DOMESTIC ABUSE

What is Domestic Abuse?

Domestic abuse is one of the most prevalent form of violence. It is a pattern of behaviors that may include:

- Verbal & psychological abuse
- Social isolation
- Deprivation
- Intimidation
- Control of finances
- Physical or threat of physical abuse
- Sexual assault

Who Are the Victims? And who are the Perpetrators?

Thousands of victims live silently with domestic abuse, trapped by their fears of physical harm, custody concerns and emotional or economic abuse.

Abuse occurs in all societies, all economic groups, and at all educational levels. Any household member may potentially perpetrate or become a victim of domestic abuse regardless of age, race, gender, sexual orientation, faith or other social group. Therefore, potential victims include an intimate partner, a child or other relatives.

Most victims of domestic abuse are women and children, but cases involving male victims are increasingly common.

Recognizing the signs of domestic abuse

Does your partner...

- Embarrass or make fun of you in front of your friends or family?
- Put down your accomplishments?
- Make you feel like you are unable to make decisions?
• Use intimidation or threats to gain compliance?
• Tell you that you are nothing without them?
• Treat you roughly—grab, push, pinch, shove or hit you?
• Call you several times a night or show up to make sure you are where you said you would be?
• Use drugs or alcohol as an excuse for saying hurtful things or abusing you?
• Blame you for how they feel or act?
• Pressure you sexually for things you are not ready for?
• Make you feel like there is “no way out” of the relationship?
• Prevent you from doing things you want—like spending time with friends or family?
• Try to keep you from leaving after a fight or leave you somewhere after a fight to “teach you a lesson”?

Do you...
• Sometimes feel scared of how your partner may act?
• Constantly make excuses to other people for your partner’s behavior?
• Believe that you can help your partner change if only you changed something about yourself?
• Try not to do anything that would cause conflict or make your partner angry?
• Always do what your partner wants you to do instead of what you want?
• Stay with your partner because you are afraid of what your partner would do if you broke up?

If any of these things are happening in your relationship, talk to someone. Without help, the abuse will continue.
Remember that abuse has short- and long-term consequences. It can lead to depression, anxiety, feelings of helplessness and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, amongst other challenges.
Physical injuries may lead to multiple injuries, internal injuries or loss of consciousness.

Making that first call to seek help is a courageous step.

Always remember...
• NO ONE deserves to be abused. The abuse is not your fault. You are not alone.

Risks while isolating due to COVID-19
• The stay-at-home restrictions that have resulted from COVID-19 have led to what amounts to forced co-habitation in confined spaces for an indefinite period – this may increase the risk of Domestic Abuse.
• Domestic Abuse victims, even without the pandemic situation and social distancing measures, already tend to be isolated from their friends, family, and support networks.
• Perpetrators of abuse are using the stay-at-home situation as an opportunity to further exert control over their victims.
• Stress is not the cause of Domestic Abuse but can serve to aggravate and catalyze Domestic Abuse in situations such as the one we are experiencing.
• Staying home may be more dangerous than the coronavirus itself — and experts foresee added stress possibly leading to explosive episodes of violence.

Remember Again- Making that first call to seek help is a courageous step.
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