

Thank you for your interest in this topic. If you have any questions about this, or any issue, please contact our office at 214-642-8737

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## Stonebriar Counseling Associates

### ▣ Domestic Violence

What is domestic violence? While abuse among family members can take many forms, it may include emotional, physical, or sexual abuse. Acts of domestic violence generally fall into one or more of the following categories:

**Physical Battering** - The abuser's physical attacks or aggressive behavior can range from bruising to murder. Any aggressive behavior directed at another person, such as pushing, pinching, squeezing, shaking, grabbing, biting, slapping, punching, kicking, choking, etc. It also includes throwing objects or using a weapon. It often begins with what is excused as trivial contacts that escalate into more frequent and serious attacks.

**Sexual Abuse** - Physical attack by the abuser is often accompanied by, or culminates in, sexual violence wherein the woman is forced to have sexual intercourse with her abuser or take part in unwanted sexual activity.

**Psychological Battering** - The abuser's psychological or mental violence can include constant verbal abuse, harassment, excessive possessiveness, isolating the woman from friends and family, deprivation of physical and economic resources, and destruction of personal property. It is the infliction of emotional pain and suffering by doing things to control or degrade another person, such as persistent verbal attacks on self-esteem or the use of caustic remarks.

Battering escalates. It often begins with behaviors like threats, name calling, violence in her presence (such as punching a fist through a wall), and/or damage to objects or pets. It may escalate to restraining, pushing, slapping, and/or pinching. The battering may include punching, kicking, biting, sexual assault, tripping, throwing. Finally, it may

become life-threatening with serious behaviors such as (2)

choking, breaking bones, or the use of weapons.

### ▣ Cycles of Domestic Violence

In fact, there is generally a cycle to abuse that has three distinct phases.

Lenore Walker, in "The Cycle Theory of Violence<sup>5</sup>," identifies *phase I* as the *Tension-Building Stage*, a period in which anxiety or tension begins to develop. The feelings are held inside where they become more and more intense. The person who abuses may attempt to placate the survivor. The survivor placates by attempting to be as nurturing and compliant as possible, believing that she or he can impact the abuser's behavior. In this phase everyone is in denial--ignoring that they feel anxious and why they feel this way. Everyone is pretending that tension is not building. The survivor may rationalize (either consciously or subconsciously) that he or she deserves this treatment. However, sometimes the abuser will react with intense anger when he or she sees that their partner is withdrawing in an effort to not make things worse. In *phase II*, the *Abusive/Violent Incident*, the actual emotional, verbal, or physical act of abuse or violence occurs. At this point, the situation is out of control. The abuser has either verbally attacked, hit, assaulted, or dehumanized the other person or persons in some way. The attack can be a major outburst, or in some instances a continuation of many attacks. The victim may try to communicate to him/her by talking louder, moving closer, or prevent the individual from walking out of the house thereby

causing the abuser to feel provoked in the only way he or she knows how to respond. In addition, verbal and emotional abuse can be a daily pattern of

interaction between the abuser and the survivor.

*Phase III* is the end of phases I and II. It is called the *Kindness and Contrite* loving stage. Phase II is brutal, contrasted to phase III, which is at the other end of the continuum: extremely loving, kind, and remorseful. The abuser knows that he or she was over the edge/out of control, and is sorry for his or her actions. In fact, the abuser may shower their partner with gifts and promises that he/she will never let it happen again. If the abuser is the husband, for example, the wife may find herself bombarded with phone calls, letters, unwanted gifts, etc., to claim/show that he cannot live without her and will make whatever changes necessary to get her to believe him. The victim may try to convince himself/herself that there is a ray of hope in their partner's ability to change. But the honeymoon phase of this pattern is only temporary, because in most violent relationships, the tension begins to build again, leading to another episode of abuse. During the six months following an episode of domestic violence, 32% of battered women are victimized again.<sup>6</sup> In fact, six months after obtaining a protection order: 8% of victims reported post-order physical abuse; 26% reported respondent came to or called their home or workplace; 65% reported no further problems.<sup>7</sup> But in the cycle of the domestic violence, this phase begins to give

<sup>6</sup> Bureau of Justice Statistics: Preventing Domestic Violence Against Women, 1986.

