[Domestic Violence](https://www.psychologytoday.com/basics/domestic-violence) is the cause of injury to women sending over 1 million every year to doctor’s offices or emergency rooms. This violence isn’t occurring from the hands of a stranger but from the hands of the man she trusts. There are too many women and men dying, people being injured, far too many children growing up in violent homes to later become victims or abusers themselves.

**What Is Domestic Violence**

Domestic violence is when a person abuses their intimate partner physically, verbally, emotionally or sexually by exerting power and control over them. Domestic violence occurs in all cultures, races, religions, classes and same sex relationships. We find that domestic violence is perpetrated by men and women, 95% of reported domestic violence cases are men abusing women and 5% of reported domestic violence cases are women abusing men.

**Cycle of Violence**

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**Incident**

* Any type of abuse occurs (physical/sexual/emotional)

**Tension Building**

* Abuser starts to get angry
* Abuse may begin
* There is a breakdown of communication
* Victim feels the need to keep the abuser calm
* Tension becomes too much
* Victim feels like they are 'walking on egg shells'

**Making-Up**

* Abuser may apologize for abuse
* Abuser may promise it will never happen again
* Abuser may blame the victim for causing the abuse
* Abuser may deny abuse took place or say it was not as bad as the victim claims

**Calm**

* Abuser acts like the abuse never happened
* Physical abuse may not be taking place
* Promises made during 'making-up' may be met
* Victim may hope that the abuse is over
* Abuser may give gifts to victim



The cycle of violence will not end until one partner leaves or seeks treatment.

The cycle can happen hundreds of times in an abusive relationship. Each stage lasts a different amount of time in a relationship. The total cycle can take anywhere from a few hours to a year or more to complete.   
  
It is important to remember that not all domestic violence relationships fit the cycle. Often, as time goes on, the 'making-up' and 'calm' stages disappear. [1]

There are five types of abuse and they usually start with the less noticeable first and become more obvious as the abusive relationship continues.

**The Five Types of Abuse**

1. Emotional (killing pet, playing mind games)
2. Verbal (calling names)
3. Technological (GPS system /Face book sabotage)
4. Sexual (forcing sex)
5. Physical (killing, punching, choking)

**Profile of an Abuser/Batterer**

1. [Jealousy](https://www.psychologytoday.com/basics/jealousy) (questioning her constantly about whereabouts, and jealous of time she spends away from him).
2. Controlling behavior (like not allowing to go for a job, leave the house or bathe without his permission)
3. Isolation (Makes partner move away from family and friends so that she depends on him solely for support.)
4. Forces her to have sex against her will ( forcing their partners to have sex with their friends and forces sex when she is asleep.)
5. Holds very rigid [gender](https://www.psychologytoday.com/basics/gender) roles (Believes that her job is just to cater to him, he is the “king of the castle.”)

The thoughts that provoke a man to violate a woman are:

• "She is controlling you. Don't let her act like you are weak."  
• She is making fun of you. Who does she think she is?"  
• "How dare she treat you this way! If she really loved you she would..."  
• "She's probably [cheating on](https://www.psychologytoday.com/basics/infidelity) you. [2]

Men that abuse are very clever, smart, and extremely charming. Most of these men have a [personality](https://www.psychologytoday.com/basics/personality) that draws people in because of their level of [charm](https://www.psychologytoday.com/basics/charisma). This is part of their art to [deceive](https://www.psychologytoday.com/basics/deception) and manipulate. This is why often times when a victim does report an assault she is not easily believed because people usually say “not him, he is so nice’ “you are so lucky”. All of this plays into his because if he gets people outside of the home to buy into his deceit the victim has little if no support.

**Diagnosis of Abusers/Batterers**

1. [Antisocial Personality Disorder](https://www.psychologytoday.com/conditions/antisocial-personality-disorder), (deceitfulness, repeatedly lying, use of aliases or conning others for personal profit or pleasure.)
2. [Borderline Personality Disorder](https://www.psychologytoday.com/conditions/borderline-personality-disorder) (a pattern of unstable and intense interpersonal relationships by alternating between extreme idealizations and devaluation.)
3. [Narcissistic Personality Disorder](https://www.psychologytoday.com/conditions/narcissistic-personality-disorder) (Has a grandiose sense of self-importance.)

A look at the profile/characteristics of batterers/abusers clearly shows how the diagnosis will be found in this population. It’s important to be careful with this diagnosis because many batterers will look to use as an excuse for their behavior.

