

An Analysis of the Effects of Domestic Violence

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Abstract

Whether married, divorced, dating, gay, lesbian, or heterosexual anyone can be a victim, or an executor, of domestic violence. Domestic violence is a pattern of abusive behavior in any relationship that is used by one partner to maintain power and control over another intimate partner. Domestic violence doesn't discriminate on the basis of race, ethnicity, or religion; neither does it single out persons of a particular economic class, educational level, age group, or even by gender. Domestic violence can be physical, sexual, emotional, economic, or psychological actions or threats of actions that influence another person. This includes any behaviors that intimidate, manipulate, humiliate, isolate, frighten, terrorize, coerce, threaten, blame, hurt, injure, or wound someone. Domestic violence has lots of effects to the society but, people do not tend to report it because of the relationship. So the purpose of this article is to discuss about the domestic violence and emphasize the hidden effects of the domestic violence.

Introduction

Domestic violence also known as domestic abuse, spousal abuse, intimate partner violence, battering or family violence is a pattern of behavior which involves violence or other abuse by one person in a domestic context against another, such as in marriage or cohabitation. Intimate partner violence is domestic violence by a spouse or partner in an intimate relationship against the other spouse or partner. Domestic violence can take place in heterosexual or same-sex relationships. Domestic violence can take a number of forms including physical, emotional, verbal, economic and sexual abuse, which can range from subtle, coercive forms to marital rape and to violent physical abuse that results in disfigurement or death. The frequency and severity of domestic violence can vary dramatically; however, the one

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constant component of domestic violence is one partner's consistent efforts to maintain power and control over the other.

Globally, a wife or female partner is more commonly the victim of domestic violence, though the victim can also be the male partner, or both partners may engage in violent behavior, or the victim may act in self-defense or justice. Whereas women in the developed world who experience domestic violence are openly encouraged to report it to the authorities, it has been argued that domestic violence against men is most often unreported because of social pressure against such reporting, with those that do facing social stigma regarding their perceived lack of machismo and other denigrations of their masculinity.

Domestic violence often occurs because the abuser believes that abuse is justified and acceptable, and may produce intergenerational cycles of abuse that condone violence. Awareness, perception, definition and documentation of domestic violence differ widely from country to country. There may be a cycle of abuse during which tensions rise and an act of violence is committed, followed by a period of reconciliation and calm. Victims of domestic violence may be trapped in domestic violent situations through isolation, power and control, insufficient financial resources, fear, shame or to protect children. As a result of abuse, victims may experience physical disabilities, chronic health problems, mental illness, limited finances, and poor ability to create healthy relationships and victims may experience post-traumatic stress disorder and these effects have discussed at the last phase of the article.

It is not always easy to determine in the early stages of a relationship if one person will become abusive. Domestic violence intensifies over time. Abusers may often seem wonderful and perfect initially, but gradually become more aggressive and controlling as the relationship continues. Abuse may begin with behaviors that may easily be dismissed or downplayed such as name-calling, threats, possessiveness, or distrust. Abusers may apologize generously for their actions or try to convince the person they are abusing that they do these things out of love or care. However, violence and control always intensifies over time with an abuser, despite

the apologies. What may start out as something that was first believed to be harmless escalates into extreme control and abuse.

It is important to note that domestic violence does not always visible as physical abuse. Emotional and psychological abuse can often be just as extreme as physical violence. Lack of physical violence does not mean the abuser is any less dangerous to the victim, nor does it mean the victim is any less trapped by the abuse. Additionally, domestic violence does not always end when the victim escapes the abuser, tries to terminate the relationship, and seeks help. Often, it intensifies because the abuser feels a loss of control over the victim. Abusers frequently continue to stalk, harass, threaten, and try to control the victim after the victim escapes. In fact, the victim is often in the most danger directly following the escape of the relationship or when they seek help.

Unfair blame is frequently put upon the victim of abuse because of assumptions that victims choose to stay in abusive relationships. The truth is, bringing an end to abuse is not a matter of the victim choosing to leave; it is a matter of the victim being able to safely *escape* their abuser, the abuser choosing to stop the abuse, or others holding the abuser accountable for the abuse they inflict.

