

## Intimate Partner Abuse

### Are you a victim of partner abuse?

There are many misconceptions surrounding domestic/dating abuse. First I would like to define some terms for you. The words “dating” and “domestic” violence cover a range of behaviors in which one person (adult or teen) uses power to control a current or former partner. **Domestic violence** refers to violence between intimate partners (gay, lesbian, straight, bisexual or transgender). **Intimate partner violence (IPV)** is a better description... This can include: physical violence, indirect violence (throwing things near the victim) threats of physical violence (to the victim, family members or pets), sexual abuse, sexual intimidation, emotional abuse, economic deprivation, isolation and stalking. Dating violence or abuse is when a person you are, or have been involved with, acts in an aggressive, threatening, controlling or violent way.

### It can happen to anyone!

IPV knows no boundaries – it happens in all cultures, races, religions, economic groups and sexes. One in six women and one in 33 males will be sexually assaulted in their life. College women are *four times* more likely to be the victims of sexual assault. Women between the ages of 16-24 are the *most* likely to be abused in a dating relationship. Even with these staggering statistics, we know that interpersonal violence is under reported in college students. Often a person is unsure if a crime has actually been committed or they feel too embarrassed to report it. The victim may be in denial or hope that the abuse will just stop.

The lesbian, gay, transgender, bisexual (LGTB) community has the same percentage of IPV and even more obstacles to reporting or seeking help. One writer referred to this as “the double closet”. The victim may not be out and they do not want to report IPV due to embarrassment about being a victim. Other problems are: services are mostly geared towards straight women; victims fear discrimination or lack of sensitivity from police and social services, lack of peer support because of negatively affecting the image of GLTB community, and the impact of HIV status keeping partners together.

### The Cycle of Violence

IPV tends to run in a cycle. The first phase is the “honeymoon”. During this time, the offender feels very sorry for their actions. They are loving, affectionate and apologetic. During the “tension building” phase, communication starts to break down and tension between the partners increases. The victim tries to keep their partner happy and calm. The “acting-out” phase is when the abusive actions occur. Experts think that the honey-moon phase is one of the reasons that victims stay in abusive relationships – things get better and they hope that they will change. They don’t.

### How do you know if you are a victim?

IPV may not be obvious to the victim. Here is a list of behaviors you may not have clearly understood as abusive:

Does your partner.....

Tell you what to wear?

Call or text all the time to find out what you are doing? Who you are with?

Call you names, insult or criticize you?  
Try to cut off contact with your family or friends?  
Act jealous, possessive or bossy?  
Get angry easily?  
Orders you around or makes all the decisions?  
Touch or kiss you when you don't want to?  
Force sex?  
Pressure you to use drugs or alcohol?  
Refuse to accept that a relationship is not working or is over?  
Shows up everywhere you go?

### **What can you do if you determine that you are in an abusive relationship?**

#### **If you are in immediate danger – CALL 911.**

1. Get help if you have *any* concerns. There is a small list of resources at the end of this article.
2. Trust your instincts!
3. Take threats seriously
4. Talk to Ventura College Campus Police, local police departments and work security.
5. Tell people about it – talk to friends, family, roommates, coworkers. Ask for their support and to watch out for you.
6. If you are a bystander to abusive behavior, and feel safe, don't leave. If you do not feel safe, call 911 for the victim.

#### **Phone Numbers**

Emergency 911

Domestic Violence Hotline (805) 656-1111

Ventura College Campus Police (805) 642-7000

#### **Websites:**

Dating Violence Resource Center: [www.ncvc.org](http://www.ncvc.org)

Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network: [www.rainn.org](http://www.rainn.org)

LGTB Domestic Violence: [www.rainbowdomesticviolence](http://www.rainbowdomesticviolence)

Ventura Community College: [www.venturacollege.edu](http://www.venturacollege.edu) Police Department

**What can SHPS do to help you ?** Our staff is trained to help you find community resources. Please call or walk in to our office.