



DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

An Overview

We have few needs as basic as the need to feel safe in our own homes. Yet millions of people live in fear of a spouse or friend, or even of their own children. If you're feeling unsafe in your own home, learn what domestic violence is, why it should be stopped and what you can do to stop it.

WHAT IS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE?

Any abuse which occurs in your own home can be called "domestic." It need not be between blood relatives. Violence includes physical assault, verbal abuse, yelling, having objects thrown at or toward a household member, or being threatened with a weapon or an object that can be used as a weapon.

WHAT IS APPROPRIATE?

Only you can determine what is or isn't appropriate behavior in your home. Understand that most people don't live in fear. Domestic violence isn't a normal situation. Tolerance of violence, even if the offender acts only under the influence of drugs or alcohol, sends a message to the offender that violence is acceptable. It's not.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

Living with domestic violence can be emotionally draining, making it harder to act against it as time goes by. One seemingly isolated incident can escalate into a way of life. Under stressful conditions, in fact, you can begin to believe that you deserve such violence. No one deserves to live with domestic violence.

WHAT ABOUT THE CHILDREN?

If you have children, living with domestic violence sends a message to them that domestic violence is normal. As they reach maturity, it might not occur to them that most households are relatively peaceful, and they might accept domestic violence in their own adult households.

TAKE ACTION.

You can stop violence in your own home by setting limits and being firm about what you will not tolerate. How you handle the situation depends upon the circumstances, but understand that once you set limits you must act in a consistent manner. With the support of other relatives, friends or community support groups, you can begin to turn the situation around and restore peace and tranquility to your household.

