

# SIUSLAW OUTREACH SERVICES

## Signs of domestic violence

Domestic violence is a problem that can affect anyone at anytime. Considering victims are usually frightened by their abusers, they often suffer in silence.

The Domestic Violence Resource Center says that 1 in 4 women has experienced domestic violence in her lifetime. Estimates range from 960,000 incidents of violence against a current or former spouse, boyfriend or girlfriend to 3 million women who are physically abused by their husbands or boyfriends per year. Men can also be victims of domestic violence at the hands of their female partners, and abuse can occur between same-sex couples as well. However, the Bureau of Justice Statistics indicates that women ages 20-24 are at the greatest risk of nonfatal intimate partner violence.

Domestic violence comes in many forms, including physical, emotional and verbal abuse. Many victims of domestic violence are battered into secrecy or are embarrassed that they are being abused and do not share their experiences with others. Others might not even realize that what they are experiencing constitutes abuse. But there are some signs of domestic violence that

can be observed, and a third party may be able to intervene.

\* A partner who harbors unrealistic expectations: Experts say that those who engage in domestic violence are generally perfectionists and expect those around them to reach unattainable goals and their own perfection. Violence may result when things do not go off without a hitch.

\* A partner who is controlling: When a person insists their victim account for all of his or her time, the relationship may eventually turn abusive. This behavior generally stems from feelings of insecurity and poor self-esteem on the part of the abusive individual, which is then projected to the partner in terms of abusive words or distrust.

\* Escalating threats: In many cases, domestic violence begins with verbal assaults that may develop into physical threats. Whether the abuse is verbal or physical, it can have profound and long-lasting effects on the victim. For those who observe a person continually brow-beating a spouse or talking badly about him or her, this may be an indication of an abusive relationship.

\* A partner with a noticeable temper:

Sometimes a temper goes hand-in-hand with domestic violence. An individual with a short fuse and a propensity for lashing out with minimal patience in areas outside of his or her relationship may be equally short-fused in the relationship.

\* A partner who limits access to money, belongings or the car: You may notice your friend or family member continually having to ask permission to use the car or visit with people. Some friends complain about not having access to the checkbook or being kept on a strict budget. While the circumstances do not always indicate a case of domestic violence, they may be warning signs that something is not right.

\* Hidden bruises or excuses for injuries: Michigan State University's Safe Place indicates that injuries that are covered up and happen with some frequency could be a sign of domestic violence. If someone you know is trying to downplay frequent injuries, it may be a red flag.

\* Conflict avoidance: Usually those who are in abusive relationships try to avoid conflict and rarely speak up or voice their own opinions.

# DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS MONTH

\* Personality changes: Withdrawal, inability or not wanting to meet up with friends, loss of enthusiasm, or any other personality changes may be indicative of someone that is being abused.

Domestic violence is something that takes many forms and is often hidden. But there may be some warning signs that can be observed through an outside party.

## No town is immune, reflections on domestic violence



When I was asked if I would contribute an article about domestic violence I was sure I could easily prepare something. And as I thought about it, going over my thirty-three years in law enforcement several ideas came to mind. I could write about various stories involving domestic violence that have stayed with me over the years, and I could relate some of the very personal issues that I think about almost every day, as a person, a father, a husband, boss, and most importantly friend.

You learn early in your police career that some of the most dangerous and most unpredictable calls involve domestic violence. That's because it is left only to the imagination what people can do to each other, physically and mentally, that would surprise most people...the real tragedy is it WOULD NOT surprise people who have been involved, sometimes in the most minor of ways, but nonetheless they would only really be shocked by your ignorance.

Police tactics will always tell you that it is very unsafe to try and deal with a violent situation by yourself. Often it has been referred to as "tombstone courage" by police trainers and coaches. I have had this drilled into me by the police departments I have worked for, the police academy, and many of the police survival seminars I have attended. But when it comes right down to it, in the middle of the night, when you are first officer at the residence of a domestic violence call, your cover officer is miles away, and you can hear sounds of a very physical altercation, often one-sided, dynamically and horrendously happening in front of you, often the tactics go out the window.

