

## Common Myths and Why They Are Wrong

Domestic violence only happens to poor women and women of color.

- Domestic violence happens in all kinds of families and relationships. Persons of any class, culture, religion, sexual orientation, marital status, age, and sex can be victims or perpetrators of domestic violence.

Some people deserve to be hit.

- No one deserves to be abused. Period. The only person responsible for the abuse is the abuser.
- Physical violence, even among family members, is wrong and against the law.

Alcohol, drug abuse, stress, and mental illness cause domestic violence.

- Alcohol use, drug use, and stress do not cause domestic violence; they may go along with domestic violence, but they do not cause the violence. Abusers often say they use these excuses for their violence. (Michigan Judicial Institute, Domestic Violence Benchbook, 1998, p. 1.6 - 1.7)
- Generally, domestic violence happens when an abuser has learned and chooses to abuse. (Michigan Judicial Institute, Domestic Violence Benchbook, 1998, p. 1 - 5)
- Domestic violence is rarely caused by mental illness, but it is often used as an excuse for domestic violence. (Michigan Judicial Institute, Domestic Violence Benchbook, 1998, p. 1 - 8)

Domestic violence is a personal problem between a husband and a wife.

- Domestic violence affects everyone.
- About 1 in 3 American women have been physically or sexually abused by a husband or boyfriend at some point in their lives. (Commonwealth Fund, Health Concerns Across a Woman's Lifespan: the Commonwealth Fund 1998 Survey of Women's Health, 1999)
- In 1996, 30% of all female murder victims were killed by their husbands or boyfriends. (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 1997)
- 40% to 60% of men who abuse women also abuse children. (American Psychological Association, Violence and the Family, 1996)

If it were that bad, she would just leave.

- There are many reasons why women may not leave. Not leaving does not mean that the situation is okay or that the victim wants to be abused.
- Leaving can be dangerous. The most dangerous time for a woman who is being abused is when she tries to leave. (United States Department of Justice, National Crime Victim Survey, 1995)

MANY VICTIMS DO LEAVE AND LEAD SUCCESSFUL, VIOLENCE FREE LIVES.

Attributed to by North Carolina Coalition Against Domestic Violence