

# **SURVIVAL MANUAL**

**A HANDBOOK  
FOR  
ABUSED PERSONS**

## **Important Information for Victims**

If you are the victim of domestic abuse, you may contact a domestic violence victim service provider to plan for your safety and take steps to protect yourself, including filing a petition under 813.12 of the Wisconsin Statutes for a domestic abuse injunction or under 813.125 of the Wisconsin Statutes for a harassment injunction.

**For assistance please contact:**

**Barron County Domestic Abuse Victim Advocate**

Barron County Health and Human Services

335 E. Monroe Ave, Barron, WI 54812

Business Hours: 715-537-6334

After Hours Crisis Line: 888-552-6642

**Wisconsin Statewide VINE Service (Jail Release Notification)**

1-888-944-8463

1-888-WI-4-VINE

[www.vineline.com](http://www.vineline.com)

**Wisconsin Statewide VINE Protective Order (Service Notification of Restraining Order)**

1-855-WI-VPO-4U

1-855-948-7648

[www.vineprotect.com](http://www.vineprotect.com)

## **Wisconsin Crime Victim Rights Notice**

### **RIGHTS OF VICTIMS**

- To be treated with fairness, dignity & respect for privacy.
- To not have personal information disclosed/used for a purpose unrelated to the official duties of an agency, employee or official.
- Timely disposition of the case.
- Have your interests considered by the court as provided by statute.
- The opportunity to attend court proceedings and be accompanied by a service representative.
- Intercession services with employer.
- Reasonable effort by law enforcement, DA, Intake & DOC to provide information pre- & post-conviction.
- Reasonable effort made to provide information to and receive input from victim.
- Testing and release of results regarding communicable diseases as provided.
- Have input and be present during parole hearing/sentence modification process.
- Reasonable protection from the accused throughout the criminal justice process.
- Notification of court proceedings.
- Have the opportunity to speak with the DA/Intake worker about the case & receive information about obtaining copies of police reports.
- The opportunity to make a statement to the court at sentencing/disposition.
- Restitution when possible & Judgment without fee when appropriate.
- Have property returned by law enforcement as quickly as possible.
- Compensation from the state for certain crimes.
- Information about the outcome of the case and the release of the accused.
- The opportunity to complain if you believe your rights have been violated.
- Other detailed explanations in Ch. 950 Wis. Stat.

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Domestic abuse is a system of behaviors that is designed to give one person in a relationship power and control over the other. Abusers use many tactics including isolation, financial control and social control as well as verbal, emotional, physical and sexual abuse. Domestic abuse is found in groups of every age, culture, gender, sexual orientation, religion and income level.

# **I. HISTORY OF END DOMESTIC ABUSE BARRON COUNTY**

In January 1993, several dedicated members of the Barron County Community came together with the purpose of improving our response to domestic violence. Individuals with backgrounds in social services, law and law enforcement, the judiciary, mental health, medicine, and the clergy came together to work on a coordinated community response. It was from this group that the Barron County Domestic Abuse Project was born. In October of 2014 the BCDAP changed the name of their organization to End Domestic Abuse Barron County (EDABC), to place our mission directly in our title. We strive to increase public awareness of the problem, monitor agencies responsible for responding to victims and perpetrators of domestic violence, and to work on prevention by promoting education, conflict resolution and healthy relationships. Our mission is to reduce violence in the community by reducing it within the family.

It is our hope that this directory will be a resource manual and practical guide for victims of domestic violence. Our desire is to encourage a battered person to seek safety and take action to resolve and/or terminate a violent situation. By resolving the abuse within our homes, we hope to create a safer future for our children and to give them the models they need for loving relationships.

This booklet is brought to you free of charge by End Domestic Abuse Barron County, P.O. Box 605, Rice Lake, WI 54868 or [www.edabc.org](http://www.edabc.org).

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

We would like to thank the Rice Lake United Way and the Barron County community for continued financial support to the EDABC and victims of domestic abuse. We thank the men and women who work day after day to promote lives that are free of violence as well as support and protect those affected by violence in their lives. Thanks to the Barron County District

Attorney's Office, Local Law Enforcement, and Department of Corrections for their continuing support. Finally, we thank those persons who have been touched by emotional or physical violence for their courage in surviving and their commitment to ending the cycle of violence.

## **II. CHECKLIST: AM I IN AN ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIP?**

You don't need scars or bruises to be a victim of abuse. Abuse happens in marriages and dating relationships; young and old; women and men. You are in an abusive relationship if your spouse, ex-spouse, lover or dating partner has done any of the following:

- withheld approval, appreciation or affection as punishment
- continually criticized you and your beliefs, called you names, shouted at you
- been very jealous, created an imagined affair
- manipulated you with lies and contradictions
- insisted you dress the way she/he wants
- humiliated you in private or in public
- insulted your friends or family; abused pets to hurt you
- taken your car keys or money; locked you out of the house
- subjected you to reckless driving
- punched, shoved, slapped, bit, kicked, choked, hit, or thrown objects at you
- threatened you with weapons (loaded or not)
- threatened to kidnap the children or commit suicide if you leave
- kept you isolated from friends & family; controlled who you could see & when
- purposely destroyed your treasured possessions
- raped you or forced other sexual acts

### **III. MESSAGE TO ABUSED PERSON**

You have both the freedom and the responsibility to care about yourself. To do this you will need to learn to make choices and changes. Consider thinking about yourself in these ways:

I am not to blame for being beaten and abused.

I am not the cause of another's violent behavior.

I do not like or want it.

I don't have to take it.