<sup>7</sup> CPOs: the Benefits and Limitations for Victims of Domestic Violence, National Center for State Courts Research Report, 1997.

<sup>5</sup> Lenore E. Walker, *The Battered Woman Syndrome* (New York: Springer, 1984), 95-96.

cycle repeats itself.

Abuse and violence have to do with the issues of power and control. Abuse of power and/or control occurs when someone attempts to control by: isolating; belittling; putting someone down to make them feel bad; making a person do sexual things against their will; making or carrying out threats to do something or hurt the person; using the children to make the person feel guilty; intimidating the person with looks, actions, gestures, loud voice, smashing things; and physical abuses (pushing, shoving, hitting, slapping, grabbing, tripping, twisting arm, biting, throwing down, using a weapon). While there is nothing wrong with realistic hope, the victim of violence needs direction on how to avoid the trap of appeasement. I have found in my practice that women tend to be the rescuer toward their abusive husbands. And, they try to take responsibility for the situation even blaming herself ("if I could have acted differently"). The fact is that the abusive husband will remain content to let their wives take the blame. Consider the following strategies in order to help the victim predict whether they are in danger or about to become involved in a dangerous situation with someone who may be physically abusive.

### **Intervention Strategies**

Within a marriage relationship, there are essentially 4 possible options to consider. First, the victim can return to the relationship with no guarantee he/she will change. Second, leave the relationship. Third, return only on the condition that the violence stops. Or, fourth, return only after one is convinced that he/she has learned alternate ways of behaving. It is important to note that a counselor must help the victim explore options if, when, and how she/he should go back to their spouse. Additionally, if a woman comes to your office and describes that home life is very tense, explore the details by asking a lot of questions. Ask her, for example if she has ever been hit or choked or pushed, as well as how often the situation occurs. When intervention takes place it is

comes to see you senses that you are serious about the situation. Below are four (4) suggestions regarding an initial role for the counselor to implement in a crisis involving spousal abuse:  
**(3)**

#### ***Determine the nature of the crisis.***

By asking questions and careful listening you want to make sure that you thoroughly understand the nature of the problem. Remember, that empathy, concern, and a good listening ear are the real ingredients in learning the description of what happened as well as assessing if there is potential for future violent episodes. If a battered spouse arrives at my office one of the first things I do is determine if they require medical attention. I encourage a medical examination as soon as possible because old injuries may be in need of a doctor's care. I realize that victims of spousal abuse hesitate or even refuse to take this action but I either help them call a friend or a relative to assist them to the emergency room as well as call the emergency room close by. Additionally, if the matter involves any kind of abuse the victim must file a report to the police. Also, when a wife attempts to separate from her husband

#### ***Determine whether there is potential for possible danger.***

By asking questions about the presence of weapons, alcohol/drugs, past history of assault or threats on a family member one can determine the type of intervention needed. Separated/divorced women are 14 times more likely than married women to report having been a victim of violence by their spouse or ex-spouse.<sup>8</sup>

#### ***Provide sensitivity and a non-judgmental attitude for the victim to take action.***

Because the victim will fear that her abuser will retaliate with further violence or that a separation may result in a loss of income if her husband is incarcerated, the possibility exists that she will need help throughout the crisis in setting priorities for action. One important component I use is prayer. Perhaps up to this point in the crisis the individual

answers her prayers. But, by praying for strength and relief from the abuse the victim can be redirected toward hope.

#### ***Determine options and select the appropriate intervention.***

By determining the degree of risk or harm in the home, one or a combination of intervention strategies may prove helpful: emergency shelter for the abused spouse (i.e. Hope's Door formerly Collin County Women's Shelter) 2701-C W. 15th Street Suite 212, Plano, TX. 75075  
Hotline phone: 972-422-SAFE (7233) Administrative Office: 972-422-2911. It is important to have emergency referral procedures as well as child-care, transportation, and counseling services. Remember, that the highest priority is establishing safety followed by emotional support, prayer, and determining housing and transportation. While this information highlights the initial intervention the next crucial step in helping the victim is to learn their own needs and expectations regarding emotional dependency, loneliness, and a sense of purpose. All of these aspects need attention in helping a marriage or a family. It is my hope that the information provided will become a valuable resource should the need present itself in a crisis situation.

