What is Domestic Violence?

**Domestic violence** is a pattern of behaviors used by one partner to maintain power and control over another partner in an intimate relationship.

**Abuse can be:**

**Physical**
- hitting, kicking, slapping, or choking
- abandonment
- preventing eating or sleeping
- denying access to medical care

**Verbal**
- Yelling aggressively
- Using obscenities
- Name-calling, belittling, and put-downs
- Constant criticism

**Emotional**
- isolation from family and friends
- constant monitoring
- threatening you or your children or pets
- damaging your self-esteem

**Sexual**
- demanding sex when you are unwilling
- asking for sex when you are sick, tired, or injured
- sexual coercion
  - threats/manipulation
  - persuading
  - “wearing you down”

**Financial**
- monitoring spending or giving an allowance
- denying bank access
- limiting hours worked
- refusing to contribute financially

**Psychological**
- gaslighting
- “crazy-making”
- playing mind games
- denying mind games
- denying mental health treatment
- forcing drug use

Domestic violence is most commonly perpetrated by men against women. However, it can effect anyone, regardless of gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, age, race, or ethnicity.

**The Cycle of Abuse**

The “Cycle of Abuse” model is used to describe the environment and patterns experienced by domestic violence survivors.

The model consists of 3 phases that cycle in an abusive relationship. Even the nonviolent phases are abusive, as manipulation and emotional abuse are utilized to keep a victim under the abuser’s control.

Regardless of what the abuse looks like, the victim is never at fault. To be abusive, whether physically, verbally, or emotionally, is a choice made by the abuser.

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**Domestic Violence Services**

Counseling & Service Coordination: 979–775–2255

24/7 Emergency Hotline: 979–775–5355