

Victims: There are many myths surrounding domestic violence

■ Continued from Page 1A
tional day, and it needs to happen."

What is Domestic Violence?

"Domestic violence is a crime involving a pattern of abusive behavior in intimate relationships where one partner tries to control and dominate the other," said Jennifer Beach, assistant director of Womenspace. It can include emotional abuse, threats of abuse and physical violence ranging from slapping and shoving to severe beatings.

Beach said college students can be more vulnerable in some ways to domestic violence.

"Isolation is a big piece of abuse and college students are often away from home for the first time, vulnerable and have more time to be alone with the batterer," Beach said.

The emotional and psychological abuse suffered by victims is often the hardest for a victim to see, said Donna Oakes, a survivor of domestic violence.

"Just because you're not being hit, doesn't mean you're not being abused," Oakes said.

"All of [my abusers] played the blame game — no matter what the situation, it's your fault," she said. "I have a 140 IQ, a 4.0 GPA and take 21 credits a term, and he could still talk me into thinking I was so stupid."

The Myths

"Why don't you just leave?" is a common question victims of domestic violence hear. The reality is most women stay in a violent home because they are ashamed to tell anyone, have nowhere to go for help or they are afraid of retaliation if they take action, according to Womenspace.

Nancy Taylor Kemp, a psy-

chologist at the Counseling Center, believes college students may feel more shame in a domestic violence relationship because they feel out of character, and unable to tell anyone or get help.

Another myth is that alcohol or drugs cause the abuse.

"My last husband was three years sober when he began physically abusing me," Oakes said. "It dispelled the myth for me that alcohol causes the abuse."

The Cycle of Violence

Battering is a pattern of repeated abuse. This "cycle of violence" is experienced by many victims of domestic violence.

First, an abuse incident will occur where the victim is screamed at, beaten, and/or cussed at for hours. All abuse incidents vary in intensity and degree.

Second, "the honeymoon phase" occurs where the batterer says things like, "It will never happen again," pleads for forgiveness, promises change and lavishes attention or gifts to the victim.

Then, the tension starts to build again in the third phase, until another abuse incident. This cycle increases in intensity and shortens in length over time.

