

## DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

### **Statistics**

- Between 2001 and 2005, about 63% of nonfatal intimate partner victimization against females occurred at home, 9.4% near home and 11.1% at a friend or neighbor's home. *DOJ, Bureau of Justice Statistics, Intimate Partner Violence in the U.S. 12/2007.*
- Between 2001 and 2005, on average 22% of nonfatal victimizations against females were committed by intimate partners, 8.9% were committed by other relatives, 36.2% by friends/acquaintances and 33% by strangers. *Ibid.*
- Males accounted for an average of 95.7 % of the persons committing violence. *Ibid.*
- Nearly 5.3 million intimate partner victimizations occur annually against American women over 18. Violence results in nearly 2 million injuries and 1,300 deaths. *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2003.*
- Many women return up to seven times before making a final break from the abuser, often due to a lack of resources. *U.S.Conference of Mayors' Survey on Hunger and Homelessness, 2002, <http://www.usmayors.org>*
- One in four women will experience domestic violence during her lifetime. *National Institute of Justice and CDC, "Extent, Nature, and Consequences of Intimate Partner Violence." 2000.*

### **Local Statistics**

- In 2007, the Houston Area Women's Center served over 2,800 survivors of domestic violence, sheltered over 1,200 women and children escaping domestic violence and answered almost 39,000 calls regarding domestic violence.
- In Houston, there were 20,070 incidents of domestic violence reported in 2006 and six women killed.
- In Texas, there were 186,983 domestic violence incidents and 110 women killed. *Texas Department of Public Safety, 2007*
- 74% of Texans know a relative, friend or a co-worker that has experienced some form of physical, sexual or verbal domestic abuse. *Saurage Research Inc. of Houston, random survey of 1,200 Texans in August 2002, released in February 2003.*

### **Overview of the Issue**

- Domestic violence occurs as intimate partner violence, spousal rape, child abuse and neglect, elder abuse and animal cruelty. It includes physical, emotional, financial, spiritual and sexual abuse, using tactics of intimidation, manipulation and assault. It affects people of all ages, races, religions, cultures, socioeconomic statuses, sexual orientations and physical or mental abilities. Most victims are women but there are also many men.
- Potential risk factors for domestic violence include poor family functioning, previous exposure to family violence, and beliefs in strict gender roles, weak societal sanctions, lack of social networks, low self-esteem, and economic stress.
- Racism, sexism, homophobia, able-ism, xenophobia, class-ism and other oppressions can impact how people experience violence and what help they receive. Substance abuse and mental illness, even though not responsible for domestic violence, can also greatly affect a victim's experience of domestic violence and access to helpful resources.

### **What You Can Do**

- Violence is taught first in the family. A culture of violence in society is either reinforced or discouraged at home. Teach your children that violence is always destructive. Educate yourself about domestic violence issues.
- Examine yourself, your community, family traditions, institutional practices and public policies to see how violent images, attitudes and beliefs are perpetuated and seek to change them. Do not blame the victim.
- If physical violence has happened in a relationship before, it will likely happen again. Do not make excuses. If you or someone you know is victimized by domestic violence, report and get help.

### **Impact on Victims**

- The most dangerous time for survivors is when they have left or have threatened to leave their batterers, who then seek to regain control over their partner or punish them. Survivors experience increased threats, risk of kidnapping of their children or themselves and more lethal physical violence when they leave.
- Survivors may suffer disability, PTSD, increased anxiety and depression. It is important that they get appropriate help to resolve negative feelings, feel better about themselves and reduce potential for self-destructive behavior.

### **Quotable**

The violation of a person's safety and well being through violence and fear is heinous, unacceptable and should be condemned by family, friends and the community. A family's right to privacy needs to be balanced with the need for intervention.