

Domestic Violence

The common figures cited regarding domestic violence suggest that 95% of intimate relationship violence is committed by men. Only 5% of the instances of domestic violence are reportedly perpetrated by women. A 2002 review of non-governmental studies on domestic violence performed by Dr. James Kline, Ph.D. found that females perpetrate as much (or more) relationship violence as males. In 2001, the National Violence Against Women Survey (NVAWS) conducted jointly by the US National Institute of Justice and the Centers for Disease Control, found that woman committed 40% of all intimate relationship violence in 2000.

Occurrence of Domestic Violence

In any year in the United States, it is estimated that about 12 million couples experience domestic violence. Roughly two-thirds of these are described as minor violence, which is described as a slap or less. About one-third of the instances are considered severe, which is described as an act of violence that might cause an injury. About half of the instances of domestic violence is perpetrated by men, and about half by women. One study found that woman are significantly more likely than men to perpetrate severe violence. A substantial portion of domestic violence, perhaps as much as half is mutual.

Domestic violence and battering are different forms of abuse. Battering only constitutes a small portion of domestic violence. Battering is meant to describe a narcissistic, dependent, malignant and possessive man who utilizes various and multiple forms of intimidation and violence to exert domination and control over a terrified female partner. Studies indicate

that the great majority of instances of domestic violence do not involve battering. Most cases are referred to as couple violence. In addition, some contend that virtually all of women's instances of domestic violence are related to self-defense. While this is undoubtedly the case in many instances, this does not appear to be the causal factor.

Causes of Domestic Violence

While power and control have been viewed as causal factors, research does not bear this out. Additionally, there is little to suggest that gender issues are the major cause. Research on gay and lesbian relationships indicate similar rates of domestic violence when compared to heterosexual couples. Intergenerational transmission (the child viewing domestic violence in the parent's relationship and repeating it in their own relationships) is not as strong a factor as once thought. In fact, a recent article indicated that the majority of people who witness domestic violence do not repeat it in their own relationships.

Alcohol is undoubtedly a factor in domestic violence. Various studies indicate that intoxication is present in as many as half of all domestic violence arrests. There appear to be two reasons for this:

1. Disinhibited of normal emotional and behavioral controls.
2. Disruption of serotonin metabolism which is known to be related to impulsive and aggressive behavior.

Factors that contribute to domestic violence to one degree or another are stress, public

attitudes condoning minor violence in relationships, and media violence.

It is likely that poor interpersonal skills, which include communication and conflict resolution skills, may be one of the most significant contributors to instances of domestic violence. When coupled with poor impulse control, this deficiency produces a potent factor for creating toxic and violent interactions between persons.

There are also biochemical factors to consider. ADD and ADHD, Bipolar Disorder, and various Mood Disorders can contribute. In addition, personality disorders such as Borderline Personality Disorder, Histrionic Personality Disorder, Narcissistic Personality Disorder and others can be significant contributors.

What To Do

1. Safety is always primary. Leave a violent situation where your safety is being threatened and call 911.
2. Contact a domestic violence hotline in your area if abuse occurs or is repeated.
3. Seek professional assistance. A professional can help a couple identify the underlying issues that cause acts of domestic violence; determine contributing factors to these episodes; and provide the needed interventions.

This information is presented for educational purposes only. It is not a substitute for informed medical advice or training. Do not use this information to diagnose or treat a mental health problem without consulting a qualified health or mental health care provider.

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HOW DO YOU KNOW IF YOU WOULD BENEFIT FROM COUNSELING?

These conditions or situations are widely experienced and may indicate the need for professional counseling:

- Depression, discouragement
- Lack of motivation, apathy
- Anger, bitterness, resentment
- General dissatisfaction with life or relationships
- Difficulties in handling life events
- Marriage and family conflicts
- Sexual dysfunction
- Difficulties in decision making
- Physical ailments for which no medical cause can be found, such as headaches and lower back pain. (Medical consultation may be required in conjunction with therapy.)
- Difficulty in building and maintaining satisfying relationships
- Job stress, inability to keep jobs
- Inability to deal with a child's misbehavior or school problems
- Compulsive behaviors (eating disorders, spending, sexual issues)
- Issues related to low self-esteem or lack of self-worth
- Excessive dependence upon the approval or validation of others

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*Information
Regarding
Domestic
Violence*