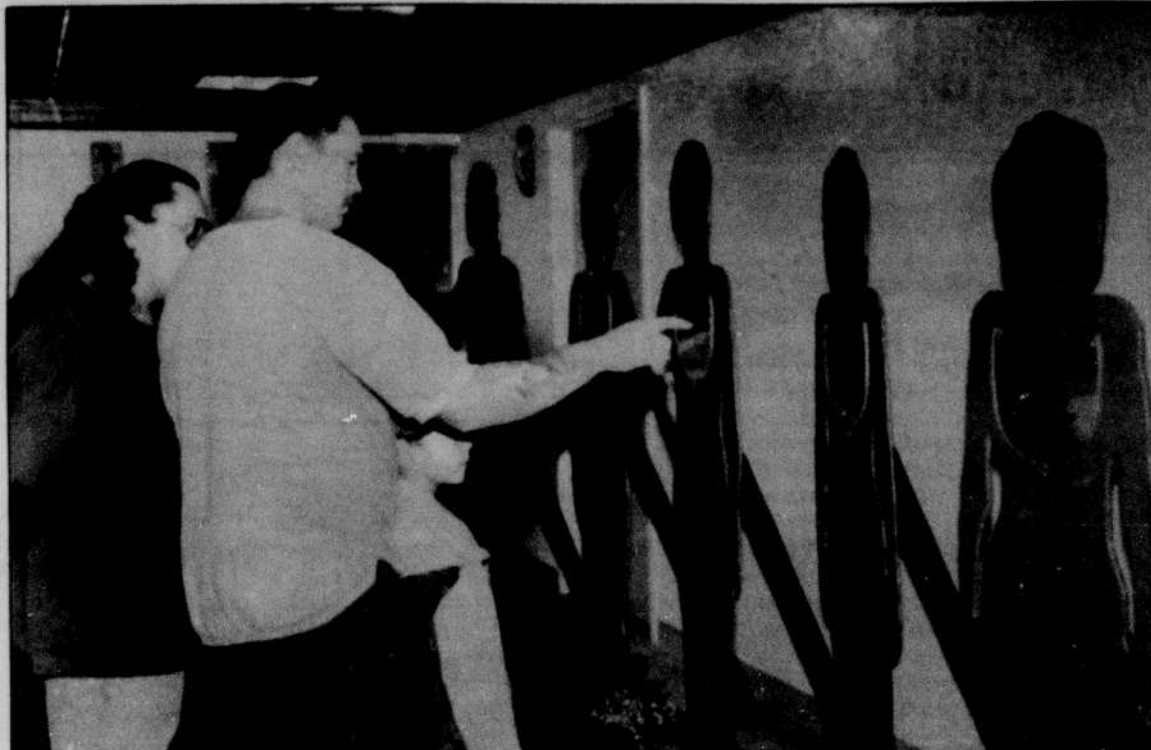
From Victim to Survivor

Oakes described her "last straw" — the moment when she realized she had to leave.

"My last physical battering happened in front of my girls," she said. "He almost stepped on my baby trying to get to me."

"I locked us in a room until he left, thinking 'I can't raise my girls this way. I can't let them go through what I saw my mom go through.'"

After the incident, Oakes talked to a counselor at Lane



Eighteen blood red, life size wooden silhouettes represent Oregon women murdered in acts of domestic violence during 1993-94. Each Silent Witness includes information about her life and how she died.

Community College where she is a student. "The counselor was non-judgmental and asked me what I wanted to do," she said.

Long-term, Oakes said the Turning Point program offered at Womenspace kept her from going back.

Womenspace also offers shelter, crisis counseling, transportation, counseling, advocacy, children's services, community education, a transition house, interpreters and rural outreach to domestic violence victims.

For more information about Womenspace, call 485-6513, 485-8232 or toll free at 1-800-281-2800.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS

Violence against women in their own homes is the most common and least reported crime in the United States. The following statistics were compiled by Womenspace:

Women who leave their batterers are at a 75 percent greater risk of being killed by the batterer than those who stay. (Barbara Hart, 1988)

Medical expenses from domestic violence total \$3 billion to \$5 billion annually. ("Domestic Violence For Health Care Providers," Colorado Domestic Violence Coalition, 1991)

There are 3,000 animal shelters but only 700 shelters for battered women. (National Coalition Against Domestic Violence)

Somewhere in America, a woman is beaten every 15 seconds by her partner; it happens at some time in 25-35 percent of American homes; 4,000 women die from such abuse each year. (FBI)

DENNIS BOLT & MATT GARTON/Emerald

Hate crime: Students urged to be wary of statistics

■ Continued from Page 1A

March or the full-page Emerald ad featuring the conference that ran for three days earlier this week," Mace said. "In receiving this flier, though, it just goes to show the necessity for this type of conference while reinforcing the value of what's going to be discussed."

Mace said a faculty member took one of the 15 fliers to the University Office of Public Safety after discovering them around 8 a.m., Wednesday. OPS then turned it over to Eugene Public Safety for further investigation since it was considered to be an official hate crime.

"Since we only have this piece of paper to go on and we

know of no further actions at this point, we'll continue to monitor the situation and see where it goes," said Jed Keever, a police agent with the Eugene Public Safety.

Statistics presented in the fliers are attributed to an Australian reporter named Neil Sheehan, which is typed in fine print at the bottom of the page. According to the flier, Sheehan allegedly "dug out half-concealed U.S. crime figures for an article in the Sydney Morning Herald (May 2, 1995). The content of his article, he commented, could not possibly be published or discussed in the U.S. mainstream media."

Statistics listed on the fliers include statements that allege

"More than 1,600 whites are murdered by blacks each year; about one million whites were murdered, robbed, assaulted or raped by blacks in 1992; on a per capita basis blacks commit 50 times more violent crimes than whites; and in the past 20 years violent crimes increased four times faster than the population."

Mace said the statistics should not be taken at face value and that the public needs to look at the larger picture.

"We cannot look at statistics like these as being the hard-and-fast truth," she said. "People need to explore these issues for themselves and continue to fight against bigotry and propaganda like this."

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