



A Survivor's Handbook

Domestic Violence

Rape

Stalking

Abuse is not acceptable
under any circumstance and
it is against the law!

*Abusers need to accept the fact that they have a problem
and take responsibility for their behavior.*

This booklet is published as a service by

Safe Harbor

310 S. Kline St.; PO Box 41

Aberdeen, SD 57402-0041

605-226-1212

Toll Free: 888-290-2935

Fax: 605-226-2430

Updated: March 2006

Section 1: What is Domestic Violence?

Domestic violence is a pattern of coercive tactics abusers use to obtain and maintain control and power over their partners.

It is an assault or threat by one family or household member (current or former) against another. Household members are defined by law as: spouses, former spouses, persons who have lived together, persons who have had a child together or persons related by blood, adoption or law.

Tactics of control include, but are not limited to:

- Physical abuse
- Emotional and verbal abuse
- Isolation
- Threats and intimidation
- Sexual abuse and rape

The existence of emotional and verbal abuse, isolation, intimidation and threats within relationships may indicate that physical abuse will follow. Even if these coercive tactics are used without physical abuse, these incidents and their effects should not be minimized. Without intervention, domestic violence never gets better and never stays the same. Domestic violence ALWAYS escalates over time.

Domestic violence is about the power and control your abuser has over you. Acts of violence are not random and are not initiated by people who are out of control or unaware of what is being done. Every episode of violence is connected to the next. Every act is terrifying and has a consequence. The intent of the abusers assaulting behavior is systematic terrorization, resulting in domination over the victim.

Who is affected

Families, children, and entire communities are affected. Victims can be anyone: young or old, rich or poor, man or woman. Violence is not correlated with race, religion, income, education, profession or sexual orientation.

When does it occur?

Domestic abuse can occur at any time, any place and for any reason. Abusers select the time, tactics, intensity and duration of assaults. This keeps victims off guard and at the mercy of their partner.

Why do victim's stay?

This question re-victimizes the victim. *It avoids looking at the behavior and intentions of the abuser.* Some people believe if the victim really wanted to leave; he or she could just get up and go. This assumption overlooks the barriers that prevent victims from leaving.

- **Economic dependence:** It is very frightening for many women to make it on their own. The inequality of pay between the sexes in our society is also a factor that keeps women economically dependent. There is a lack of housing and childcare. There is a great stigma attached to public assistance.
- **Fear of greater physical danger to herself/himself and/or the children if the attempt to leave is made:** Threats may be made to friends and family also.
- **Fear of emotional damage to children:** There is social pressure to "stay together for the sake of the children", "children need both parents".
- **Fear of custody fight over the children:** an abuser often threatens this. "I'll take the children away" or "you'll never see them again."
- **Isolation resulting in lack of support from family or friends**
- **Lack of information about alternatives**
- **Cultural and religious restraints**
- **Love of the person:** A strong commitment to marriage; a desire to make the relationship work.
- **Hope that the abuser will change**
- **Fear that the abuser won't be able to survive alone:** There may even be threats of suicide.
- **There is a great deal of guilt and humiliation attached to abuse:** Battering damages self-esteem. Repeated beatings cause a severe lack of self-worth.
- **Lack of support and faith in law enforcement**
- **Myths about battering often blame the victim:** A victim may have accepted the blame.

- **He/She may come from a violent home and accept violence as a usual course in relationships:** Victims may not realize that they have the right of not being abused.
- **A victim may be experiencing violence for the first time and believe she/he is the only person experiencing this problem:** You may be embarrassed to talk about it.
- **A victim may doubt her/his own sanity, accepting the abuser's reality.**
- **Fear of Death:** A woman's greatest time of risk is when she leaves her abuser. Her risk of death increases 7 times in the first 7 days.

Myths about Domestic Violence

Myth: Domestic violence is rare.

Fact: National studies estimate that 3 to 4 million women are beaten each year in our country.

Myth: Domestic violence is confined to the lower class.

Fact: Studies of domestic violence consistently have found that battering occurs among all types of families, regardless of income, profession, region, ethnicity or educational level.

Myth: Alcohol and/or drug abuse is the real cause of violence in the home.

