

## Myths and Facts about Domestic Violence

Compare these myths from the Module 1 self-assessment to the facts presented in Module 2.

Myths	Facts
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Batterers abuse their partners because they are under a lot of stress or are unemployed.</li> <li>2. Some men just can't control their anger and take out their rage on their partners.</li> <li>3. A woman usually provokes her partner into violence.</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Batterers abuse their partners to gain a sense of power and control. Typically batterers have low self-esteem and struggle with depression or feelings of powerlessness. Exerting control over someone else is a way to makes abusers feel better.</li> <li>• Committing domestic violence against someone else is never an acceptable way to express anger. Anger can be controlled and violence is never the victim's fault.</li> </ul>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Most women who are victims of domestic violence are psychologically unbalanced.</li> <li>5. Most women who are victims of domestic violence won't accept help even if it is offered.</li> <li>6. When a battered woman returns to an abusive partner, it means she is okay with the abuse.</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Victims often believe the relationship will get better – especially in the early stages of abuse.</li> <li>• A woman may depend on the batterer for economic and emotional support. If she had economic and/or emotional support, she could leave her batterer.</li> <li>• Women do not want to be abused. They feel guilt, depression, fear, or helplessness. They may believe the abuse is somehow their fault.</li> <li>• Some women have religious or cultural beliefs that discourage leaving a relationship.</li> <li>• Separation from a batterer puts a woman at more risk of assault or death – especially during the first year. This fact makes women very cautious about leaving.</li> </ul>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7. Domestic violence is caused by alcohol or drug abuse.</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Batterers use alcohol or drugs, but these do not cause domestic violence.</li> <li>• Controlling personalities often abuse alcohol. The alcohol itself is not a cause; it is another symptom.</li> <li>• Batterers use more drugs or alcohol than the victim.</li> </ul>

<b>Myths</b>	<b>Facts</b>
<p>8. The most frequent victims of domestic violence are poor and uneducated.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All economic groups are affected.</li> <li>• 31% of American women report physical or sexual abuse from a male partner during their lifetime.</li> <li>• Women from all income and education levels report battering.</li> <li>• Women aged 18 -44 report more battering than other age groups.</li> <li>• Family history is a predictor of violence.</li> <li>• Social factors influence acceptance of violence. In some cultures, domestic violence is an accepted part of the culture.</li> </ul>
<p>9. Victims of domestic violence are wasting their time if they call the police for help.</p> <p>10. An order of protection cannot prevent domestic violence.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Police treat domestic violence as seriously as other crimes.</li> <li>• Harassment Restraining Orders (HROs) and Orders For Protection (OFPs) help a woman and children stay safe.</li> </ul>
<p>11. A child who witnesses domestic violence will NOT be affected as an adult.</p> <p>12. Battering is between parents and does not affect the children.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children who witness domestic violence have more behavioral, emotional, learning problems.</li> <li>• Boys show more aggression and hostility; adults use more violence against partners.</li> <li>• Girls show more depression and internalized problems; adults think violence is normal.</li> </ul>
<p>13. Rape is not possible between married or cohabiting partners and is not a kind of domestic violence.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nonconsensual sex is rape – even when partners are married or living together.</li> </ul>
<p>14. Domestic violence refers only to physical harm.</p> <p>15. Threats, withholding economic support and verbal attacks are not considered domestic violence.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Domestic violence includes physical and emotional abuse. It can cause physical, emotional, and economic harm to its victims.</li> </ul>