



Opportunities
FOR OTSEGO

24-Hour Hotline

607.432.4855

collect calls accepted

VIOLENCE INTERVENTION PROGRAM

A woman is beaten every 15 seconds in America

According to latest FBI statistics:

- 91% - 95 % of the perpetrators of intimate partner abuse are men who abuse their female partners
- 5%-6% of the perpetrators of intimate partner abuse are from gay and lesbian relationship
- 1%-2% of the perpetrators of intimate partner abuse are women who abuse their male partners

Because most of the perpetrators are men, this information packet refers to men battering women.

A power and control wheel shows many, but not all, of the tactics abusers use to control their partners. Approximately 1/4 of the wheel is physical abuse; the remaining 3/4 is psychological, emotional, economic, and sexual tactics. The forms of abuse are not clearly separate, but overlap considerably. For example, the effect of physical abuse may be that the victim cannot work, which is economic abuse and psychological abuse because it makes her afraid and isolates her from coworkers. Domestic Violence can include physical abuse, or it can be other tactics with no physical abuse.

The forms of abuse used by gay and lesbian abusers are very similar to the forms used by men against their female partners. The biggest difference is that gay and lesbian abusers use their partner's sexual orientation as a weapon. They may threaten to "out" their partner to friend, family, or employer; they may use the "us against them" relationship that being "in the closet" creates to make the victim more dependent; or they may threaten to expose the victim's HIV status.

You don't have to be hit to be a victim of domestic violence. Adult domestic violence is an abuser's deliberate, systematic pattern of behavior, which he/she uses to establish and maintain power and control over their partner. If one or several of the segments of the power and control wheel describes your partner's actions, you may be a victim of domestic violence and qualify for services VIP offers. You can use VIP services if:

- If there is a domestic abuse in your past or present
- No matter your sexual preferences
- If you are in a relationship with an abuser
- If you left the relationship
- If you return to the relationship

We support you regardless of your decisions.

10%-15% of the men in America use the tactics on the power and control wheel to try to control their intimate partners. The other 85%-90% of American men are loving and nonviolent. The ones who abuse believe that men have the right to do whatever they think is necessary to control their partners. They don't do it because they are angry, out of control, or have issues from their past. **They are choosing to abuse. They do it because they can.** Our society has allowed abusive behavior with few or no consequences. While change is difficult and slow, many in Otsego County are changing their beliefs and are holding batterers accountable for their actions.

Men who go to batterers programs usually continue to abuse their partners while they are in the program and after they finish it. The community's insistence on protecting victims and on legal consequences for battering is the most effective way to stop a batterer from abusing.

You have no control over being abused. If you had control you would be able to stop it and you can't. Even staying with an abuser doesn't make you responsible for abusing you. He is making a choice every time he abuses you. You don't deserve to be treated that way. You deserve respect.

If you have any questions, concerns, or need help or someone to talk to, please call The Violence Intervention Programs at 607. 432.4855

The following has been adapted from the YWCA of Schenectady



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Couples Counseling and Mediation

Many people believe that domestic violence will stop if the partners learn to communicate better or they can get help from a neutral party to solve some of their problems or “deal with” some issue from the past. This kind of counseling or mediation can be successful for partners who have close to equal power in a relationship and both take responsibility for making changes which help the relationship and the partners grow.

When one partner abuses the other, the power in the relationship is always **Unequal**. If the partners in an unequal relationship go to couples, family counseling, or mediation the following usually happens:

- The perpetrator blames the victim for the problems in the relationship.
- There is little or no negotiation and the victim is expected to make changes to improve the relationship.
- The perpetrator turns what the victim says around to put blame in her. He is charming and says what makes him look good to the counselor or mediator.
- The victim is not free to say what she needs to say because she knows that the perpetrator is likely to use what she says for ammunition to abuse her later.
- When the victim makes changes that increase her power, the perpetrator increases the controlling tactics to keep his power greater than hers.

Couple Counseling, Family Counseling, And Mediation Are Usually Dangerous For A Victim of Domestic Violence. It is encouraged that victims in an abusive relationships get individual services first. It is important that the abuser changes their beliefs, such as about male privilege and respecting women. If couple counseling is still considered after a period of time (probably a few years), the victim must decide whether there has been enough significant change in the abusers beliefs to indicate that couple counseling may be safe.

If you aren't sure if couples counseling, family counseling, or mediation is for you, call The Violence Intervention Program at 607.432.4855 and to speak to a counselor. We will give you information and support you need while you make you own decision.

The following has been adapted from the YWCA of Schenectady



Drinking, Drugging, and Domestic Violence

Some abusers who use the tactics on the power and control wheel to control their partners are abusive only when they are drinking alcohol or using other drugs. Others are more abusive than usual when they drink or use.

It is very tempting to blame the abuse on the drink/drug, especially when they only abuse when they drink or use. The drink/drug triggers a reaction in you, so it is easy to be misled. It is important to separate drinking or using other drugs from domestic violence.

Addiction to drugs (including alcohol) is a disease; an illness for which we know of no cure. Once an addict or alcoholic takes the first drink or drug, the disease takes over and the person has no control over his/her drinking or drug use.

Domestic violence is usually perpetrated by the 10%-15% of American men who learned, probably while growing up, that it is OK to disrespect women. They think that an intimate partner is a possession (like a piece of furniture), and that men have the right to do whatever they decide to do to maintain control over their partners. In gay and lesbian relationships and the rare relationship where a woman abuses a man, one person believes it is OK for him/her to control the partner. Domestic Violence is caused by a belief system. The perpetrator is totally in control of what he is doing, even when they appear to be out of control.

PCP and steroids are the only drugs that make someone violent or aggressive. Alcohol doesn't make someone violent. Drinking and drugging are a smoke screen, an excuse to abuse. One man admitted that he was more abusive when he drank. He said, "I gave myself permission to be more abusive, because I had an excuse. I was drunk." Even drunk he made a conscious decision to abuse. Abusive people are totally in control of their abusiveness even when they are drunk.

Studies show that the majority of abusive men don't drink and use other drugs or they drink very little. One study of 2000 men concluded that:

- 20% of the men didn't drink at all
- 20% of the men frequently drank very heavily
- 70% of the men drank lightly or moderately to heavily
- The majority of the 20% who drank very heavily were not abusive when they drank
- Most of the men who used controlling tactics on their partners didn't drink at all or their drinking was light- moderate

The violence can stop, if men who abuse really change their belief system, a change that can only happen separate from and in addition to treatment for addictions.

Some women who are victims of domestic violence are also addicted to alcohol and/or other drugs. Some of those women were addicted before they were abused; some became addicted after their partners started abusing them. Which came first isn't important. It is important to understand that using drugs and/or alcohol is one of many survival techniques which may appear strange to many people, but which help victims survive living with partners who abuse them.

Alcohol and/or other drugs may ease the severe emotional pain that abuse causes for victims. An addicted victim may continue to drink or use drugs because when they stop, their partner is more abusive. When a

victim tries to get clean/sober, a batterer may see that as a threat to their power. Many batterers try to sabotage their partner's sobriety by forbidding them to attend AA meetings, accusing them of having affairs with people they met in treatment, refusing to watch the children, or forcing them to drink. Danger increases for addicted victims when they try to stop drinking or using drugs while their partner still have access to them. When victims are drinking it is difficult for them to think clearly enough to follow through on a safety plan. It is important for addicted victims who are abused to be safe from abuse while they get clean/sober.

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