Fact: Alcohol and drug abuse offer the batterer an excuse to evade responsibility for the behavior. Domestic violence and substance abuse are two different problems that should be treated separately.

Myth: Battered wives like being hit. Otherwise they would leave.

Fact: The most common response to battering-"Why don't they just leave?"-ignores economic and social realities facing many women and men. Batterers escalate their violence when the victims try to leave, show signs of independence, or have left.

Myth: Domestic Violence is usually a one time, isolated occurrence. **Fact:** Battering is a pattern and includes the repeated use of numerous tactics. Physical violence is just one of these tactics. The various forms of abuse helps maintain power and control over their spouses and partners.

Power and Control

The cycle of violence (Three Phases)

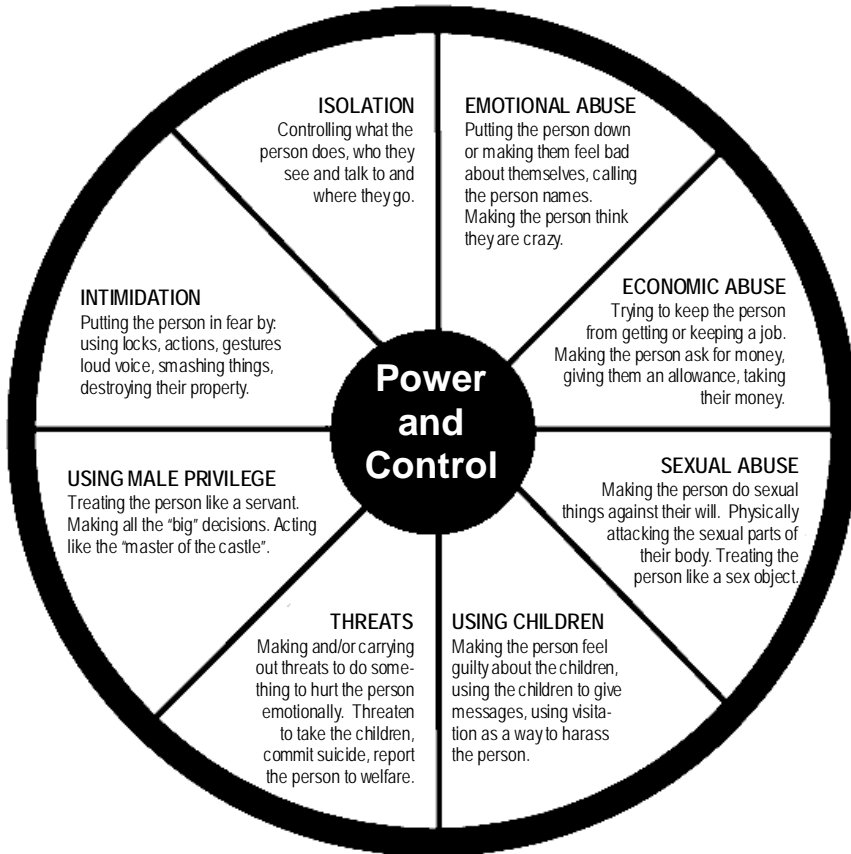
Domestic violence has a consistent pattern of behavior that continually repeats itself. As time goes on, and without proper intervention, the pattern repeats more frequently and the violence becomes more severe.

Tension building phase: Commonly described as feelings of "walking on egg shells." The victim knows that things are not going well. The abuser is edgy and easily agitated. The victim tries to manipulate his or her surroundings by being extra pleasing (cooking, keeping the house clean, making the kids behave) during this time to appease the abuser.

Explosive (violent) phase: This is when someone gets hurt. Verbal fighting has occurred, and the offender uses some type of violence. When the victim is in crisis mode, the police are sometimes called.

Honeymoon (seduction) phase: The abuser is remorseful to varying extents; promises are made and sometimes gifts are given. The batterer becomes scared of losing control of his or her partner and will try whatever means necessary to keep the victim in the relationship.

Power & Control Wheel *Violence*



Abusers

Men or women can be abusers. Victims and abusers often have common characteristics; both may have been raised in abusive homes, witnessed violence or been abused or neglected as children. This learned behavior becomes a normal response to stress, relationships and lifestyles.