I am an important human being.

I deserve to be treated with respect.

I do have power over my own life.

I can decide for myself what is best for me.

I am not alone; I can ask others to help me.

I am worth working for and changing for.

I deserve to make my own life safe and healthy.

I am a worthwhile person.

## IV. YOU ARE NOT ALONE

### Statements from other victims of domestic violence:

*“I kind of got used to him hitting me, but when he started treating the kids the same way I took them and left. Now he’s trying to get custody of the kids. I’m afraid he might. I’m scared for my kids.”*

*“I wound up in the hospital the last time he beat me up. He sent me flowers and wants me to come home. He needs to get counseling—then I’ll think about it.”*

*“I’m glad I finally left my emotionally abusive husband, with his accusations, mind games, and methods of trying to control me. I no longer feel responsible for his actions, and I am in a safe place where he can’t harass me. Whatever is in store for me has got to be better than what I had.”*

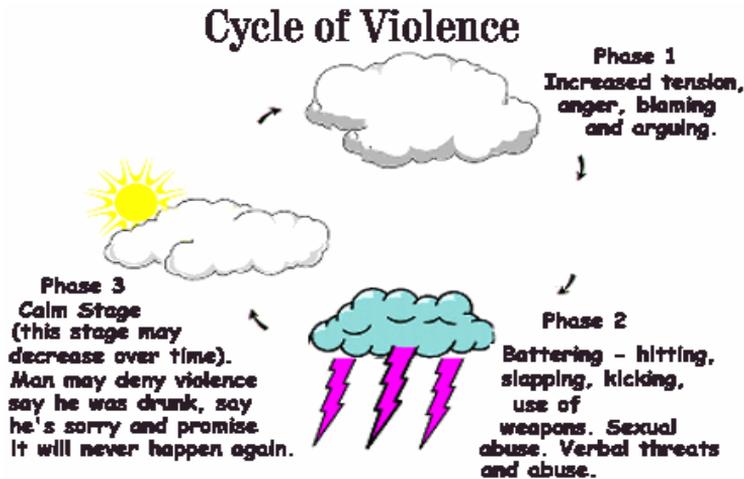
*“When I got out of my abusive marriage I felt like I got my life back. I don’t have to be afraid anymore.”*

*“I got real tired of walking on eggshells, wondering what kind of mood he was going to be in when he came home from work. I never knew what was going to set him off.”*

*“I was taught that I should stay married no matter what, that I needed a husband, the kids needed a father and any problems could be worked out if I tried hard enough.”*

*“He said that if I ever left, he’d find me and kill me -- and if he couldn’t, he’d kill himself.”*

## V. THE CYCLE OF VIOLENCE



**Phase 1: Tension Building Phase.** Abuser may: pick fights, act jealous, criticize, threaten, drink/use drugs, be moody, and or unpredictable. Make you: feel like you're walking on eggshells, try to appease, reason with or calm the abuser, feel afraid or anxious.

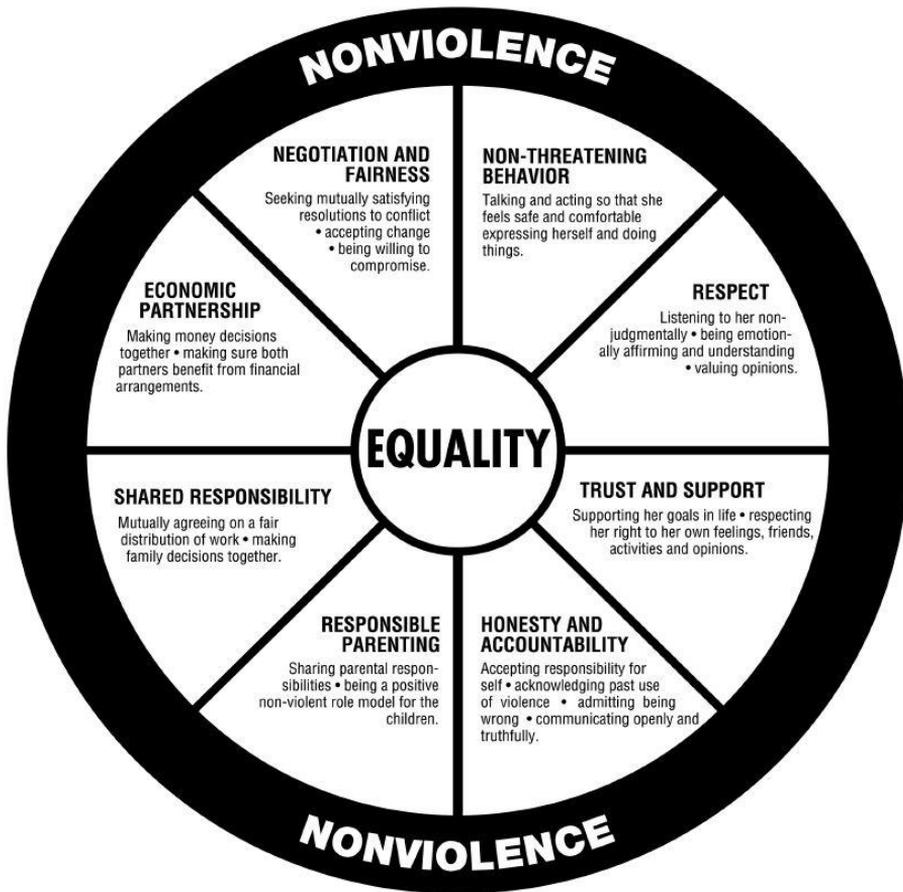
**Phase 2: Crisis Phase.** Abuser may: verbally abuse, sexually assault, physically abuse, increase control over you, physically restrain you, destroy property, etc. Make you: feel emotionally assaulted, feel afraid or in shock, protect yourself and others, use self-defense, call for help, try to get away either temporarily or permanently, pray for it to stop, do what is necessary to survive.

