

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Myths and Facts about Domestic Violence

MYTH: Domestic violence is not common.

FACT: *Every 9 seconds in the United States, a man beats a woman. In Oregon, crisis service hotlines annually receive more than 50,000 emergency calls and 37,000 non-emergency calls from survivors of domestic violence.*

MYTH: Domestic violence happens only in low-income families.

FACT: *Domestic violence happens in all kinds of families, rich and poor, urban, suburban and rural, in every part of the country, in every racial, religious and age group.*

MYTH: Alcohol and drugs cause domestic violence.

FACT: *Alcohol and drugs do not cause domestic violence. Domestic violence is a choice. Many abusers will make sure they have alcohol or drugs on hand, in order to use them as an excuse for their actions. Abusers will also claim their actions resulted because they could not have the alcohol or drugs.*

MYTH: Domestic violence is an anger control issue.

FACT: *Domestic violence has nothing to do with anger. Anger is a tool abusers use to get what they want. We know abusers are actually very much in control because they can stop when someone knocks on the door or the phone rings; they often direct punches and kicks to parts of the body where the bruises are less likely to show; and they are not abusing everyone who makes them "angry", but waits until there are no witnesses and abuses the one he says he loves.*

MYTH: Abusers and/or victims have low self-esteem.

FACT: *Abusers do not have low self-esteem. They believe they are entitled to have power and control over their partner. Abusers will pretend to have low self-esteem, if it will make others believe the violence is not their fault.*

FACT: *Survivors of abuse may have had great self-esteem at the beginning of the relationship, but the abuser uses emotional abuse: calling her names, putting her down, telling her it is her fault, in order to destroy her self-esteem. Some abusers look for women with low self-esteem, as they believe she will be more likely to blame herself and less likely to report his behavior. Other abusers will seek women with high self-esteem, as they may represent a greater challenge to control over time.*

MYTH: Most assaults are really just a couple of slaps and they are not really harmful.

FACT: *More than 30 percent of hospital emergency-room admissions are women who have been abused. Domestic violence is the single greatest cause of injury to women in the United States.*



What a Coordinated Community Response Looks Like