Childhood trauma is not an excuse for the batterer's behavior.

Characteristics of batterers and "red flags"

- Low self-esteem, poor self-image, feelings of insecurity or inflated ego, sense of entitlement over rest of human race
- Extreme jealousy, wants complete control
- Dr. Jekyll & Mr. Hyde personality
- Violent temper, loses temper easily
- Preoccupation with weapons
- Abuse of alcohol or other drugs
- Dislike for authority figures
- Isolation
- Cruelty to animals
- Breaking or striking objects
- Past history of violence

Beliefs held by abusers

- Anger causes violence.
- Women are manipulative.
- Smashing things isn't abusive; it's venting.
- Sometimes there is just no alternative to violence.
- Women are just as violent as men are.
- Women want to be dominated by men.
- Jealousy is natural in men.
- I will get what I want when I want it.
- I'm doing nothing wrong.
- I won't get caught.
- If I get caught, I can talk my way out of the situation.
- If I can't get out of it, the consequences will be light.

Typical Statements

Abusers

"She or he made me do it."

"If she or he would have..."

"It was just a little tap/push/shove..."

"You got to keep them in line or they walk all over you."

"I just had too much to drink."

Victim

"When he or she isn't drinking, he or she is the nicest person."

"If I would have... I wouldn't have been hit."

"It's only when he or she has been drinking."

"I'm not really abused-it's just verbal."

"He or she is a good parent."

"But I love him or her."

If a victim's partner is abusive and the victim is not sure what to do about it, an excellent first step is to reach out to people who can help. No matter how alone the person may feel there are lots of people who have experienced what the victim is experiencing and are willing to help.

Domestic Violence Effects on Children

Children who witness the battering of their mother or father may demonstrate significant behavioral and/or emotional problems, which may include stuttering, anxiety and fears, sleep disruption, excessive crying, school problems and psychosomatic disorders. Battering even affects the fetus. Battered women have increased risk of spontaneous abortions, pre-term labor, fetal injuries and low birth weight babies.

Studies have shown that children do not have to be hit in order to suffer the effects of violence. Witnessing violence in the home also has detrimental effects. Parents may think that the children are not witnesses if the violence occurs after the children have gone to bed or are playing in another part of the home. In reality, however, children hear and see much more than their parents know and chances are they are not sleeping through the violence. Children who see or hear violence live in fear.

What happens to a child who grows up in tension and fear? The child's brain may develop differently from the brain of a child raised without fear. The part of the brain that controls learning, logic, empathy, sympathy and remorse (all the finer thinking processes), does not develop normally because a fearful child is developing a brain that reacts to fear. The child goes into a "fight or flight" mode of thinking, with the brain cueing the body to elevate heart rate, respiration and blood pressure.

Danger Assessment

Jacquelyn C. Campbell, PhD, RN, FAAN
 Copyright 2004 Johns Hopkins University, School of Nursing

Several risk factors have been associated with increased risk of homicides (murders) of women and men in violent relationships. We cannot predict what will happen in your case, but we would like you to be aware of the danger of homicide in situations of abuse and for you to see how many of the risk factors apply to your situation.

Using the calendar, please mark the approximate dates during the past year when you were abused by your partner or ex partner. Write on that date how bad the incident was according to the following scale:

1. Slapping, pushing; no injuries and/or lasting pain
2. Punching, kicking; bruise, cuts and/or continuing pain
3. "Beating up"; severe contusions, burns, broken bones, miscarriage
4. Threat to use weapon; head injury, permanent injury, miscarriage
5. Use of weapon; wounds from weapon

(If **any** of the descriptions for the higher number apply, use the higher number.)

Mark Yes or No for each of the following.

("He" refers to your husband, partner, ex-husband, ex-partner, or whoever is currently physically hurting you.)