**Phase 3: Calmer Phase.** Abuser may: ask for forgiveness, promise it won't happen again, stop drinking/using drugs, go to counseling, be affectionate, initiate intimacy, minimize or deny abuse. You may: need medical attention, forgive, return home or to the relationship, arrange for counseling, benefit from talking to someone you trust, feel hopeful, feel manipulated, blame self or someone other than the abuser, minimize or deny abuse, drink/use drugs, lash out at others.

# THE POWER AND CONTROL WHEEL



# THE EQUALITY WHEEL



## VI. CONTINUUM OF VIOLENCE

Violence within families/relationships can occur in basically three different ways: physical, verbal/emotional, and sexual. An important first step in preventing family/relationship violence is to recognize what it is. Something that begins rather innocently, such as a minor critical remark, may end up becoming a very serious problem. Without some kind of help, abuse almost always gets worse. Abuse is a **process** rather than an event. The end result can be death. If you find yourself engaging in any of these behaviors, please recognize them, and then get help in replacing them with less destructive behaviors.

People generally believe that physical abuse is easy to recognize but rarely does abuse begin with a significant injury. **Physical and sexual abuse** continuum can include:

- pushing
- punching
- uninvited touching
- slapping
- kicking
- sexual pressure
- throwing objects at you
- hurting pets, family members or friends
- choking
- isolation
- false accusations
- using weapons
- humiliation
- forced sex/sexual contact
- hurtful sex/sexual contact
- threatening hurtful
- sex/sexual contact
- homicide
- suicide.

**Emotional and psychological abuse** continuum includes behaviors, which are emotionally and psychologically abusive. Many of the least severe abuses are considered to be common ways to show anger for many people and are not thought to be especially abusive. However, like all abuse, these behaviors are attempts to control one's partner through harm and threat of harm. Like hitting, targeted and repeated emotional abuse can have devastating effects on

someone's sense of self-esteem and perception of reality. A pattern of psychological and emotional abuse almost always accompanies, and in many cases precedes incidents of physical abuse. Like all abuse, the use of emotional abuse will increase in severity and frequency over time.

Emotionally and psychologically abusive behaviors include:

- jokes about your habits, characteristics, or faults
- jokes about the habits, characteristics, or faults of your loved ones
- ignoring or denying your feelings or needs
- ignoring or denying the feelings or needs of your loved ones.
- withholding affection or approval as punishment
- infidelity
- yelling, shouting, invading personal space
- name-calling, insults
- insulting or ridiculing beliefs, religion, family, race, etc.
- repeated insults, labeling, and/or name-calling (i.e. "Stupid" "Jerk" "Crazy" etc.)
- repeated humiliation (private and/or public)
- controlling (insisting you dress a certain way, account for your actions and time spent, trying to control who you spend time with, insisting that you give him/her a role in making decisions, etc.)
- blaming others for abuse or behavior
- manipulating with lies and contradictions (playing "mind games")
- slamming doors, hitting walls, breaking objects (displays of anger and violence)
- threatening violence or retaliation (either direct or implied)
- threatening violence against your family, children, friends
- put-downs about abilities as a parent, person, worker, student, partner, athlete, etc.
- demanding all of your attention and resenting others who get your attention; extreme jealousy (accusations, following him/her, etc.)
- isolation (scaring or driving away friends and family)
- destroying meaningful possessions

- suicide threats (should always be reported to hospital, clinic or emergency response personnel)
- threats to hurt or kill pets; threatening abuse, or to hurt or kill.

## **SOME PREDICTORS AND EARLY FORMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

The following signs and early forms of domestic abuse may serve as clues to potential future abuse:

- Did your partner grow up in a violent family? People who grow up in families where they have been abused as children, or where one parent beats the other, have grown up learning that violence is normal behavior.
- Does your partner tend to use force or violence to "solve" problems? Someone who has a criminal record for violence, who gets into fights, or who likes to act tough is likely to act the same way with "loved ones". Does your partner have a quick temper? Over-react to little problems and frustration? Act cruel to animals? Punch walls or throw things when upset? Any of these behaviors may be a sign of a person who will work out bad feelings with violence.
- Does your partner abuse alcohol or other drugs? There is a strong link between violence and problems with drugs and alcohol. Be alert to his/her possible drinking/drug problems, particularly if your partner refuses to admit that there is a problem, or refuses to get help. Do not think that you can change your partner.
- Does the male partner think a woman should stay at home, take care of her husband, and follow his wishes and orders? Does the female partner think that "real men" should tolerate slapping, hitting, scratching?
- Is your partner jealous of your other relationships—not just with

members of the opposite sex that you may know—but also with your friends and your family? Does your partner keep tabs on you? Want to know where you are at all times? Want the two of you together all of the time?

- Does your partner have access to guns, knives, or other lethal instruments and talk of using them against people, or threaten to use them to get even?
- Does your partner expect you to follow orders or advice? Does your partner become angry if you do not obey or if you cannot anticipate what your partner wants?
- Does your partner go through extreme highs and lows, almost as two different people? Is your partner extremely kind one time and extremely cruel at another time?
- When your partner gets angry, are you afraid? Do you find that not making your partner angry has become a major part of your life? Do you usually do what your partner wants you to do, rather than what you want to do?
- Does your partner treat you roughly and/or physically force you to do what you do not want to do?