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<sup>8</sup> Bureau of Justice Statistics: Female Victims of Violent Crime, 1991.

(1)



# Newsletter of Stonebriar Counseling Associates

From the desk of....

**Bob Good**



Dear Educator and Ministry Leader:

Over breakfast one morning, a woman said to her husband, "I bet you don't know what day this is." "Of course I do" he indignantly answered, going out the door on his way to the office. At 10 A.M. the doorbell rang, and when the woman opened the door, she was handed a box containing a dozen long-stemmed red roses. At 1 P.M., a foil-wrapped, two pound box of her favorite chocolates arrived. Late, a boutique delivered a designer dress. The woman couldn't wait for her husband to come home. "First the flowers, then the candy and then the dress!" she exclaimed. "I've never spent a more wonderful Groundhog Day in my whole life!" There is no emotion so slippery, so controlling, so unshakeable as guilt. Sometimes guilt is a reminder of past mistakes, regrets, failures. And, sometimes guilt is an accuser. It tells us that we've fallen short of expectations, that we've failed our loved ones and family. Eric Fromm, the famous psychiatrist and author, wrote "It is indeed amazing that in as fundamentally an irreligious culture as ours, the sense of guilt should be so widespread and deep-rooted as it is." <sup>1</sup> The fact that guilt is an emotion also places certain demands or expectations upon us. That 'deep-rooted sense' impacts the conscience of each and every person to the extent that it can become a chain of pain psychologically, physically, and spiritually. Though the possibility exists for reminding us of past transgressions that we haven't yet come to terms with still many people are convinced that they have drifted too far away emotionally and spiritually to make any significant change in their life.

As counselors we may use terms like reconciliation and redemption with our counselees. But, as good as those truths are there are times when people are not looking to hear the euphony of our erudition especially when they feel powerless. The Devil tells his young protégé in *The Screwtape Letters*, "We thus distract men's minds from Who He is, and what He did. We first make Him solely a teacher...a merely probable, remote, shadowy, and uncouth figure, one who spoke a strange language and died a long time ago. Such an object cannot in fact be worshipped."<sup>2</sup> In sharp contrast, the Bible presents a view of Jesus Christ that shows His love and the freedom He gives to all from the chains that bind the conscience of our counselees. A recognition of guilt leads to encouraging and remarkable transformation in both the young and the old. Therefore, in dealing with the subject of guilt this month's article will focus on the possible causes developmentally as well as the consequences of guilt followed by the spiritual cure or treatment. Then, next month's issue will deal with forgiveness-receiving and extending forgiveness to others. As we look at the diagnosis may we in the spirit of humility and genuine sensitivity initiate a prognosis that exudes a fresh liberating sense of joy and hope in the lives of people we counsel!

Sincerely,

Bob Good

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<sup>1</sup> Eric Fromm, *The Sane Society*, p.181

<sup>2</sup> C.S. Lewis, *The Screwtape Letters* (Glasgow, Scotland:Collins-Fontana Books, 1942), p. 118.

#### **(4) PART I**

##### **Personal Safety Plan**

If you had the perpetrator evicted or are living alone, you may want to:

- Change locks on doors and windows.
- Install a better security system -- window bars, locks, better lighting, smoke detectors and fire extinguishers.
- Teach the children to call the police or family and friends if they are snatched.
- Talk to schools and childcare providers about who has permission to pick up the children.
- Find a lawyer knowledgeable about family violence to explore custody, visitation and divorce provisions that protect you and your children.
- Obtain a restraining order.

If you are leaving your abuser, ask yourself the following questions:

- How and when can you most safely leave? Where will you go?
- Are you comfortable calling the police if you need them?
- Who can you trust to tell that you are leaving?
- How will you travel safely to and from work or school or to pick up children?
- What community and legal resources will help you feel safer? Write down their addresses and phone numbers, and keep them handy.
- Do you know the number of the local shelter?
- What custody and visitation provisions will keep you and your children safe?
- Is a restraining order a viable option?

