternatives to people living in violent situations, promotes a more functional home and family environment, intervenes in the cycle of violence, and alerts the community as to the complexity and enormity of the issue and the need for extensive networks of service.

### 24-Hour Crisis and Information Hotline for information, support and referral resources

CHOICES receives thousands of calls every year from people who are living with the fear, the danger and the violent effects of domestic violence. They call CHOICES' hotline, unaware of what help is available to them. A staff member listens as tears and sobs turn into questions with hopeful answers, as alternatives to violence are discussed and discovered. Callers are referred to programs and services, based on their needs. Closure usually comes in the form of a thank you and a reminder from CHOICES' staff that the line is available 24 hours a day – a resource in time of need.

### Temporary shelter for women and their children

As a former resident wrote a few years ago, "Walking into the shelter was like coming home..." She knew she was safe. She felt others cared about her. She recognized that she was no longer alone. The fact that the shelter exists is well known, yet its location remains hidden. Through their shelter experience survivors learn that home does not have to be where the hurt is.

### Outreach – Legal Support and Advocacy

Providing a vital link between the criminal justice system and community services, the Legal Advocates walk individuals through the intimidating court system, assist with filing criminal charges and obtaining protection orders. A Legal Advocate offers support and comfort, gathers information and above all, listens.

### Outreach – Programs for Special Populations

CHOICES provides educational programs and support groups designed for underserved, at-risk communities, and the general public. During the sessions, individuals learn about the cycle of abuse, the psychological effects of a relationship dominated by power and control and the generational nature of the issue. Healthy relationships are discussed and the danger signals of unhealthy relationships are explored.

### Counseling

CHOICES offers problem-solving counseling, support, resources and referrals to those victims and survivors of domestic violence who do not require residential services. Day or night, services ranging from individual sessions to educational groups are available at several locations in the community. All services are provided by licensed social workers with graduate level credentials. Treatment goals are developed cooperatively focusing on increasing self-esteem, empowerment and decision-making skills. Personal, physical and emotional safety plans are explored and defined.

### Community Education and Training

Education is the first step in the prevention of family violence. CHOICES strives to educate the community at large, mental health and social service staff, the legal and law enforcement communities, health workers and other appropriate groups about domestic violence and CHOICES' services.

### Specific Educational Programs and Trainings include:

- Consultation and education to community groups, schools, churches and families
- Trainings for medical and mental health care professionals
- Domestic violence in the workplace programs for central Ohio employers.

## Family Violence Facts

Domestic violence is virtually impossible to measure with absolute precision due to numerous complications, including the societal stigma that inhibits victims from disclosing their abuse and the varying definitions of abuse used from study to study. Estimates range from 960,000 incidents of violence against a current of former spouse, boyfriend, or girlfriend per year (U.S. Department of Justice, 1998) to 3.9 million women who are physically abused per year.

(The Commonwealth Fund, 1993)

One in four American women will be physically abused by an intimate partner at some point in her life.

(Family Violence Prevention Fund, 1998)

30% of Americans say they know a woman who has been physically abused by her intimate partner in the past year.

(Lieberman Research, Inc., 1995)

95% of all domestic violence is male to female.

(The American Medical Association, 1992)

Child abuse is 15 times more likely to occur in families where domestic violence is present.

(Stacy, W. and Shupe A. 1993)

\$2.5 billion of health insurance benefits are spent on injuries resulting from domestic violence.

(Governor's Task Force on Family Violence, 1991)

A large majority of Employee Assistance Program providers surveyed have dealt with specific partner abuse situations in the past year, including an employee with a protection order (83%) or an employee being stalked at work by a current or former partner (71%).

(Isaac, Nancy E., Cambridge, MA: Harvard University School of Public Health, 1997)

A pervasive and destructive force, domestic violence is best characterized by numbers. These statistics, although alarming, are merely estimations at best. While it is impossible to precisely determine data involving domestic violence, there is no denying that the results are horrifying and numbing. Beginning to understand the prevalence of domestic violence is one way we can address this emergency.



PO BOX 06157  
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ELIMINATING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

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P.O. Box 06157 • Columbus, Ohio 43206  
Information and Crisis Line 614.224.4663  
Business Line: 614.258.6080  
www.choicesdvcos.org

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## CHOICES Mission Statement

The mission of CHOICES is to:  
**Interrupt the cycle of domestic violence in this community; and Advocate for social change.**

CHOICES is one of the most comprehensive programs in the state offering a wide range of services for victims and survivors of domestic violence, family members, friends, employers and professionals in central Ohio. With services ranging from shelter and hotline to counseling, education and advocacy, CHOICES is the researcher, creator and developer of the local systems that help survivors and their children.



## What is Domestic Violence?

Domestic violence and domestic abuse are patterns of behavior that establish power and control over an intimate partner through fear and intimidation. It often begins with isolation, jealousy, threats or name-calling and may include emotional, sexual or verbal abuse. It can progress to physical violence like pushing, hitting and kicking. And, it may escalate and result in serious injuries, hospitalization and even death.

Abuse crosses all barriers of age, income, culture, religion, education and race. Domestic violence between partners happens in all kinds of relationships – husbands and wives, dating or live-in partners, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender partners. Anyone can be a domestic violence victim.