## **DOMESTIC ABUSE AND PET ABUSE**

Women entering battered women's shelters often report that their batterer has injured, maimed, killed, or threatened the family pets for revenge or to psychologically control them. Often the violence toward the animals occurs in the presence of the women and their children, and is one more step in the long history of violent behavior directed at them. Because of fear that leaving their pets behind will put the animals at risk at the hands of their abuser, victims may resist the idea of entering a shelter.

## **Why Do Abusers Batter/Hurt Animals?**

- To demonstrate power and control over the family
- To isolate the victim and children
- To enforce submission
- To perpetuate an environment of fear
- To prevent the victim from leaving or to coerce her/him to return
- To punish the victim for leaving or showing independence

## **What Victims Can Do!**

- Have pets vaccinated against rabies
- License pets with the town or county and make sure the registrations are in YOUR names
- Do not leave your pets with your abuser
- Create a safety plan for your pets
- Arrange for temporary shelter for your pets with a veterinarian, family member, trusted friend, or local animal shelter (Barron County Human Society, (715) 537-9063).

## **STALKING**

Stalking refers to harassing or threatening behavior that is engaged in repeatedly. Such harassment can be either physical stalking or cyberstalking.

- Physical stalking is following someone, appearing at a person's home or place of business, making harassing phone calls, leaving written messages or objects, or vandalizing one's property.
- Cyberstalking involves using the Internet or other electronic means to harass.

Either type of action may or may not be accompanied by a credible threat of serious harm. But both types can cause psychological damage, and each can

potentially lead to an assault or even murder.

All states have anti-stalking laws, but the legal definitions vary. Some state laws require that the perpetrator, to qualify as a stalker, make a credible threat of violence against the victim. Others require only that the stalker's conduct constitute an implied threat.

### **Anti-Stalking Tips**

Here are a few important pointers to help you thwart cyberstalking, whether it's directed at you, your electronic devices, or your family:

- Maintain vigilance over physical access to your computer and other Web-enabled devices like cell phones. Cyberstalkers use software and hardware devices (sometimes attached to the back of your PC without you even knowing) to monitor their victims.
- Be sure you always log out of your computer programs when you step away from the computer and use a screensaver with a password. The same goes for passwords on cell phones. Your kids and your spouse should develop the same good habits.
- Do an online search for your name or your family members' now and then to see what's available about you and your kids online. Don't be shy about searching social networks (including your friends and colleagues), and be sure to remove anything private or inappropriate.
- Delete or make private any online calendars or itineraries--even on your social network--where you list events you plan to attend. They could let a stalker know where you're planning to be and when.
- Use the privacy settings in all your online accounts to limit your online sharing with those outside your trusted circle. You can use these settings to opt out of having your profile appear when someone searches for your name. You can block people from seeing your posts and photos, too.

- If you suspect that someone is using spyware software to track your everyday activities, and you feel as if you're in danger, only use public computers or telephones to seek help. Otherwise, your efforts to get help will be known to your cyberstalker and this may leave you in even greater danger.

## **Teach Your Children**

You might sound like a broken record, but keep on telling your kids they should never provide any personal information about themselves online, no matter how safe they think it might be. Tell them never to indicate their real name, school, address, or even the city where they live. Phone numbers are not to be distributed online, and if a stranger contacts them via any method, they need to let you know right away. Encourage your kids to tell you if they're being cyberstalked. As parents, you should report cyberstalking to a teacher or school administrator and, if it seems serious, the police.

## **Report It**

- If you're being cyberstalked, remember to keep a copy of any message or online image that could serve as proof. In fact, show your children how to use the "print screen" or other keyboard functions to save screenshots.
- Most important, don't be afraid to report cyberstalking to the police. Many police departments have cybercrime units, and cyberstalking **is** a crime.

## **Technology Safety Planning**

- Trust your instincts.
- Plan for safety
- Take precautions if you have a "techy" abuser
- Use a safe computer
- Create a new email, Face Book, Twitter and any other type of

electronic social media account you may use

- Check your cell phone settings
- Change passwords & pin numbers
- Minimize use of cordless phones or baby monitors
- Use a different or new cell phone
- Ask about your records and data
- Get a private mailbox and don't give out your real address
- Search for your name on the Internet

## **VII. WHAT ARE YOUR CHOICES?**

### **WHY YOU MIGHT STAY IN AN ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIP:**

- hope that partner will change and abuse will end
- fear of what the abuser will do if you leave
- awareness of the serious practical difficulties you will face trying to make it on your own, (i.e. financial, child care, housing, etc.)
- lack of confidence in yourself
- too afraid or embarrassed to ask for help
- emotional ties to the abuser
- fear of getting the abuser “in trouble”
- social pressure to stay even if you do not love the abuser

### **WHY YOU MIGHT LEAVE AN ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIP:**

- you might see that the abuse is not changing
- the abuse/violence may be increasing in frequency or intensity
- the abuse/violence is extending to children and/or pets
- what you get from the relationship is no longer worth the stress, fear, or pain
- you now see your partner as an abuser, not a lover
- your disgust and anger become stronger than your fear of leaving
- you find others who support your decision to leave

The FBI's Uniform Crime Report says that about 1400 women a year are killed by husbands or boyfriends, which accounts for roughly one-third of all female homicide victims.

A Violence Prevention Coalition study estimates that over \$31 billion dollars each year is lost due to the effects of domestic violence in the workplace.