If you are staying with your batterer, think about:

- What works best to keep you safe in an emergency.
- Who you can call in a crisis.
- If you would call the police if the violence starts again. Can you work out a signal with the children or the neighbors to call the police when you need help?
- If you need to flee temporarily, where would you go? Think through several places where you can go in a crisis. Write down the addresses and phone numbers, and keep them with you.
- If you need to flee your home, know the escape routes in advance.
- Have the following available in case you have to flee:
  - Important papers such as birth certificates, social security cards, marriage and driver's licenses, car title, lease or mortgage papers, passports, insurance information, school and health records, welfare and immigration documents, and divorce or other court documents
  - Credit cards, bank account number, and ATM cards
  - Some money
  - An extra set of keys
  - Medications and prescriptions
  - Phone numbers and addresses for family, friends, doctors, lawyers, and community agencies
  - Clothing and comfort items for you and the children

## (5) PART II

# Signs To Look For In A Battering Personality

Below is a list of behaviors that are seen in people who beat their girlfriends or wives; the last two signs listed are almost always seen only if the person is a batterer-if the person has several of the behaviors (say three or more) there is a strong potential for physical violence - the more signs the person has, the more likely the person is a batterer.

### Signs To Look For In A Battering Personality

- 1) **Jealousy:** At the beginning of a relationship, an abuser will always say that his jealousy is a sign of love; jealousy has nothing to do with love. It's a sign of insecurity and possessiveness. He will question the woman about whom she talks to, accuse her of flirting, or be jealous of time she spends with family, friends or children. As the jealousy progresses, he may call her frequently during the day or drop by unexpectedly. He may refuse to let her work for fear she'll meet someone else, or even do strange things such as checking her car mileage or asking friends to watch her.
- 2) **Controlling Behavior:** At first, the batterer will say that this behavior is because he's concerned for the woman's safety, her need to use her time well, or her need to make good decisions. He will be angry if the woman is "late" coming back from the store or an appointment, he will question her closely about where she went, whom she talked to. As this behavior gets worse, he may not let the woman make personal decisions about the house, her clothing, going to church; he may keep all the money or even make her ask permission to leave the house or room.
- 3) **Quick Involvement:** Many battered women dated or knew their abuser for less than six months before he comes on like a whirlwind: "you're the only person I could ever talk to", "I've never felt loved like this by anyone." He needs someone desperately, and will pressure the woman to commit to him.
- 4) **Unrealistic Expectations:** He is very dependent on the woman for all his needs; he expects the woman to be the perfect wife, mother, lover, friend. He will say things like "if you love me, I'm all you need--you're all I need." She is supposed to take care of everything for him emotionally and in the home.
- 5) **Isolation:** The man tries to cut the woman off from all resources. If she has any friends--male or female, she may be prevented from associating with them. He accuses people who are within her social network as "causing trouble" in the relationship.
- 6) **Blames Others for His Problems:** If he is chronically unemployed, someone is always doing him wrong, out to get him. He may make mistakes and then blame the woman for upsetting him and keeping him from concentrating on doing his job. He will tell the woman she is at fault for almost anything that goes wrong.
- 7) **Blames Others for His Feelings:** He will tell the woman "you make me mad", "you're hurting me by not doing what I ask", "I can't help being angry". He really makes the decision about what he thinks and feels, but will use feelings to manipulate the woman. Harder to catch are his claims that "you make me happy," "you control how I feel".
- 8) **Hypersensitivity:** The man is easily insulted, he claims his feelings are "hurt" when he's really very mad, or he takes the slightest setbacks as personal attacks. He will "rant and rave" about the injustice of things that have happened to him--things that are really just part of living, like being asked to work overtime, getting a traffic ticket, being told that something he does is annoying, being asked to help with chores.
- 9) **Cruelty to Animals or Children:** This is a man who punishes animals brutally or is insensitive to their pain or suffering; he may expect children to be capable of doing things far beyond their ability (whips a two year old for wetting their diaper) or he may tease children or young brothers and sisters until they cry. (Sixty percent of men who beat the women they are with also beat their children.) He may not want children to eat at the table or expect them to keep to their room all evening while he is home.
- 10) **Verbal Abuse:** In addition to saying things that are meant to be cruel and hurtful, abusers can be seen degrading the woman, cursing her, running down any of her accomplishments. The man will tell her she's stupid and unable to function without him. This may involve waking her up to verbally abuse her or not letting her sleep.
- 11) **Rigid Sex Roles:** The man expects a woman to serve him; will say that she must stay at home, that she must obey him in all things---even things that are criminal in nature. The abuser will see women as inferior to men, more stupid, unable to be a whole person without a relationship.
- 12) **Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde:** Many women are confused by their abuser's "sudden" mood changes --they will describe that one minute he's nice and the next minute he explodes into some special "mental problem" or that he's "crazy". Explosiveness and mood swings are typical of men who beat their partners, and these behaviors are related to other characteristics such as hypersensitivity.
- \*13) **Breaking or Striking Objects:** This behavior is used as a punishment (breaking loved possessions), but is mostly used to terrorize the woman into submission. The man may beat on tables with his fist, throw objects around or near the woman. Again, this is a very remarkable behavior; only very immature people beat on objects in the presence of other people in order to threaten them.