**ARE MEN VICTIMS TOO?**

**Domestic violence against men** deals with [domestic violence](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Domestic_violence) experienced by men or boys in an [intimate relationship](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intimate_relationship) such as marriage, cohabitation, dating, or within a family. [5]

“When we think of abuse or domestic violence, we don’t often hear or think about the husband being the victim.” It’s usually the wife who is the reported sufferer. Yet more and more cases are reported where many husbands are victims of spousal abuse, as well. [3]

“Is a woman every bit as capable as a man?” We have been able to see woman as CEOs, as leaders, and maybe soon we’ll even get to see woman as commander in chief.  That equality, though, also demands that we be able to entertain the thought of women as aggressors. [4]

Whereas women who experience domestic violence are openly encouraged to report it to the authorities, it has been argued that men who experience such violence often encounter pressure against reporting, with those that do facing social stigma regarding their perceived lack of machismo and other denigrations of their [masculinity](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Masculinity). Additionally, [intimate partner violence](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intimate_partner_violence) (IPV) against men is generally less recognized by society than IPV against women, which can act as a further block to men reporting their situation.

“When a man is a victim of his wife’s physical abuse he is both shamed by the assaults of his wife and shamed by society for not ‘controlling’ her better. Men are considered ‘wimps’ for letting their wives beat them or for complaining about their wives’ attacks. For many men ‘taking it like a man’ means don’t complain and don’t show you are vulnerable or in pain!

“With the prospect of being viewed as ‘wimps’ and/or having the assaults by their wives not believed or minimized by the general public and law enforcement, it’s no wonder few men report their abuse or discuss it openly.” [6]

### Women are three times more likely to be killed or seriously injured by their male counterpart than vice versa. Though those numbers suggest a more dire need, they do not connote that women are completely innocent when it comes to domestic violence.[4]

### BARRIERS TO DISCLOSING

Male victims of family violence and abuse - like women - often face many barriers to disclosing their abuse:

* They are likely to be told that there must be something they did to provoke the perpetrator’s abuse
* They can suffer shame, embarrassment and the social stigma of not being able to protect themselves
* They can fear that if they disclose the abuse there will be nowhere for them and their children to escape to
* In cases of intimate partner violence, they can fear that if they disclose the abuse or end the relationship, their partner might become more abusive and/or take the children
* They can feel uncertain about where to seek help, or how to seek help
* Services are less likely to ask whether a man is a victim of family violence, and when they do ask, they are less likely to believe him (indeed many health departments have mandatory domestic violence screening for young women, but no such screening for young men)
* Male victims can be falsely arrested and removed from their homes because of the assumption that because they are male, they must be a perpetrator and not a victim. When this happens, children can be left unprotected from the perpetrator of the violence, leading many men to suffer the abuse in silence in an attempt to protect their children.

Because of these barriers, men are much less likely to report being a victim of family violence than are women (and women also frequently don’t report violence against them).

### FORMS OF ABUSE

Abuse of men takes many of the same forms as it does against women:

* physical violence
* intimidation
* threats: sexual, emotional, psychological, verbal
* financial abuse: property damage and social isolation.

Many men experience multiple forms of abuse. Men, more so than women, can also experience legal and administrative abuse - the use of institutions to inflict further abuse on a victim, for example, taking out false restraining orders or not allowing the victim access to his children. [7]

**THE SILENCE FOLLOWING RAPE**

Rape is a stigma which exists in the society from a long time. The dictionary meaning of word rape is “the ravishing or violation of a woman.” It means an unlawful intercourse done by a man with a woman without her valid consent. (Section 375 of the Indian Penal Code, 1860 )

Rape is a crime, which has a devastating effect on the survivors; it has been described as a “beginning of a nightmare”. The aftershocks include depression, fear, guilt-complex, suicidal-action, diminished sexual interest. etc. [10]

As Freda Adler says-“It is little wonder that rape is one of the least reported crimes. Perhaps it is the only crime in which the victim becomes the accused and in reality, it is she who must prove her good reputation, her mental soundness and her impeccable impropriety.” Why do so many women choose to remain silent after being sexually assaulted? To answer that question, one should look at the three institutions with which she will come into contact: the police, the hospital, and the courts.

***Police***.

In most locations the patrol officer on call will respond to a complaint by a rape victim. This officer has probably had little, if any, training in dealing with rape. Later, the case is referred to an investigator who most likely works with all types of assaults. In some cities, female police officers are used to investigate rape cases; however, most investigations are still conducted by males.