A Bureau of Justice Statistics report says that domestic violence causes more injuries to females between the ages of 15 and 44 than car accidents, muggings and rapes combined.

### **THE ADVANTAGES OF EVEN A TEMPORARY ABSENCE:**

- The abuser may begin to take your objections more seriously.
- Being away from the violence for only a short time often helps you to evaluate your situation more clearly so that you can make appropriate decisions.
- Talking to others who have experienced similar problems (as in a shelter) or with a counselor or advocate who can connect you with the community resources you need can also be very helpful.

### **THINGS YOU CAN DO FOR YOURSELF WHILE DECIDING WHETHER OR NOT TO LEAVE:**

- **Plan what to do in an emergency.** For example:
  - think ahead about what you can do if your partner is violent again
  - memorize local emergency numbers
  - set aside extra money for food, phone calls, transportation
  - figure out where you can go and how you could get there
  - have an overnight bag packed for you and your kids (Leave it with someone- -that's safer than with you.)
  - if possible, keep your valuables and important papers together in a

- place where you can gather them in a hurry
  - keep a spare set of house and car keys handy
  - plan different ways you might be able to get yourself and your children out of the house
  - plan different ways you might be able to get out of **any** dangerous situation. The more you plan and practice ahead of time, the easier it will be for you to react in an emergency.
- **Keep records.** Get a notebook, diary, or calendar and start keeping a record of times that you have been abused. As soon after the abuse incident as possible, write down what happened: where and when, and how you felt. Keep a record of all injuries to yourself and/or your children. Note whether or not you went to the doctor or hospital and if there were any witnesses. Later, this may help to prove (to you and the courts) how much abuse there was in your relationship. (See sample violence log in the back of this booklet). Keep in mind that you will want to keep this record in a place where it cannot be found.
  - **Talk to other people.** Don't let yourself be isolated. Make an effort to keep in touch with your friends and family. Tell someone you trust about the battering. (Look for someone who will believe you and who won't blame you.) Consider a support group and/or seeing a counselor. Tell your health care provider.
  - **Be careful whom you tell.** If you believe there is any chance that your partner will become more violent if you tell about the plans/steps you are making in your life for changes—don't risk telling the abuser. Keep in mind that many abusive persons are insecure about themselves and they are dependent on you. They are likely to feel anxious and threatened by the idea that you are planning to make a change. The more you tell the abuser, the easier it will be to try and stop you from ending the relationship either permanently or temporarily.
  - **Consider your long-term prospects:** Start thinking about what skills

you will need to be more independent. Work on improving your own self-image and level of confidence. If you need job training or education; try to at least get started on part of this. Do what you think is best and safest for you now, but keep making plans for the future.

- **Imagine life without the abuser and the abuse:** Picture what you would do without your abusive partner. Think about the steps you would go through each day on your own. Think about your future obstacles and how to get through them. Talk to other people and ask them how they survived obstacles. Increase your self-confidence.

### **IF YOU ARE AN ABUSED PARENT, YOUR CHILDREN ALSO NEED HELP.**

- Children are often abused themselves, sexually as well as physically and emotionally.
- Children suffer psychological and emotional injury because they live in a home where there is violence – even if they aren't the actual targets.
- Children live in terror of that violence.
- Children may see a parent beaten and/or sexually abused and hear the screams. They hear punching, kicking, throwing, and pounding as well as yelling and swearing. It's difficult, if not impossible, to hide the abuse from children in the home.
- Children who see a parent abused may feel sorry for that parent. However, their sympathy may turn to anger and hate toward the victim for not defending him/herself or leaving. They blame the victim for their own helplessness and victimization.
- Children who grow up in violent homes may learn to behave either as victims or aggressors. It is recommended that you seek help for your children through counseling or other services listed in the back of this booklet.

- Children rarely discuss the problems they experience from witnessing or suffering abuse with the parent

## **HELP CHILDREN BEFORE THEY SHOW PROBLEMS**

Children usually receive no help until their problems become obvious. This is because children hide their problems well. Organizations involved in providing services to battered persons have recognized the needs of these children and are prepared to help them. They can also refer you to other community resources that can help your children.

Often batterers will use the partner's fear of loss of child custody as a means of control. However, any battered spouse can, and probably should, speak to Social Services about the specifics of the situation. This call can be made anonymously, and the child protection agency should tell you what your rights and options are regarding your children.

## **FAMILY VIOLENCE IS A LEARNED BEHAVIOR**

Children are affected now...and later. Consider these statistics on incidence, prevalence and severity:

- Domestic violence is a pervasive and life-threatening crime affecting millions of individuals across our nation regardless of age, economic status, race, religion or education.
- More than 1 in 3 women have experienced rape, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner in their lifetime. in approximately 7 million women are raped and/or physically assaulted by a current or former intimate partner each year. <sup>1</sup>
- Nationwide, an average of 3 women are killed by a current or former intimate partner every day. <sup>2</sup>
- Female victims of rape, physical violence, or stalking by an intimate

partner experienced impacts such as fear, concern for their safety, need for medical care, injury, need for housing services, and missing work or school.<sup>3</sup>

## **CHILDREN AND YOUTH**

- Children are particularly vulnerable as both victims of and witnesses to domestic violence and sexual abuse and assault. In order to break the cycle of violence, we must intervene and provide services.
- Approximately 15.5 million children are exposed to domestic violence every year.<sup>4</sup>
- 1 in 4 girls and 1 in 6 boys are sexually abused before the age of 18.<sup>5</sup>
- Young women between the ages of 16 and 24 experience the highest rate of intimate partner violence and sexual assault.<sup>6</sup>
- Children exposed to violence are more likely to attempt suicide, abuse drugs and alcohol, run away from home, engage in teenage prostitution and commit sexual assault crimes.<sup>7</sup>
- Men exposed to physical abuse, sexual abuse and/or domestic violence as children are almost 4 times more likely than other men to perpetrate domestic violence as adults.<sup>8</sup>

## **VIII. TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF IN A CRISIS**

### **IF YOU ARE IN IMMEDIATE DANGER, GET OUT NOW!**

Call the Police or Sheriff's Department for help. Call a shelter for a safe place to stay temporarily for yourself and your children. Call the victim advocate for help. Turn to the back of this booklet for these essential phone numbers. Remember that you can always go back home later when the situation is less dangerous.