\*14) *Any Force During an Argument*: This may involve a man holding a woman down, physically restraining her from leaving the room, any pushing or shoving. (The man may hold the woman against a wall and say "you're going to listen to me").

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## Upcoming Free Workshops

### **Accurately Assess/Counsel in Marriage Counseling-May 22, '03**

(Free Coffee and Donuts) Time: 6:30 PM

Location: 4760 Preston Road, Suite 226, Frisco, Texas

Call SCA office at 214-642-8737 to register

*Please RSVP*

### **Suicide: How To Assess and Intervene—June 19, '03**

(Free Coffee and Donuts) Time: 6:30 PM

Location: 4760 Preston Road, Suite 226, Frisco, Texas

Call SCA office at 214-642-8737 to register

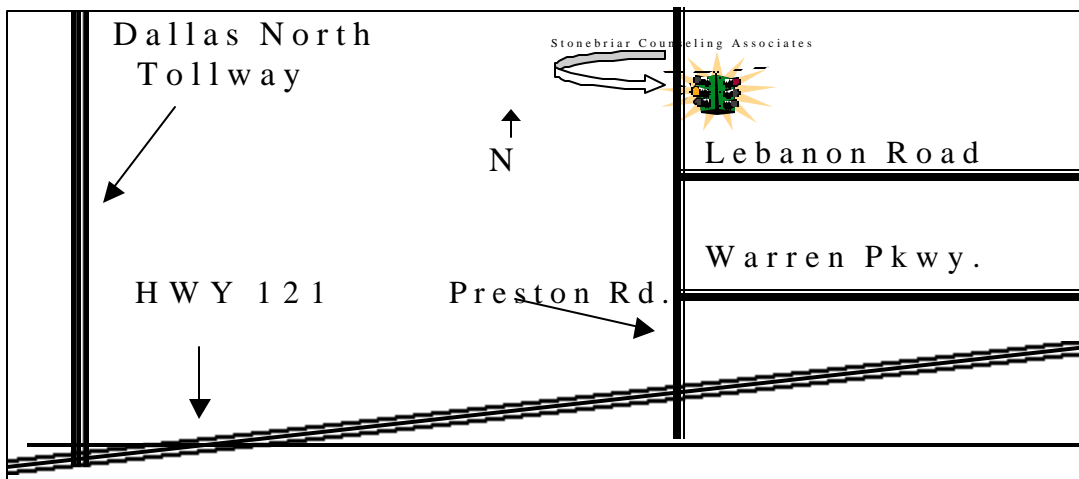
### **Spousal Abuse-Signs To look for/When To Refer—July 17, '03**

(Free Coffee and Donuts) Time: 6:30 PM

Location: 4760 Preston Road, Suite 226, Frisco, Texas

Call SCA office at 214-642-8737 to register

*Please RSVP*



### **Mission Statement**

Stonebriar Counseling Associates (SCA) is purposefully passionate in providing quality psychotherapy from a Christian perspective that influences the treatment of psychological, emotional, and mental health issues.

To this end, SCA is committed to glorify God by:

- Believing that each person has the innate ability for personal growth and wholeness.
- Seeking a variety of approaches to help you learn new skills and find more choices so as to manage life's changes with a broader range of solutions for recognizing your strengths.
- Accepting all people with respect and love regardless of age, sex, race, religion, ethnicity or socio-economic status.
- Thoughtfully affirming and carefully following the morals of the Christian faith and the ethics of the professional governing boards.
- Providing research and development for new and innovative programs, seminars, and workshops in order to further the