

The SECOND Closet

Domestic violence
hides in the dark

by Jonathan Kipp • Photos by Marty Davis

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ILLUSTRATION BY RUPERT KINNARD

Stepping Out of Denial

Lynn, who is in her 40s, never dreamed she would be involved in a relationship where she would experience domestic violence. She grew up in a good family; her parents were not violent. In fact, her history fails to

reveal anything that could be seen as a precursor to becoming a victim of domestic violence.

Today, Lynn insists on being called a survivor. Despite her suffering through the years, she says she is nobody's victim.

The abuse was so subtle at first, Lynn didn't even realize she was headed down a road that would leave her fragile and wary of her own abil-

ity to be in a relationship. Her partner escorted her everywhere. She remembers being held in a room against her will and recalls driving her car as her girlfriend grabbed at the wheel, trying to cause an accident.

It wasn't until she went to her employee assistance program at work that the painful truth of her life began to emerge. She sought out help because she thought she needed better coping skills to get along with her partner.

Lynn thought she was the one with the problem. But a closer look into her life by a counselor revealed she was more likely the victim of domestic violence.

At first, Lynn found that hard to believe. Her partner never had hit her; she never had been to the hospital.

But Lynn followed the counselor's recommendation and started attending a support group in Portland for battered women. It was in attending these sessions that she started seeing her own denial.

*Domestic violence is everywhere.
"It's fascinating to me that it runs
the gamut that it does,"
says Betty Ann Hale, a community
activist in the area of domestic violence
who does outreach to sexual minorities.*



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