## **BATTERED PERSONS NEEDING MEDICAL ATTENTION**

If you experience abdominal pain, nausea, dizziness, and fainting after an assault, **go to an emergency room immediately.**

Frequent beatings may result in long-term physical problems such as:

- Chronic and severe headaches
- vision and hearing impairment
- memory loss
- spinal damage
- damage to head and neck
- damage to kidneys
- blood clots (which could cause strokes)

With every beating, your body **is damaged**. With each beating, it becomes more and more difficult for your body to repair itself.

- Sexual abuse often causes:
  - laceration of genitalia
  - infections which can lead to infertility
  - sexually transmitted diseases
- Physical abuse often causes psychological problems such as:
  - Extreme fears/anxiety
  - depression/withdrawals
  - suicidal tendencies
  - nervous disorders (example: stuttering, tics)
  - helplessness, timidity, passivity
  - loss of self-worth and self-esteem
  - drug and alcohol abuse

Tell your doctor or health care provider that you have been battered. It is important for your doctor to know, so that he/she may properly treat you. Tell your doctor what happened and who did it. You don't have to try and explain

why it happened.

## **WHAT YOU SHOULD EXPECT FROM A DOCTOR:**

- courteous communication
- documentation of the abuse in your medical records (you may want to use these records in the future)
- correct diagnosis
- confidentiality of your records
- appropriate treatment and prescriptions
- referral to advocate, abuse shelter, social services agency, etc.

## **ASSISTANCE/COUNSELING**

Organizations that work with battered persons know that battered persons are not mentally ill. How you feel or act may be a result of the tremendous stress you are under. You may need:

- Protection (legal restraint on the abuser, also known as a restraining order)
- Safety (a place to heal, think, and plan)
- Accurate information about your rights and options
- A support system (through women's groups, Al-Anon, counselors, advocates, etc.) A support system is a network of people you can turn to for assistance. These are people who:
  - Can listen to you when you need to talk about difficulties or successes.
  - Limit their judgments about you and your decisions.
  - Are willing to back you up in taking steps to improve your life.
  - Want to see you live in whatever way is satisfying for you.
  - Do not push you in directions they feel are best but encourage you to follow through on decisions you make for yourself.

We all need several people in our support system, since any one person may not be immediately available. These people may include a trusted friend, a relative, a counselor, a co-worker, a religious representative and others.

Support people sometimes withdraw their support if you go over the same issues many times or if they need to take care of their own needs. Try not to feel rejected, but acknowledge the help you have received and continue to use your other support people. Without a good support system it may be very difficult to stop violence in our lives.

## **GETTING SUPPORT AND INFORMATION FROM A COUNSELOR**

When looking for a counselor/mental health professional:

- Ask a friend, your physician or an agency you trust for a referral.
- Ask the counselor if she/he has had training in the area of domestic violence.

The counselor should:

- Support and encourage you to make your own decisions
- Be clear that you are not responsible for your partner's behaviors
- Recommend that each person involved be seen separately until the violence has stopped. Only then can relationship issues be dealt with.

## **SHELTER FOR YOURSELF AND YOUR CHILDREN**

At a shelter for battered persons:

- You will have time away from your abuser to gather strength and plan for the future.
- You can get accurate information about your rights and options.
- You and your children can get counseling to help with your feelings about the violence.
- You will receive the support of others to end the violence.

If you decide not to go to a family abuse shelter, consider staying with a friend or relative who is supportive of you. Additionally, there may be transitional housing assistance available on a limited basis that can help families progress toward lives that are independent and free of violence.

## **IX. THE LEGAL SYSTEM**

### **INTRODUCTION TO THE LEGAL SYSTEM**

The legal system is comprised of the criminal and the civil systems. The criminal system deals with crimes in which the state, through the District Attorney, brings an action against a person for committing a crime. In the civil system one person takes action against another.

The legal system provides a degree of protection and control only for persons whose circumstances fall within existing laws. It is likely that you will also need to take other measures to protect yourself and build a positive new life as well.

### **THE DECISION TO TAKE LEGAL ACTION**

This is a very important and difficult decision to be made. Some things you want to consider are:

- Unless some action is taken, the abuse you are experiencing is likely to continue, to increase in severity, and to happen more often.
- Use of the legal system takes time. Four to twelve months may elapse between the day a criminal case is started and the court's final decision. A civil injunction, however, can be obtained in one day.
- You may have to testify against your partner in court. The police, district attorney, defense attorney, judge, and possibly a jury may question your credibility. A good support system is very important.
- In the criminal system, the abuser may not be sentenced to jail even if

found guilty. The abuser may be placed on probation with conditions that require counseling and limitations on behavior, but even this less punitive outcome could give you more protection from further abuse than you have right now.