Yes	No	
_____	_____	1. Has the physical violence increased in severity or frequency over the past year?
_____	_____	2. Does he own a gun?
_____	_____	3. Have you left him after living together during the past year? 3a. (If you have never lived with him, check here _____)
_____	_____	4. Is he unemployed?
_____	_____	5. Has he ever used a weapon against you or threatened you with a lethal weapon? 5a. (f yes, was the weapon a gun? _____)
_____	_____	6. Does he threaten to kill you?
_____	_____	7. Has he avoided being arrested for domestic violence?
_____	_____	8. Do you have a child that is not his?
_____	_____	9. Has he ever forced you to have sex when you did not wish to do so?
_____	_____	10. Does he ever try to choke you?
_____	_____	11. Does he use illegal drugs? By drugs, I mean "uppers" or amphetamines, speed, angel dust, cocaine, "crack", street drugs or mixtures.
_____	_____	12. Is he an alcoholic or problem drinker?
_____	_____	13. Does he control most or all of your daily activities? (For instance: does he tell you who you can be friends with, when you can see your family, how much money you can use, or when you can take the car? (If he tries, but you do not let him, check here: _____)
_____	_____	14. Is he violently and constantly jealous of you? (For instance, does he say "If I can't have you, no one can.")
_____	_____	15. Have you even been beaten by him while you were pregnant? (If you have never been pregnant by him, check here: _____)
_____	_____	16. Has he ever threatened or tried to commit suicide?
_____	_____	17. Does he threaten to harm your children?
_____	_____	18. Do you believe he is capable of killing you?
_____	_____	19. Does he follow or spy on you, leave threatening notes or messages on answering machine, destroy your property, or call you when you don't want him to?
_____	_____	20. Have you ever threatened or tried to commit suicide?
_____	_____	Total "Yes" Answers

Thank you. Please talk to your nurse, advocate or counselor about what the Danger Assessment means in terms of your situation.

Developing a safety plan

Every individual in an abusive relationship needs a safety plan. These plans should be individualized, but still contain common elements.

- Develop a support system.
- Keep a journal and document the behavior. (Keep it in a safe, secret place.)
- Think about all possible escape routes.
- Choose a place to go.
- Pack a survival kit (money for calls or carfare, clothing, extra keys, birth certificates, legal documents, medications, address book and any valuables such as jewelry).
- Try to start an individual savings account. (Have statements sent to friends or relatives.)
- Avoid arguments with the abuser in areas with potential weapons.
- Review your plan monthly.

Personalized Safety Plan

The following steps represent my plan for increasing my safety and preparing in advance for the possibility of further violence. Although I do not have control over my partner's violence, I do have a choice about how to respond to him or her and how to best get myself and my children to safety.

Step 1: Safety during a violent incident. People cannot always avoid violent incidents. In order to increase safety, battered persons may use a variety of strategies. I can use some or all of the following:

- 1) If I decide to leave, I will _____ . (Practice how to leave safely. What doors, windows, elevators, stairwells, or fire escapes would you use?)
- 2) I can keep my purse/wallet and car keys ready and put them (where) _____ in order to leave quickly.
- 3) I can tell _____ about the violence and request they call the police if they hear suspicious noises coming from my house.
- 4) I can teach my children how to use the telephone to contact the police and the fire department.
- 5) I will use _____ as my code word with my children or my friends so they can call for help.
- 6) If I have to leave my home, I will go _____. (Decide this even if you don't think there will be a next time.)
- 7) If I cannot go there, then I can go _____ or _____. I can also teach some of these strategies to some or all of my children.
- 8) When I expect we are going to have an argument, I will try to move to a space that is lowest risk, such as _____. (Try to avoid arguments in the bathroom, garage, and kitchen, near weapons or in rooms without access to an outside door.)
- 9) I will use my judgment and intuition. If the situation is very serious, I can give my partner what he or she wants to calm him or her down. I have to protect myself until I am out of danger and my children are safe.

Step 2: Safety when preparing to leave. A battered person frequently leaves the residence shared with the battering partner. Leaving must be done with a careful plan in order to increase safety. The batterer often strikes back when he or she believes the battered partner is leaving a relationship. I can use some or all of the following safety strategies:

1. I will leave money and an extra set of keys with _____ so I can leave quickly.
2. I will keep copies of important documents or keys at _____.
3. I will open a savings account by _____ (date) to increase my independence.
4. Other things I can do to increase my independence include:

5. The domestic violence program's hotline number is _____. I can seek shelter by calling this hotline.
6. I can keep change for phone calls on me at all times. I understand that if I use my telephone credit card, the following month the telephone bill will tell my batterer those numbers I called after I left. To keep my telephone calls confidential, I must either use coins or I might get a friend to permit me to use their telephone credit card for a limited time when I first leave.
7. I will check with _____ and _____ to see who would be able to let me stay with them or lend me some money.
8. I can leave extra clothes with _____.

