

# Domestic Violence

Domestic Violence is more than just a “family problem”—it is a crime!

In Texas, it is a crime for any person to threaten, beat, sexually assault, strangle or otherwise harm another person, even if they are married. In Texas, this also includes Dating Violence, or violence involving those who just simply live together, but are not related.

Domestic Violence is not exclusively a crime against women, but they are majority of victims; thus this publication is primarily directed to the wife or woman who is living in an abusive relationship.

There are a lot of statistics on Family Violence in Texas. Here are a few of them:

- 72% of all murder-suicides involved an intimate partner; 94% of the victims were female
- Of the victims in Texas – 39% were Hispanic, 61% were non-Hispanics, 68.5% were White, 28.9% were Black, 2.6% were American Indian, Alaskan Native, Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander
- The youngest victim to die at the hands of an intimate partner was 16 years old in 2018
- There were 8 victims under the age of 19 years old who were killed by an intimate partner in 2018
- 34.5% of Texas women and 35.1% Texas men experience intimate partner physical violence, intimate partner rape and/or intimate partner stalking in their lifetimes

## Why do they stay?

The most frequently asked question concerning a Family Violence situation is, why does she stay? While the reasons range from children, love, guilt, fear, pride, embarrassment, financial dependence—or a combination thereof—it is very possible the woman may be locked into a violence cycle.

## Three-phase theory of family violence

The family violence cycle consists of three phases: the tension-building phase, the acute-battering incident and the honeymoon-loving reconciliation.

- **Tension-Building Phase**

During this phase the woman senses her mate’s increasing tension. He is “edgy” and perhaps challenges her and tells her she is stupid, incompetent, etc. The woman may internalize her appropriate anger at the man’s unfairness and experience physical effects such as depression, tension, anxiety and headaches. As the tension in the

relationship increases, minor episodes of violence increase, such as pinching, slapping or shoving.

- **Acute-Battering Incident Phase**

The tension-building phase ends in an explosion of violence. The woman may or may not fight back. Following the battering, she is in a state of physical and psychological shock. The man may discount the episode and underestimate the woman's injuries.

- **Honeymoon-Loving Reconciliation Phase**

During the last phase of the family violence cycle, both parties have a sense of relief that "it's over." The man is often genuinely sorry for what happened and is fearful that his partner will leave him. He apologizes and may "shower" her with love and praise that helps her repair her shattered self-esteem. He tells her he can't live without her, so she feels responsible for his well-being and guilty for her actions and blames herself for what led up to the abuse. A short time later, the cycle begins again back at the tension-building stage.

## **Increasing spiral of violence**

Once violence has begun, it continues to increase in both frequency and severity.

Understanding the psychological consequences of her violent relationship can help the woman take power and choose constructive alternatives, as well as aid those who intervene to help her.

## **If you become a victim of Domestic Violence**

- Call the police or sheriff's office (Burlison Police – 817-426-9903, Johnson County – 817-556-6060, Tarrant County – 817-884-1213; or 911 for all emergencies). If you need to, you can also text a message to 911 (Please add your location and name, turn your ringer off because Dispatch may attempt to call you back).
- Make sure you are safe from another violent episode. Whenever you believe you are in danger, leave your home and take your children with you. Also, take important papers such as your birth certificate, driver's license, social security card, etc. (You can reach out to the Victim's Assistance Coordinator Stephanie Beard at 817-426-9901 for a comprehensive list of items you should take with you).
- Get medical attention. Don't try to treat yourself; you may be injured much more seriously than you realize. You do not have to go to the hospital, but you may summons the local Medical Professionals and Fire Fighters to assess you.
- Seek assistance. Whether or not you file charges against the person who assaulted you, you may need to talk to a professional about your situation. Contact your local Domestic Violence Shelters, Women's support group or Victim's Assistance coordinator at your local law enforcement office.

- Save all the evidence (proof) you can. (You may even want to take photographs of your injuries.) Whether or not you file charges now, you may later change your mind and will then need proof that you had been assaulted.

## **A way out**

Everyone has the right to be safe from threats and beatings—but *you* must take that first step. Once you recognize that it *isn't your fault* and it is possible to change your situation, seek the help you need to correct your situation.

## **Help available**

If you need help, there are several agencies you can call for help in our area, which include: One Safe Place – 817-916-4323 [Family Justice Center – Not a Shelter], located at 1100 Hemphill St, Fort Worth; Johnson County Family Crisis Center – 817-641-1133; SafeHaven – 1-877-701-7233, or speak with Stephanie Beard at 817-426-9901 with a more comprehensive list of shelter information). These agencies can offer you help to you or refer you to someone who can.

Remember, your local police and sheriff's departments exist to help you. You should always have their numbers handy for an emergency. Other sources of help and/or referral are the Salvation Army, your private physician or your attorney.



Burleson Police Department

1161 SW Wilshire Blvd

817-426-9903