The cycle of violence the domestic violence



Domestic abuse falls into a common pattern, or cycle of violence. First abusive partner lashes out with violent behavior. After abusing victim, the partner feels guilt, but not over what he's done. He's more worried about the possibility of being caught and facing consequences for his abusive behavior. Next the abuser rationalizes what he or she has done. The person may come up with a string of excuses or blame for

the abusive behavior .The abuser generally does everything he can to regain control and keep the victim in the relationship. He may act as if nothing has happened, or he may turn on the charm. This peaceful honeymoon phase may give the victim hope that the abuser has really changed this time. But the abuser begins to fantasize about abusing the victim again I this time period. He spends a lot of time thinking about what victim have done wrong and how he'll make the victim pay. Then he makes a plan for turning the fantasy of abuse into reality. Then the abuser sets you up and puts his plan in motion, creating a situation where he can justify abusing victim. Abuser's apologies and loving gestures in between the episodes of abuse can make it difficult to leave. Abuser may make victim believe that the victim are the only person who can help him that things will be different this time, and that he truly loves abuser. However, the dangers of staying are very real.

Victims of Domestic Violence

There is NO “typical victim” anyone can be a victim of domestic violence. Victims of domestic violence come from all walks of life, varying age groups, all backgrounds, all communities, all education levels, all economic levels, all cultures, all ethnicities, all religions, all abilities, and all lifestyles. The definition of domestic violence goes on to say that victims can include anyone, regardless of socioeconomic background, education level, race, age, sexual orientation, religion, or gender. Domestic violence used to be referred to as wife abuse. However, this term was abandoned when the definition of domestic violence changed to recognize that wives are not the only ones who can fall victim to domestic violence. The definition of domestic violence now recognizes that victims can be: Spouses, Intimate partners, Family members, Children.

Many people think that a victim of domestic violence can only obtain a protective order against his or her spouse. This is actually a myth. Most states allow victims of abusive lovers to obtain protective orders. Some states allow victims of abusive adult relatives, room - mates to obtain protective orders. The laws in each state are different. As recognition for the need for protection grows in each state, the law evolves to reflect it.

Domestic violence not only affects those who are abused, but also has a substantial effect on family members, friends, co-workers, other witnesses, and the community at large. Children, who grow up witnessing domestic violence, are among those seriously affected by this crime. Frequent exposure to violence in the home not only predisposes children to numerous social and physical problems, but also teaches them that violence is a normal way of life - therefore, increasing their risk of becoming society's next generation of victims and abusers.

Characteristics of an Abuser

Like a victim anyone can be an abuser. They come from all groups, all cultures, all religions, all economic levels, and all backgrounds. They can be a neighbor, priest, friend, child's teacher, a relative etc. It is important to note that the majority of abusers are only violent with their current or past intimate partners.

Though there is no typical personality of an abuser they do often display common characteristics; an abuser often denies the existence or minimizes the seriousness of the violence and its effect on the victim and other family members, an abuser objectifies the victim and often sees them as their property or sexual objects, an abuser has low self-esteem and feels powerless and ineffective in the world. He or she may appear successful, but internally, they feel inadequate, an abuser externalizes the causes of their behavior. They blame their violence on circumstances such as stress, their partner's behavior, on alcohol, drugs, or other factors, an abuser may be pleasant and charming between periods of violence and is often seen as a "nice person" to others outside the relationship.

Factors Contributing to Domestic Violence

There are lots of factors influences to domestic violence. Most prominent factors can discribe as follows.

Age

The female age group at highest risk for domestic violence victimization is 16 to 24. The victimization of teen girls is estimated to be high.

Socioeconomic Status

Although domestic violence occurs across income brackets, it is most frequently reported by the poor who more often rely on the police for dispute resolution. Victimization surveys indicate that lower-income women are, in fact, more frequently victims of domestic violence than wealthier women.

Repeat Victimization

Domestic violence, generally, has high levels of repetition. It is likely that some victims of domestic violence experience physical assault only once and others experience it repeated layover a period as short as 12 months.