9. I will sit down and review my safety plan every _____ in order to plan the safest way to leave the residence. _____ (domestic abuse advocate or friend) has agreed to help me review this plan.
10. I will rehearse my escape plan and, as appropriate, practice it with my children.

Step 3: Safety in my own residence. There are many things a person can do to increase his or her safety in the home. It may be impossible to do everything at once, but safety measures can be added step by step. These are some I can use:

- A. I can change the locks on my doors and windows as soon as possible.
- B. I can replace wooden doors with steel/metal doors.
- C. I can install security systems including additional locks, window bars, poles to wedge against doors and an electronic system.
- D. I can purchase rope ladders to be used for escape from second floor windows.
- E. I can install smoke detectors and purchase fire extinguishers for each floor in my house or apartment.
- F. I can install outside lighting that lights up when a person is coming close to my house.
- G. I will teach my children how to use the telephone to make a collect call to me and to _____ (friend/minister/other) in the event that my partner takes the children.
- H. I will tell the people who take care of my children which people have permission to pick up my children and that my partner isn't permitted to do so.
- I. I can inform _____ (neighbors, friends) that my partner no longer resides with me and they should call the police if he or she is observed near my residence.

Step 4: Safety with a protection order. Many batterers obey protection orders, but one can never be sure which violent partner will obey and which will violate protection orders. I recognize that I may need to ask the police and the courts to enforce my protection order. The following are some steps I can take to help the enforcement of my protection order.

- A. I will keep my protection order _____ (location). (Always keep it on or near your person. If you change purses, put the protection order in first.)
- B. I will give my protection order to police departments in the community where I work, in those communities where I usually visit family or friends, and in the community where I live.
- C. There should be a county registry of protection orders that all police departments can call to confirm a protection order. I can check to make sure that my order is on the registry. The telephone number for the county registry of protection orders is: _____.
- D. For further safety, if I often visit other counties in my state, I might file my protection order in those counties. I will register my protection order in the following counties: _____.
- E. I will inform my employer, my minister, my closest friend and _____ and _____ that I have a protection order in effect.
- F. If my partner destroys my protection order, I can get another copy from the courthouse.
- G. If my partner violates the protection order, I can call the police and report a violation, contact my attorney, call my advocate, and/or advise the court of the violation.

Step 5: Safety on the job and in public. Each battered person must decide if and when he/she will tell others that their partner has battered them and that they may be at continued risk. Friends, family and co-workers can help to protect him/her. Each person should consider carefully which people to invite to help secure their safety. I might do any/all of the following:

- A. I can inform my boss, the security supervisor and _____ at work of my situation.
- B. I can ask _____ to help screen my phone calls at work.
- C. When leaving work, I can _____.
- D. When driving home, if problems occur I can _____.
- E. If I use public transit, I can _____.
- F. I can use different grocery stores, shopping centers and banks to conduct my business and shop at hours that are different than those when residing with my battering partner.

Step 6: Safety and drug or alcohol use. Most people in this culture use alcohol. Many use mind-altering drugs. Much of this use is legal and some is not. The legal outcomes of using illegal drugs can be very hard on battered persons and may hurt their relationship with their children and put them at a disadvantage in other legal matters with the battering partner. Therefore, people should carefully consider the potential cost of the use of illegal drugs. But beyond this, the use of alcohol or other drugs can reduce a person's awareness and ability to act quickly to protect themselves from a battering partner. Furthermore, the use of alcohol or other drugs by the batterer may give him/her an excuse to use violence. Therefore, in the context of drug or alcohol use, a person needs to make specific safety plans. If drug or alcohol use has occurred in my relationship with the battering partner, I can enhance my safety by some or all of the following:

- A. If I am going to use, I can do so in a safe place and with people who understand the risk of violence and are committed to my safety.
- B. If my partner is using, I can _____.
- C. To safeguard my children I might _____.

