

# DOMESTIC VIOLENCE & BRAIN INJURY

Domestic violence (also called intimate partner violence) is a pattern of abusive behaviors by one partner in a relationship that seek to control and maintain power over the other person in the relationship.

Domestic violence can be physical, emotional, sexual, and economic abuse. It can happen to anyone regardless of gender, race, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, or religion.

In the United States, 1 in 4 women and 1 in 7 men report being a victim of severe physical violence by an intimate partner.

Domestic violence can be cause of a traumatic or acquired brain injury.

50% of people who have experienced domestic violence are strangled at some point in the course of their relationship. This can lead to a lack of oxygen to the brain. Victims may suffer repeated blows to the head.

Domestic violence is a **pattern** of abuse, meaning many people who experience domestic violence could suffer multiple brain injuries.

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- ▶ Because domestic violence is based on power and control, it can be really challenging for people in domestic violent situations to leave.
- ▶ This means someone is more likely to sustain another brain injury if they aren't able to leave the perpetrator.
- ▶ After the first traumatic brain injury, someone is 3x more likely to sustain a second injury.
- ▶ After the second traumatic brain injury, someone is 8x more likely to sustain a third injury.
- ▶ If someone is treated in the ER for domestic violence, healthcare professionals often treat physical wounds first and may not screen for a traumatic brain injury.
- ▶ The symptoms of traumatic brain injury may make remembering safety plans or appointments difficult. They also may present as behavioral or mental health concerns.