The main call that comes to mind is waiting outside of a residence, nothing special - ranch house in the valley, in a normally quiet neighborhood. I could hear lots of yelling and screaming, both from a man and a woman inside, as I am standing near the front door, waiting for my cover officer who is only two minutes away. As I'm waiting and trying to look through the window, I start to hear body impacts against the inside walls. More screaming and yelling inside as I am giving the updates on my portable radio. The front door is a decorative three panel door, the kind where all three panels are inset a bit. Suddenly a woman gets forcefully thrown through the door from the inside and lands on the front porch. I remember seeing the splintered wood and broken door pieces covering her and the outside porch area. Her husband, we later found out, comes storming out of the hole in the door to continue his attack on his wife. He had not observed me there and I was able to easily grab him and get him in handcuffs without any real problem...mostly because he was so surprised. The story is chilling but the really sad part to me, as a relatively new officer, was that the wife would only say that she fell down. She never told me she had been injured by her husband in

any way and did not want to press charges. The husband, very intoxicated, claimed he didn't know anything about what had happened. Thru the years I've seen this same scenario, to a lesser or greater extent, replay hundreds of times. Often the event is fueled by alcohol use by at least one of the people involved. Usually the male half of the fight was the aggressor but not always.

My next very memorable call involved, again, the call of a family dispute, this time at a large apartment complex. I had a cover officer with me this time and a recruit officer in training. The apartment was quiet when we arrived and ultimately we knocked on the front door. A very small slender man answered the door, in only a bathing suit, and asked what he could do for us. I noticed he was wet from head to toe; his feet were so wet he had left foot prints on the floor leading up to the front door. I advised him that we had been called to a family dispute at this location. When I began questioning him, I noticed he started slowly swaying back and forth. As he was trying to answer (he was also very intoxicated) I saw blood dripping from under his chin to the middle of his chest in big flowing drops. Two of us reached out to hold him up as he began to lose his balance. We assisted him to sit down on the sidewalk in front of his apartment door at which time we could see that his throat was slashed from ear to ear and he began to bleed heavily. Upon interviewing witnesses, we learned that the victim had been swimming with a female in the pool at the apartment complex. The man's girlfriend discovered this, went to the pool, grabbed him out of the water, broke a nearby beer bottle, and slashed his throat. According to the witness she then told the man to go back inside. In the end he survived and she went to jail. It took five officers to get her arrested and in the car.

So there are two stories...even though I think of them only on occasion, stories just like these, and often much worse happen everyday...statistically about every minute of every day in the United States. No town is immune, no matter how quaint. Every one of these incidents should alarm us, every one...but they just don't. First responders, police, fire, and ambulance, will tell you they get a regular diet of family disputes, resulting in domestic violence calls for service almost everyday. Larger populated areas will have multiple calls per day. The number of people affected by domestic violence is almost impossible to calculate; the spouse, partner, child, relative, neighbor etc. could be affected by a full range of possibilities, from intimidation to homicide.

I don't have any great answers or advice, but domestic violence cannot ever be kept a secret. Refusing to acknowledge domestic violence is a huge part of the problem. The psychological and physical issues are very complex, and people who are involved cannot deal with their problems alone. To try and give advice using phrases like "you should just leave him" or "never let him/her treat you that way", doesn't even scratch the surface.

The police often become the "protectors" who get called in middle of the night, in the middle of alcohol fueled fights and arguments. When victims just want the chaos to stop, we are the only hope that some people have to keep them safe. And once that momentary stability is established, we need support service organizations such as Florence SOS to assist that person in gaining a better life.

**Tom Turner**  
Chief, Florence Police Department

## Even when abuse doesn't leave a bruise, it still leaves a mark



There's a line from the Chris Farley comedy "Tommy Boy" that has wovens its way into our cultural vernacular. It comes after his friend Richard whacks him with a bat. Before Tommy passes out, he goes a little cross-eyed and says matter-of-factly, "That's gonna leave a mark," then crumples to the ground. Even before there's any bruising or swelling, Tommy already knows what's to come. The same can be said for victims of domestic violence and physi-

cally abusive relationships; they begin to recognize certain patterns in behavior and attitude that are precursors to violence. Sometimes that knowledge can help them defuse a situation; many times it can't. And when the violence begins, there's no stopping what's to come.