Step 7: Safety and my emotional health. The experience of being battered and verbally degraded by partners is usually exhausting and emotionally draining. The process of building a new life for me takes courage and incredible energy. To conserve my energy and to avoid hard emotional times, I can do some or all of the following:

- A. If I feel down and ready to return to a potential abuse situation, I can _____.
- B. When I have to communicate with my partner in person or by telephone, I can _____.
- C. I can try to use "I can..." statements with myself and to be assertive with others.
- D. I can tell myself " _____ " whenever I feel others trying to control or abuse me.
- E. I can read _____ to help me feel stronger.
- F. I can call _____, _____ and _____ as other resources to be of support to me.
- G. I can attend workshops and support groups at the domestic violence program or _____, _____ or _____ to gain support and strengthen my relationships with other people.

Step 8: Items to take when leaving. When leaving, it is important to take certain items. Beyond this, a person might give an extra copy of papers and an extra set of clothing to a friend in case they have to leave quickly. These items might best be placed in one location, so that if I/we have to leave in a hurry, I can grab them quickly.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Identification for myself | <input type="checkbox"/> Passport(s) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Children's birth certificates | <input type="checkbox"/> Divorce papers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> My birth certificate | <input type="checkbox"/> Medical records for all family members |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Social Security cards | <input type="checkbox"/> Lease/rental agreement, house deed |
| <input type="checkbox"/> School and vaccination records | <input type="checkbox"/> Bank books |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Money | <input type="checkbox"/> Insurance papers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Checkbook, ATM card | <input type="checkbox"/> Small saleable objects |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Credit cards | <input type="checkbox"/> Address book |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Keys – house/car/office | <input type="checkbox"/> Pictures |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Driver's license and registration | <input type="checkbox"/> Jewelry |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Medications | <input type="checkbox"/> Children's favorite toy/blanket |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Welfare identification | <input type="checkbox"/> Work permits |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Green card | |

Developed by Barbara Hart and Jane Stuehling, PCADV, 524 McKnight Street, Reading PA 19601 PCADV, 1991
 Adopted from "Personalized Safety Plan", Office of the City Attorney, City of San Diego, CA April 1990

Section 2: Rape/Sexual Assault

Rape. Why me? If you have been raped, one of the questions you may be asking is how could this have happened? Will the pain and suffering ever end? If you have been raped, what can you do to support your recovery?

Remember, regardless of what others think, you know whether or not you have been raped. If a sexual act was committed against you *in any way without your consent*, you were raped. Do not let what others think or say confuse you. You know if you have been raped. **It is not your fault!**

What is Rape?

Rape occurs any time a sex-related act is forced on another person. This includes acts of fondling, oral sex, forcing a person to disrobe, voyeurism, photography, as well as intercourse. This includes any sex act imposed on a person who cannot give consent – whether they are too young to give consent or when a person takes or is given alcohol or a drug that causes her to lose consciousness.

Rape involves the use of force or threat of force. Anytime a survivor is forced or coerced to the point of physical or emotional powerlessness, rape has occurred. Even if the survivor does not fight back, force or threat of force is all that is necessary for rape to occur.

Rape includes attempted as well as completed acts. Simply being placed in the position of fearing rape, even if the rape is not carried out for some reason, constitutes the crime of rape.

Rape is violent sexual abuse against another person, regardless of who that person is or what that person does with her or his life.

Remember, rape is never your fault!

Rape Myths

Myth: Rape is about sexual gratification

Fact: Rapists are seeking to satisfy a need to degrade women, to have ultimate power over them or to make them fear him. It has nothing to do with sex. Rapes are a crime of violence and sex is the weapon.

Myth: Women provoke rape by the way they dress or act.

Fact: False. Women are not responsible for the behavior of a rapist merely by being in any given place at a certain time or with certain clothing.

Myth: Strangers commit most rapes.

Fact: False. 60-80% of all sexual assaults are committed by someone the victim knows (i.e. 85% of child sexual assaults are by someone known and trusted. The attacks occur frequently in the victim's home or car.)