Termination of the Relationship

Although there is a popular conception that the risk of domestic violence increases when a couple separates, in fact, most assaults occur during a relationship rather than after it is over. However, still unknown is whether the severity of violence increases once a battered woman leaves.

Pregnancy

Contrary to popular belief, pregnant women are no more likely than non-pregnant women to be victims of domestic violence. In fact, some women get a stay of execution from violence during pregnancy. The risk of abuse during pregnancy is greatest for women who experienced physical abuse before the pregnancy. Some additional factors increase the risk during pregnancy: being young and poor and if the pregnancy was unintended. Physical abuse during the pregnancy can result in pre-term delivery, low birth weight, birth defects, miscarriage, and fetal death.

Multiple Risk Factors

Being young, black, low-income, divorced or separated, a resident of rental housing, and a resident of an urban area have all been associated with higher rates of domestic violence victimization among women. For male victims, the patterns were nearly identical: being young, black, divorced or separated, or a resident of rental housing.

Also domestic violence is strongly linked to cohabitation at a young age, a variety of mental illnesses, a background of family adversity, dropping out of school, confidence for other types of crime, drug abuse, long-term unemployment, and parenthood at a young age.

Effects of Domestic Violence

”Domestic violence incurs significant social, emotional and economic costs to victims, their families and the broader community (Laing & Bobic 2002)”

Domestic violence affects all aspects of a victim’s life. When abuse victims are able to safely escape and remain free from their abuser, they often survive with long-lasting and sometimes permanent effects to their mental and physical health; relationships with friends, family, and children; their career; and their economic well-being.

Abuse can have a serious impact on the way a person thinks and interacts with the world around them. The chronic exposure to domestic violence and the stress fear resulting from this exposure can cause not only immediate physical injury, but also mental shifts that occur as the mind attempts to process trauma or protect the body. Domestic violence affects one’s thoughts, feelings and behaviors and can significantly impact one’s mental stability. Increased anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder and depression symptoms are commonly observed among survivors of domestic violence.

Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is a mental health condition that is triggered by a shocking incident. Some common symptoms associated with PTSD are flashbacks, nightmares, severe anxiety and uncontrollable thoughts about the event. Many people who go through traumatic events have difficulty adjusting and coping for a while. But with time and support, such traumatic reactions usually get better.

Depression is more than common feelings of temporary sadness. Symptoms can include prolonged sadness, feelings of hopelessness, unexplained crying, and changes in appetite with significant weight loss or gain, loss of energy or loss of

interest and pleasure in activities previously enjoyed. Depression can affect a person's outlook, which can lead to feelings of hopelessness. This, in turn, can impact his or her thought process and ability to make decisions. In extreme cases of depression, people may even experience suicidal thoughts and attempts.

Dissociation usually refers to feeling like one has "checked out" or is not present. In some instances of dissociation, people may find themselves daydreaming. But in situations where dissociation is chronic and more complex it may impair an individual's ability to function in the "real" world, such as not being able to focus on work related duties or being able to concentrate on schoolwork.

Victims of domestic violence experience an array of emotions and feelings from the abuse inflicted upon them by their abuser, both within and following the relationship. They may also resort to extremes in effort to cope with the abuse. Victims of domestic violence may want the abuse to end, but not the relationship.

Coping with the effects of domestic violence can be overwhelming, often because the survivor's control over the situation has been taken away by the executor. When this has occurred, a survivor may have the need to self-medicate or use drugs or alcohol to help him or her cope with the overwhelming feelings. Engaging in self-injurious behaviors can also bring a sense of control over a person's environment and serve as a release of tension. It is an action that is not always performed with suicidal intent, although occasionally it can result in severe harm or death. These are temporary coping strategies that can lead to deeper issues in the future.

Conclusion

Domestic violence is widely recognized as a serious human rights violation that affects millions of people worldwide. Entire society suffers from it and the effects of domestic violence on society are obviously enormous, but are impossible to measure. It generally changes one's worldview on life. That is a survivor may develop a negative worldview in which he or she may feel "damaged" or not good enough of a better life. Although it is generally documented that domestic violence is a well-known problem affecting people, it seem to be lot of years gone from discovering a solution.

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