

ECHO Q&A

Emergency and Community Health Outreach

Questions & Sample Answers / ECHO-TV “Domestic Abuse and Your Safety”

(Recording Show: @ TPT)

FINAL 6.20.12

NOTE: Yellow Highlights are for TPT CONTROL

1. What exactly is domestic abuse?

- Behavior used to gain or maintain power and control over a partner in an intimate relationship
- Can be physical (attacking or hurting someone)
- Can be psychological or emotional (intimidation, threats, bullying)
- Can be sexual
- Can be economic
- May use scare tactics, for example say “I’m going to take the kids away.”

2. Who are the victims?

- Usually women, girls, or children, but victims can also be men and boys.
- All communities are affected, including immigrants
- May be teens who may not recognize abuse
- May be someone being abused by his/her own family, such as parent, in-law, uncle, etc.
- Anyone who is being controlled or hurt by someone with whom she has an intimate relationship.
- GLBT community (Gay, Lesbian, Bi-sexual, etc. Avoid acronyms)
- Senior citizens

3. Is talking about abuse unacceptable in our culture and if so, why?

- Religious reasons
- Cultural perceptions
- Leadership reasons
- Gender reasons

4. What if someone's culture allows the husband to do whatever he wants sexually to his wife? For example, sometimes there is the expectation that partners, wives, girlfriends are expected to have sexual relations as part of their obligation as a partner, wife, or girlfriend.

- Forcing someone into a sexual act is a crime in this country
- Sexual acts must be consensual even between husband and wife. Sex needs to be consensual.
- It's a process of cultural education that people must learn. Communities need information and education about the laws that protect women from un-consensual sex.
- Regardless of your culture or customs, you DO have options

5. What should someone do if an abuse victim comes to them for help?

- The first thing you should do is listen
- Assure them that it's not their fault
- Assure them that no one has the right to abuse them regardless of cultures or customs
- Direct them to a crisis intervention number or local county abuse protection. Direct them to an advocate immediately. Advocates can be found through the crisis intervention number or through the MN Coalition for Battered Women.
- Offer to help with housing, children, rides, etc.
- Tell them that you are afraid for their safety

(For survivor or advocate)

6. Tell us your story or the share a story of an abuse victim who's been able to address abuse.

(For expert)

7. How can abuse victims prepare to be safer?

CONTROL NOTE: Put numbers on screen.

- Be aware of your partner's abusive cues, what precedes abuse, including their demeanor, expressions, threats, actions, or other clues to you that abuse is imminent.
- Talk with your doctor, counselors, advocates and supportive friends and family about the abuse before the abuse escalates.
- Memorize a Crisis Intervention number (in Minnesota 1-866-223-1111)
- Call the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-SAFE (7233) for information about services in your area.
- Check in with local domestic violence programs and other resources.
- Work with an advocate from a domestic violence program. They will help with a safety plan.
- Get an Order for Protection if needed.

8. How do you get an Order for Protection?

- Call a domestic violence agency and connect with an advocate. They will help you with this process.
- In Minnesota, you must apply for an order for protection at your local courthouse. You will need to document recent incidents. Check with your domestic abuse program and district courts for the procedures in your area.
- In Minnesota, you can get the application from:
 - Local court website
 - Domestic abuse non-profits such as Asian Women United of Minnesota, Sexual Violence Center, Tubman, Domestic Abuse Project, among others
 - Crisis Intervention (in Minnesota 1-866-223-1111)
- A judge will review and issue the order

9. Can the victim then press charges?

- The victim does not have a say in whether to press charges. This is a misconception. The only entity that can make a decision about whether charges will be filed is the prosecuting agency based on the evidence. However, the victim's concerns will be heard.
- It will be based on evidence (and decided by the court?)
- This way the abuser cannot pressure the victim to drop the charges. The abuser will try to pressure the victim to drop the charges, but again, only the prosecutor can do that based on the evidence.
- A case will not hurt a person's immigration status (so there is no need to worry about deportation concerns if a victim is not legal....) A victim's immigration status is not considered in the review of the case.

10. What if you think you'll have to leave an abusive situation?

- Contact an advocate; they will help you with a safety plan.
- Make sure you have important papers such as birth certificate, social security cards, insurance information, school and health records, welfare and immigration documents, and divorce or other court documents
- Bring money, credit cards, bank account number and ATM cards
- Have address for family, friends, doctor, lawyers and community agencies
- Medication and prescriptions
- Clothing and comfort items for you and your children
- Put all these items together, where you can get to them quickly
- You can also document your abuse so that if you leave you have evidence to build a case. For example, take photographs of bruises, keep a journal, ask a friend to document for you.

11. What if you can't leave?

- Talk to your children and neighbors about police help
- Determine who can you call in a crisis
- Have a backup place where you can go for a short time if necessary
- Plan an escape route from your home

12. What if the abuser has already left the home?

- Change locks on doors and windows
- Install a better security system
- Teach children to call the police or family and friends if they are taken
- Talk to school and childcare providers about who has permission to pick up the children
- Seek legal advice from someone who knows about family violence. Domestic violence programs, volunteer agencies, district courts may have free legal advice.
- Obtain a restraining order

13. What can happen to the abuser?

- Can be arrested
- Can go to jail or prison
- Will have a criminal record
- Can be kept from contacting victim and other family members
- A criminal record can affect employment opportunities
- Offender may blame victim for the consequences
- Offender may still be responsible for any child support

14. Can abusers change their behavior?

- Intervention is critical. This may come from police, counseling, and/or response from the criminal justice system.
- Victims should not believe promises by abusers to change on their own.

15. What does a healthy relationship look like?

- Healthy relationships share responsibility and decision-making tasks and reflect respect for all the people in the relationship, including children.
- Non-threatening behavior
- Trust and support
- Honesty and accountability
- Responsible parenting

16. Where can victims turn for help?

- Local domestic violence programs
- Crisis Intervention Minnesota 1-866-223-1111
- National Domestic Violence Hotline 1-800-799-SAFE (7233)
- Local county services
- For resources contact
 - Your place of worship (guest to fill in appropriately for each culture)
 - Guest to suggest local community organizations and domestic violence agencies such as Asian Women United of Minnesota, Sexual Violence Center, Tubman, Domestic Abuse Project, among others
- For medical help consult your doctors or clinics