Myth: A husband cannot rape his wife.

Fact: False. If a spouse forces his or her mate to have sex, then it is a rape and it is a crime. Studies show that 1 out of 7 women are raped by their husbands.

Myth: Only women are assaulted

Fact: False. While women do compose the majority of sexual assault survivors, men are also victims of rape. Studies report that men commit 98% of all rapes. Therefore, when men are raped it is usually by another male.

Myth: A rapist is easy to spot in a crowd

Fact: False. A rapist could be your neighbor, relative, boyfriend, cable man, husband or stranger. The fact is they can be of any race, color or socio-economic class.

Myth: Rape could never happen to me

Fact: False. All women are potential rape victims, regardless of age, race, religion, occupation, education, or physical description. Studies report that 1 out of every 3 women will be a victim of some type of sexual assault during her lifetime.

Myth: If a victim doesn't scream or fight it's not rape.

Fact: False. The rapist's primary weapon is fear. Through threats of bodily injury or death, the woman is terrorized into cooperation or immobilized by fear. A victim does not have to have bruises, cuts or any other physical injury to prove that she has been raped. Submission is not consent; it is against her will.

Myth: Women "cry rape" to get back at men.

Fact: Less than 5% of reported rapes are false accusations.

Recovering from Rape

You will recover in your own way and at your own pace. Your long term response will follow no set pattern or time schedule.

It is okay for you to resume your regular routine as much as possible. Try as much as possible to resume the business of running your own life. Proving to yourself that you are back in charge will help you recover sooner. You made decisions prior to the rape, you can do so after. Trust your instincts.

Other People in Your Life

It is important for you to share your feelings. Feel free to tell important people around you what has happened and how you feel. Talk about your feelings, fears, strengths, and perceived weaknesses. It may seem surprising, but often the act of simply talking to your family and friends can be of tremendous help.

Many communities today have trained advocates to assist you. An advocate may help you to learn about the services that are available in your area.

Professional counseling is available to you. You will find counseling beneficial as you work through your reaction to the rape.

Remember, You Are In Charge. Your feelings are most important. You have the privilege of deciding what should be said, what advice to accept or reject. Don't let well meaning family and friends "pressure you". Remember only you get to decide what is best for you and you make the decisions.

You have the right to be safe. You are NOT to blame for a rapist's behavior.

Section 3: Stalking

You have the right to be safe. You are NOT to blame for a stalker's behavior.

Every situation is different and every stalker is different; but often, stalking leads to violence. Stalking can lead to injury and can even lead to death. It is vital to devise a safety plan to address your specific circumstances.

A stalker may be someone you know well or not at all. Most have dated or been involved with the people they stalk. About 75% of stalking cases are men stalking women but men do stalk men, women do stalk women, and women do stalk men.

Stalking is unpredictable and dangerous. No two stalking situations are alike. There are no guarantees that what works for one person will work for another, yet you can take steps to increase your safety.

Some things Stalkers do:

- Follow you and show up where you are
- Repeatedly call you, including hang-ups
- Damage your car, home or property
- Send unwanted gifts, letters, cards or emails
- Monitor your phone calls or computer use
- Use technology like hidden cameras or global positioning systems (GPS) to track where you go
- Drive by or hang out at your home, work or school
- Threaten to hurt you, your family, friends or pets
- Find out about you by using public records or on-line search services, hiring investigators, going through your garbage, or contacting friends, family, neighbors, or co-workers
- Other actions that control, track or frighten you

What you can do:

- Call 911
- Trust your instincts. Don't downplay the danger. If you feel you are unsafe, you probably are.
- Take threats seriously. Danger generally is higher when the stalker talks about suicide or murder, or when a victim tries to leave or end the relationship.
- Develop a safety plan.
- Don't communicate with the stalker or respond to attempts to contact you.
- Keep evidence of the stalking. When the stalker follows you or contacts you, write down the time, date and place. Keep emails, phone calls, phone messages, letters or notes. Photograph anything of yours the stalker damages and any injuries the stalker causes.
- Ask anyone who witnesses to write down what they saw.
- Contact the police and report everything, no matter how trivial it may seem.
- Consider getting a protection order that tells the stalker to stay away from you.
- Tell family, friends, roommates and co-workers about the stalking and seek their support. Tell security staff at your job or school. Ask them to help watch out for your safety.

