

Effects of Domestic Violence

A domestic or dating violence incident takes place every [24 minutes](#) in the U.S. [One in four women and one in seven men](#) are victims of such violence. Increasingly, we are becoming aware of the scope of the domestic violence problem and the extent to which it can and does impact an individual's mental and physical health, and the overall mental health and well-being of a family. [Post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, and anxiety](#) are common among survivors, and a significant majority are at a higher risk than average for [strokes, heart disease, asthma, and substance abuse](#).

The ripple effects, unfortunately, don't stop there: Children who witness domestic violence can experience [lifelong effects](#) from poor performance in school to early death; [domestic violence](#) costs more than [\\$5 billion](#) in medical and mental health care each year, and an estimated 8 million days of paid work are lost annually because of domestic violence. We must all come to terms with the prevalence of domestic violence and better understand the impact on families, society, and even our economy. We must also step up to support those who have experienced it and, as importantly, find ways to prevent it.

While it is often assumed that domestic violence involves physical abuse, this is not always the case. Domestic violence can involve psychological, verbal, sexual, or economic abuse. Contributing to the isolation frequently experienced by victims, these forms of domestic violence can be difficult to spot. Abusers often exhibit certain attributes, however, that can serve as warning signs, including jealousy, controlling behavior, isolation of their partner from friends and family members, hypersensitivity or being quick to anger, and cruelty toward animals or children.

Loved ones who may experience domestic violence also exhibit certain behaviors. Sudden changes in their appearance, personality or interests, becoming withdrawn, avoiding eye contact, and physical bruises can all indicate that someone may be in an unhealthy and abusive relationship. Other signs may also include frequently being absent from school or work, exhibiting a sudden fear of conflict, and frequently accepting blame for arguments or other situations at home or work.

As with many personal or family-related problems, there is a tremendous stigma that prevents victims from coming forward to share their experiences and to seek help. This stigma, along with overwhelming feelings of shame or embarrassment, can be particularly damaging for male domestic violence survivors. Men often don't want to be seen as weak and thus remain silent about their experiences.

The [U.S. Office on Women's Health](#) suggests several actions that can be taken if someone recognizes the behaviors of a potential abuser or victim. It is also often assumed that domestic violence only occurs in lower-income, minority or rural communities. The truth is that domestic violence can happen to anyone, regardless of who they are, what they do for a living, or where they live. Recent headlines about NFL Hall of Famer [Warren Sapp](#) and U.S. soccer player [Hope Solo](#) prove that even celebrities are far from immune.

Domestic violence is a choice and may be more prevalent with the use of drugs or alcohol. So many individuals do not feel they have a choice as leaving an abuser may affect the victim's income, social connections, and cause fear of death.

If you or someone you know may be experiencing domestic violence, please take a moment to call the Louisiana Domestic Violence Hotline at 1.888.411.1333.

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