But what about when the abuse doesn't leave a mark or a bruise? When the violence doesn't come from a clenched fist but, instead, from between clenched teeth in words that berate, belittle and defeat the victim from the inside. While they may not leave any visible bruising, the marks left on the victim's psyche wound just as deeply. And when children are involved — whether directly or indirectly — they often carry those marks into their own lives as they come to define themselves, their choice in friends and how they handle their future relationships.

As parents, we have a dual responsibility to our children. The first is to encourage and support them to become their own person by being a sounding board for their ideas, a confidant for their wishes and a consistent enforcer of the rules that help guide them. Secondly — and by that, I only mean the second side of the same coin — we must be the example of what it means to value, respect and appreciate those who we say we love.

Notice I said "those who we say we love." Plenty of abusers profess their love as well as deep regret after extreme physical and verbal abuse to those who they say they love. For victims of abuse, this unpredictability becomes another means of control by their abuser, who can then dispense feelings of guilt should their victim hesitate to

forgive. In most cases, forgiveness becomes nothing more than a welcome, albeit temporary, reprieve in an endless cycle of abuse.

For children, seeing this sends a dangerous mixed message: Love goes hand-in-hand with violence, indifference and the need to dominate or control those who you say you love.

That's why our second responsibility as parents — being an example of what it means to value, respect and appreciate those who we say we love — is anything but secondary. It means not just saying the right words, but also showing that we care by demonstrating our support and commitment to those we say we love through our actions — none of which should ever include verbal or physical violence.

Doing that is the only way to truly leave the kind of mark that will end the cycle of abuse.

**Ned Hickson**

## Domestic Violence In Oregon – 2015

A total of 60 people – victims and perpetrators – lost their lives in 2015. The highest number of domestic violence fatalities occurred in Lane and Multnomah counties with 8 in each. This is a statistic we should pay attention to because Multnomah County has well over double the population of Lane County. Even worse, the Florence area has only about 5% of the population in Lane County but had 25% of the fatalities with two. The statistics also show that, statewide, the month of December accounts for more than double the average number of fatal incidents.

Last year Siuslaw Outreach Services provided advocacy to 157 victims of domestic violence and 27 victims of sexual assault. Any number is too high, but in a community of our size these numbers are startling. We also provided 1086 shelter nights in our safe house or other emergency shelter. We responded to 21 after-hours calls from police and 7 from the hospital. The majority of these calls were to provide advocacy to victims. We work very closely with all law enforcement agencies and the hospital and advocates are available around the clock.

Once per year we are asked to submit a one day account of activity. On September 14th, 2016, we provided advocacy service to 9

women survivors of domestic violence (with 10 children), emergency shelter to 2 women and 5 children, and we handled 6 domestic violence-related phone calls.

We also have formal agreements to work collaboratively with Womenspace, Sexual Assault Support Services, and KidsFirst in Eugene. These allow victims to have local advocates as well as support from these other organizations when appropriate. KidsFirst provides forensic interviewing, advocacy, and medical services to victims of child abuse.

### How Can I Help?

One of the biggest barriers to stopping domestic violence is the lack of awareness about it. Many people find it uncomfortable to discuss or difficult to report, but it is a community problem that requires community involvement. Join with us and the Siuslaw High School Cheerleaders for our annual October Domestic Violence Awareness Month march on Bay Street to promote awareness:

**SUNDAY OCTOBER 2<sup>nd</sup> 2016 VETERANS MEMORIAL ON BAY STREET 12:45 P.M.**

(March begins promptly at 1:00 p.m.)



**October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month**

**Come march with SOS End Domestic Violence**

**Sunday October 2<sup>nd</sup>**

**Gather by 12:45 p.m. at the Veterans Memorial on Bay Street**

march begins promptly at 1:00 p.m. and continues through downtown Florence