Unfortunately, many police officers are antagonistic toward the female rape victim. They may feel embarrassed themselves at having to question a woman about a sexual assault. Very often police questioning focuses on the woman having brought on the attack herself by her dress, her inviting a man to her house, accepting a ride from a man, going to a bar unescorted, or by her past sexual experiences. The officer may dwell on the sexual aspect of the rape, asking her to describe her feelings during the attack, the rapist’s genitals, or the position in which he raped her. Fortunately, in many areas of the country police departments are establishing special rape units and training police to work with rape victims.

***The Hospital*.**

Whether or not a rape victim intends to report an attack to the police, she should obtain medical care. When a woman who has been raped arrives at a hospital, medical personnel have a two-fold responsibility. They must treat the patient and also provide evidence for the police that a rape did occur.

In addition to checking a victim’s entire body for injury, a doctor should explain to her when she must return for pregnancy and venereal disease tests. A doctor will check for the presence of semen in the vagina as well as on other parts of her body and clothes. A rape victim should not wash herself before going to the hospital, and her clothing should be made available for the investigation. Doctors in hospital emergency rooms, where most rape victims are taken, do not always react sympathetically. Here, too, women frequently report they are subjected to hostile and irrelevant questions.

***The Courts*.**

A woman may report an assault to the police but choose not to press charges. However, if she does decide to file a complaint and the rapist is arrested, she may come to feel that she, not the rapist, is the person on trial. With few exceptions, statements by these victims describe their court experiences as unpleasant and difficult.

While the police and medical personnel often subject a rape victim to unfair questions, in the courtroom she must endure even more. Rape is defined as a crime against the state, and the victim is a witness for the prosecution. She may choose to have her own attorney, but that person only serves as an advisor; the court appoints the prosecutor over whom she will have no control.

The victim will often be attacked by the defense attorney on three major issues.

(1) Consent. How much did she resist? Many rapists have been released on the grounds that a rape did not occur because the victim did not struggle. In no other crime would this issue be raised. If a person is robbed, she is not expected to resist the robber and refuse to surrender her money.

(2) Corroboration. A few states still require that another witness testify that the rape took place or that there is some evidence such as the victim’s injuries or the presence of semen. If the victim was not harmed or she delayed reporting the rape so that the semen had disappeared, there would be no physical evidence and the case might be dismissed. Going back to our robbery, one does not have to prove that she was carrying a wallet in order to charge someone with theft.

(3) Chastity. The victim's past sexual behavior is often presented as evidence on behalf of the defendant. Testimony by a rape victim who admits to having sexual relations with someone to whom she is not married is used as proof that she is immoral and therefore, she is likely to have consented to intercourse. Conversely, the past crimes of the defendant are not admissible as evidence.

Acquittals in jury trials have been based on the admission by the victim that she had gone to a bar alone, that she was hitchhiking, that she showed no evidence of physical abuse, that she was dressed seductively, and that jury members found her unattractive (thus, why would anyone rape her?)

Looking at the number of people with whom a woman may have to speak in filing charges and the insensitive treatment she may receive, one can understand why some women who have reported a rape feel as though they have been raped a second time. There is usually a great deal of emotional conflict involved in making the decision to press charges or not. On the one hand, the woman may feel anger and want to see the rapist captured and punished; on the other, she may feel so humiliated that she does not wish to recount the details of the rape to the police.

The gradual change in the rape laws has been brought about by two opposite forces; the women’s movement and police, prosecutors, and legislators who want rape viewed as a law-and-order, not a feminist, issue. That is,

(i) To define rape by degrees rather than as a single degree assault

(ii) To use *threat* of injury as proof that rape occurred rather than insisting that a woman must have suffered actual physical injury by resisting the rapist;

(iii) And, in a few states, to restrict the discussion of the victim’s past sexual behavior and the need for corroboration by proof other than the victim’s testimony.

Although not all police, hospital personnel, and attorneys are intent upon protecting the accused rapist by making the victim appear guilty, it is not surprising that many women either do not report a rape or withdraw the rape charge before it is brought to trial. Some rape victims elect not to report a rape because they feel the rapist will not be apprehended or they do not wish to recount the circumstances of the attack to others.

***Rape Crisis Centers***.

Perhaps more than with physical injuries, women need help with recovering from the emotional shock of a sexual assault.

Services of a rape crisis center may include a telephone answering line, group and individual counseling, escort service, self-defense classes, and women's discussion groups. Since most of these centers have limited funds, they rely on volunteers to assist in their work. [8]

Union women and child development minister [Maneka Gandhi](http://www.dnaindia.com/topic/maneka-gandhi) had suggested 660 'Nirbhaya Centers' - one each in the 640 districts and another 20 in the six metros. Now, there will be just 36, and their locations will be decided by the state governments. [9]

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