- Law Enforcement or the District Attorney may initiate a criminal action as soon as they have enough information about an incident whether or not you want that or are ready for it.

## **LAW ENFORCEMENT**

- If you are being beaten or are in immediate danger of being beaten, **CALL LAW ENFORCEMENT! CALL 911!**
- Give law enforcement a good description of what is happening. What your abuser is doing (breaking in, breaking furniture, beating the children, etc.)? Is there a weapon (gun, broomstick, board, knife, shoe, etc.)?
- Law Enforcement response time varies. They may not be able to respond to your call as soon as you want them to. You may not be able to predict what action law enforcement will take when they do respond. Write your own notes of what happened for your own records. You may contact the District Attorney's Office and/or the law enforcement supervisor if the law enforcement officer takes no action or if you feel the action was not appropriate.

### **What to expect from Law Enforcement**

When an officer responds to a domestic disturbance call involving adults, the officer is **required by law** to make an arrest if, after looking at the scene and talking to you and other witnesses, the officer believes a crime has occurred and the guilt of the batterer is more than a possibility. It is not required that you have visible injuries. It does not matter if you do or do not want to press charges. If the batterer is not there when law enforcement arrives, the officer may apply for a warrant for the batterer's arrest. The officer may tell you how

to contact an advocate or a family abuse shelter or contact them for you. This is done to give you emergency shelter information, transportation, childcare, and immediate support.

You and/or any witnesses (including children) should be interviewed outside of the presence or hearing of the batterer. The officer will likely collect the following information from you and any other witnesses who saw/heard or otherwise know about the violent episode:

- When and where did the incident take place?
- What circumstances preceded the incident? (Argument, alcohol/drug consumption, etc.)
- What did the abuser do (punches, kicks, etc.)?
- What, if any weapons were used? (NOTE: Any object may be used as a weapon.)
- What injuries did you suffer? What medical attention have you received? The officer should get a medical records release form signed by you so that s/he may obtain medical corroboration about the nature and severity of your injuries.
- Were there any witnesses to the beating (including any children)? Where can these people be reached?
- What action, if any, did you take to defend yourself or retaliate against the batterer? Did the batterer sustain any injury?
- Is there any other physical evidence of a struggle (damaged or scattered personal effects, etc.) which the officer should see or photograph?
- Were you ever beaten before? Does the batterer have access to firearms or other dangerous weapons?

**\*\*\*Always try to write down the details of an incident as soon as possible! This will ensure that the details of an incident are not lost and the seriousness of an incident is not diminished. These details can be very important!\*\*\***

Keep in mind that a law enforcement report is **not** the same as a criminal charge. The prosecutor is the **only** one who can decide what, if any, criminal charges to file.

If an **injunction** (restraining order) is filed, the order may, and in some cases, **shall** be enforced by arrest. This means that if the order is violated in any way, it is **your** responsibility to report the violation to law enforcement. Even if the violation does not result in a criminal charge, it is important to continue documenting violations with law enforcement.

You should always tell the officer if there are any charges pending against the abuser, whether or not the case involves you. The officer will need to check any bonds in effect and whether or not the bond has been violated.

## **THE CIVIL PROCESS**

In the civil process, one person takes action against another in court. This may be done with or without the assistance of an attorney or legal advocate. The civil process can provide some options for individuals affected by domestic abuse.

**Restraining orders:** Individuals may apply to the court for an injunction (restraining order), which will forbid the abuser from contacting you. Applications are available through the Clerk of Court's office and the victim advocate may be able to provide assistance in making the application. There are several varieties of injunctions and the advocate or clerk can provide you with the best information in deciding which application to make.

Injunctions can often be obtained within an hour or two and the order can stay

in effect for several years. Keep in mind, there may or may not be a cost to you associated with filing an injunction. Additionally, you **will** be required to appear in court for the final hearing.

You do **not** need to begin a divorce process in order to obtain an injunction. You **do** need to be sure that you want the abuser to stay away from you. Violation of the injunction will likely result in criminal charges. These orders are available as a safety measure; not to allow you to choose when and where you will allow the abuser to contact you. If you are not sure that you want the abuser to stay away from you completely, you should look to other options.

**Divorce, custody and visitation:** In a divorce action, a temporary hearing will usually be scheduled within a few weeks. At this hearing the court *may* enter a temporary family court order that covers issues such as: Initial placement and custody; initial distribution of assets and debts; and other matters affecting the family.

Keep in mind that if you are married, both parents have equal custody of the children unless the court orders otherwise.

If you are married and decide to leave an abusive situation, even temporarily, take the children with you if possible.

If the abuser takes the children and won't let you see them or won't return them, this may affect the visitation order and you should notify your attorney and/or the family court as soon as possible. In some cases, the abuser may face criminal charges for interfering with child custody.

If the abuser is violent toward you, visitation can be structured to help protect you. If the abuser is violent toward your children, visitation *may* be denied. **Any violence towards children should be reported immediately.**

Custody and visitation issues can be very complex. It is a good idea to seek legal advice and the advocate can provide you with information about

possible legal assistance.

Keep in mind that even after a divorce action is started, if you think you may want to reconcile, you may put a “hold” on the divorce action. Later, if you do choose to reconcile, you may drop the action completely.

## **CRIMINAL CHARGES**

If there is enough evidence to prove a case in criminal court, charges may be filed against the abuser. Evidence may include:

- Your statements/testimony
- Statements/testimony of witnesses (including children)
- Pictures of injuries
- Medical records

The District Attorney will review law enforcement reports after an incident and decide whether or not to file charges in a case. It is the prosecutor’s decision whether to file and what charges should be filed. You may always make your opinion known about how the case should be handled and the prosecutor will consider your wishes when making a charging decision. It is not your responsibility, however, to press charges and the prosecutor may or may not do exactly what you want in the case.