Common Reactions to being Stalked:

You might:

- Feel fear of what the stalker will do
- Feel vulnerable, unsafe and not know who to trust
- Feel nervous, irritable, impatient or on edge
- Feel depressed, hopeless, overwhelmed, tearful or angry
- Feel stressed, including having trouble concentrating, sleeping, or remembering things
- Have eating problems, such as appetite loss, forgetting to eat or overeating
- Have flashbacks, disturbing thoughts, feelings or memories
- Feel confused, frustrated or isolated because other people don't understand why you are afraid

Section 4: Resources & How They Can Help

Protection Orders

South Dakota statute allows victims of domestic violence or stalking to file for an order of protection against an abuser or stalker. The order is signed by a circuit court judge and delivered to the offender by a sheriff's deputy. If the offender violates the order, he or she may be arrested and charged with a Class 1 misdemeanor.

The judge can order the offender:

- To stay a certain distance away from the your home, workplace, and children,
- To have no contact with the you in person, by phone, in writing, or through a third party,
- To leave the home,

A victim can file a protection order without the assistance of an attorney. Forms are available at the clerk of court's window or at Safe Harbor. Safe Harbor staff can assist you through the process.

SD Crime Victims' Compensation Program

You may file a claim for reimbursement of certain expenses if you have been a victim of a violent crime or have suffered physical injury as a result of a criminal attack, a collision with a drunk driver, trying to stop a person committing a crime, trying to help a law enforcement officer, witnessing a crime or trying to help a victim of a crime.

Awards of compensation of up to \$15,000 may be made from the SD Crime Victims' Compensation Fund. Funded through a court surcharge on criminal offenders, compensation is available only to the extent that funds are generated from the surcharge. No compensation can be awarded when money is not available.

To apply, you must be one of the following: an innocent victim of a violent crime who has suffered harm, a dependent of a deceased victim, a person authorized to act on behalf of a victim or a dependent or a parent or other family member of a victim (under limited circumstances).

To be eligible, the crime must have occurred on or after July 1, 1992, the crime must have been reported to law enforcement within five days, and the claim for compensation must be filed within one year of injury or death, unless good cause for delay is shown.

Eligible expenses include medical or counseling bills, lost wages, childcare, homemaker replacement, funeral costs, rehabilitation, dental expenses and mileage for treatment.

The fund will not compensate for stolen or damaged property.

The Victim's Assistant can assist victims in applying for compensation.

Counseling resources

Victims of violence should receive counseling to help sort out what has happened, why it happened and how not to allow it to happen again. In addition to individual counseling, support groups can be of benefit to the victim. It is recommended that children receive counseling as well.

Marriage or family counseling between the abuser and victim is not recommended. This type of counseling places the victim in danger. In counseling with the abuser present, you do not have the opportunity to speak your mind freely without fear of consequences.

The Aberdeen area offers a multitude of counseling services. Victims may look under "Counselors" in the Yellow Pages of the local phone book. Before choosing a counselor, a victim should ask whether the service accepts insurance or Medicaid, how much the service costs, whether there is an intake fee and what licenses the counselor holds.

Safe Harbor in Aberdeen provides a support group for adult victims. The group is free and free childcare is provided.

Bill of Rights for a Survivor of Domestic Abuse

1. I will not be blamed or shamed for having been a victim.
2. I have the right to be happy.
3. I have the right to be free of all forms of abuse: physical, mental, emotional, psychological or sexual.
4. I have the right to feel my feelings.
5. I have the right to take care of myself.
6. I have the right to have my needs met.
7. I have the right to make choices.
8. I have the right to be loved in a healthy way.
9. I have the right to live without fear.
10. I have the right to express myself.
11. I have the right to forgive myself for things in the past.
12. I have the right to make a better life for myself.

From *Healing Your Life: Recovery from Domestic Abuse* by Candace A. Hennekens

"People hit and abuse family members because they can."

Richard J. Gelles, *Intimate Violence in Families*; 1997

Break the Silence!