The abusive behavior frequently follows a three phase cycle that intensifies with each incident.



**Tension Building:** increased anger, blaming, verbal abuse.

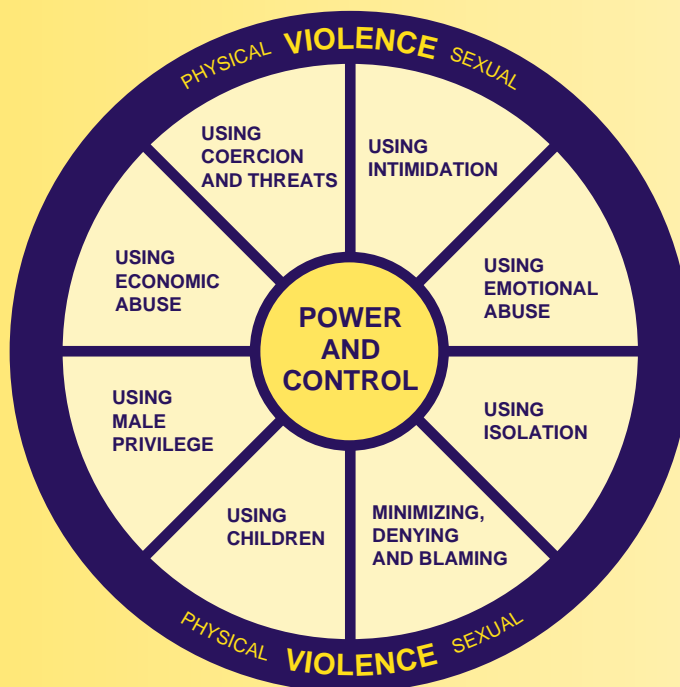
**Battering:** acts of violence, forced sex, extreme psychological abuse, withholding of basic needs.

**Honeymoon:** temporary changes in behavior, apologies, gifts, promises to never be abusive again, to obtain counseling or to give up alcohol and or drugs.

## Signs of Abuse

Often domestic violence goes unreported due to societal stigmas that inhibit victims from disclosing their abuse. Victims may be too ashamed or frightened to admit they are being abused – even to close friends and family. Recognizing the abuse is key to helping someone get out of a violent situation. Some signs may include:

- Repeated bruises or injuries, often attributed to accidents or clumsiness;
- Often canceling plans, or needing permission from a partner to make plans;
- Being withdrawn or ceasing to socialize outside the home;
- High rate of absenteeism, tardiness, missed appointments and leaving work early; and
- Sensitivity about home life or hints that there is trouble at home



## How You Can Help

Do you know someone in an abusive relationship? Making the decision to get involved can be difficult – especially if you don't know how to help. But for many victims, the knowledge that someone cares and is willing to provide emotional support is critical to starting a new life free from abuse and fear.

### Here are a few ways you can help someone suffering from abuse:

- Believe her. Ask her about the situation and listen to her without judging.
- Tell her that you support and care about her.
- Respect her need for confidentiality.
- Reassure her that she's not responsible for the abuse and that domestic violence is never acceptable.
- Let her know she is not alone. Domestic abuse happens to many women.
- Give her clear messages that: she can't change her partner's behavior; apologies and promises will not end the violence; and violence is never justifiable.
- Her physical safety is the first priority. Discuss her options and help her make plans for her and her children's safety.
- Be understanding if she chooses not to leave her abuser, or if she goes back to him after leaving. Many women leave an abuser several times before ending the relationship.
- Educate yourself and share information with her about local resources that can help if she decides to leave the relationship.
- **Have her call CHOICES crisis and information line, 614.224.4663.**

\*The use of feminine pronouns reflects abuse statistics that show 95% of heterosexual domestic violence is against women. CHOICES recognizes relationship violence crosses gender lines.

## Why Does She Stay?

Many women do leave. But leaving is usually difficult and dangerous. Most victims must overcome a complicated set of obstacles that include:

- Fear
- Hope for change
- Economics
- Isolation
- Love
- Responsibility
- Personal history
- Society/Culture
- Learned helplessness
- Physical dangers in leaving

Rather than questioning the abusive relationship and wondering "why doesn't she leave?" we should instead ask the question, "why is the abuse allowed to continue? And how can we help?"

## Working Together to Make Our Community Safe

Domestic violence is a problem that affects all of us. It results in increased health care costs and higher taxes to pay for law enforcement and prosecution. It traumatizes children who witness abuse and promotes violent behavior in the next generation. Domestic violence crosses all ethnic groups and robs the victim of the ability to be a valuable contributor to society. It takes a toll on every one of us.

CHOICES has made a commitment to reduce the violence in our community. We believe that domestic violence – and all of its consequences – can be prevented. To learn more about how you can help eliminate domestic violence, complete the attached response card and mail it back to us.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City State Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Fax \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

### Check all the boxes that apply:

- I would like to volunteer.
- Add me to your mailing list.
- I am interested in distributing materials at my workplace, school or community group.
- Please accept my donation to support lifesaving programs for domestic violence survivors and their children. Enclosed please find my tax deductible contribution of \$ \_\_\_\_\_. All contributions are tax deductible within IRS guidelines.



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