

Domestic Violence

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Domestic violence may start when one partner feels the need to control and dominate the other. A man may feel the need to control his partner because of low self esteem, extreme jealousy, and other strong emotions or when he feels inferior to the other partner in education and socio-economic background. Some men with very traditional beliefs may think they have the right to control women and that women are not equal to them. Studies suggest that violent behavior is often caused by an interaction of situational and individual factors. According to Khan (2000), abusers learn violent behavior from their family, people in their community and other cultural influences as they grow up.

The first cause of domestic violence is the family background. Battering is a learned behavior, and statistics show that 85% of convicted batterers grew up in households where they witnessed their mother being abused by a male partner. Boys are not only young men learning tactics, but also they are learning that they can get away with it. They see that the abuser is not arrested, that there is no intervention, and that there are few consequences for that behavior. Child abuse and domestic violence are highly correlated. These young men are not only learning to be abusive; but they are also very likely being abused themselves resulting in many of the traits we see in batterers: low self esteem, insecurity, and manipulative behavior.

The second cause is the patriarchal society. We live in a male dominated society with a history that encouraged men to treat their wives and daughters as property. Also, countless laws and cultural mores in many countries have perpetuated the oppression of women. For example, in the 1900s, women in Arabia were treated like slaves or property; women did not have independence, and they were not regarded as human beings but as a sub-species between humans and animals. This gender socialization from a very young age has helped to perpetuate the treatment to women through the generations. It is continued through adulthood as people continue to receive messages affirming strict gender roles through the media, peers, and family.

The psychological makeup and symbolic world is a third cause. Batterers make the rules and define the roles in their relationships. They often feel as if people in their lives and the society have wronged them. They tend to blame others for their problems and try to manipulate not only the people in their intimate relationships but also friends, colleagues, and others that they come in contact with. Batterers often see themselves as above the rules, untouchable, and omnipotent.

Domestic violence is a serious problem that occurs with all socioeconomic classes, ages, sexes, races, and religious groups. According to Khan (2000), domestic violence often begins with behaviors like threats, name-calling, or damage to objects and pets. It may escalate to pushing, slapping, or pinching. The battering may include punching, kicking, biting, sexual assaulting, tripping, or throwing. Finally, it may become life-threatening with serious behaviors such as choking, breaking bones, other serious injuries, or even killing. There are some institutions such as UNICEF (United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund) that help women to solve domestic violence problems. These institutions have specialists who talk to the women affected, and according to the severity of the problem, they offer solutions such as talking to the abuser,

putting the abusers under a treatment with psychologists, or simply arresting the abusers. But it is up to the women to inform the institutions of their problems.

Reference

Khan, M. (2000). Domestic violence. Retrieved March 13, 2003 from <http://www.unicef.org/vaw/domestic.pdf>