If the prosecutor does decide that action must be taken, the charge may be criminal or non-criminal. If a criminal charge is filed, it is **possible** that the abuser may be sentenced to some period of jail or prison time. It is also possible that the abuser may be ordered to some period of probation that may include conditions such as counseling and avoiding alcohol. The prosecutor or victim/witness coordinator may provide you with more information about possible sentencing options. Additionally, you will have the opportunity to let the prosecutor and the sentencing judge know your thoughts about the impact of the crime if you would like.

If a non-criminal charge is filed, the sentence will consist of a forfeiture of

money. This is **not** a criminal conviction and is usually filed in less serious cases or cases where the evidence may not be strong enough to prove a criminal charge.

If charges are filed, you may receive a subpoena from the prosecutor to appear as a witness at a court hearing or trial. Keep in mind that your **only** job as a witness is to tell the truth. Your cooperation as a witness will make the case proceed easier. The victim/witness coordinator or victim advocate can help you prepare for your experience in court.

If the abuser has been arrested, they may sometimes “bond out” immediately, (either with cash or a signature), or they may remain in custody until court. You may be asked if you want an initial no contact order that will last 72 hours. This will give you time to decide if you want to pursue a more long-term restraining order.

The offender will make an initial appearance in court, either from jail or as the result of a summons. The judge will be sure that the offender knows and understands the charge and has the opportunity to make a decision about whether or not to be represented by an attorney. The prosecutor will make a recommendation about bond and the defense attorney will have an opportunity to respond.

The recommendation may include the posting of cash or a signature and will usually have some conditions, (i.e. no contact with the victim, no alcohol, curfew, etc.) The court will order bond and may include the recommended conditions, such as no contact with the victim for safety purposes, **whether or not you want that.**

If the court does order the offender not to have contact with you, that order needs to be followed. Keep in mind that the judge has to consider not only your wishes but also your safety and the safety of law enforcement and other community members. No contact means in person, in writing, by phone, by electronic means, and through a third party. The offender will **not** be allowed

to reside with you while the no contact order is pending.

**Only** the court can change the no contact condition on the bond. If you want the no contact order dropped, you may schedule a meeting with the victim advocate and receive a certificate that you may have filed with the court. This shows the court that you have received information about options that may be available to you and that you do want the condition dropped. Keep in mind that the court still may or may not order the no contact as a condition of bond.

If the offender or the offender's friends and family contact you to try and get you to drop the charges or the bond conditions, you should report the incident to law enforcement and/or the District Attorney's office as soon as possible.

Carefully consider the risks and benefits of re-establishing contact with the abuser. Keep in mind that changes made as a result of criminal charges may not be permanent. For example, the abuser may quit drinking and start counseling but not have the incentive to follow through once the situation has calmed down. The criminal process can take quite a bit of time and is stressful for all who are involved. The abuser may be quite sorry at the beginning of the case but become frustrated and angry again as the case progresses.

Do not rely on the abuser, family or friends for information about the pending case. The District Attorney's office victim/witness coordinator will answer your questions about the case and provide you with information directly from the prosecutor. If you are asked by anyone (including the defense attorney) for information or to discuss the case, you may answer, you may choose not to discuss the case or you may refer the individual to the District Attorney's office. Keep in mind that when you do choose to discuss the case, it is important to remember that others may also receive a subpoena to testify in the case and they may be asked to testify about information they received from you.

**IT IS COMMON FOR OFFENDERS TO TRY TO PERSUADE VICTIMS TO “DROP CHARGES” USING PROMISES, THREATS AND/OR GUILT. YOU CAN HONESTLY SAY THAT THE DECISION IS OUT OF YOUR HANDS AND THE PROSECUTOR HAS MADE HIS/HER DECISION. REMEMBER THAT THE ABUSIVE BEHAVIOR RESULTED IN CHARGES AGAINST THE OFFENDER. YOUR SAFETY IS THE MOST IMPORTANT THING!**

Remember, anyone who is charged with a crime has the right to have the case proven at trial. At some point, the prosecutor and defense attorney will talk about resolving the case without the need of trial. Again, the prosecutor will take your thoughts into consideration but will proceed with the case as he/she sees fit. If there is an agreement to resolve the case without trial, a plea hearing will likely be scheduled. You will have the opportunity to share your thoughts with the court if you would like. Once again, the judge will consider your thoughts but the sentence may or may not reflect your wishes.

The sentence may include jail/prison time, probation with specific conditions and/or a fine. You should speak with the victim/witness coordinator about when sentencing is likely to be conducted and what sentence is likely to be recommended.

Keep in mind that the criminal process can be very complex and the District Attorney’s office is available to provide you with information and help answer your questions. The prosecutor who is handling your case is also handling many others and may not be readily available to speak with you when you have questions. The victim/witness coordinator is usually easier to reach and should be able to answer most, if not all of your questions.

## **X. HELP FOR THE ABUSER**

The abuser may offer to seek help or it may be advised or required by someone else. The earlier an abusive person receives help in changing the

behaviors, the better for everyone. People don't become abusive overnight and it takes time to learn to change their hurtful behaviors. They may also have other problems to deal with including alcohol/drug abuse, self-esteem and even their own victimization. Remember, as much as you may care about them, you can't change them; they have the responsibility to address their own problems.

Keep in mind:

- It will take some time for the abuser to begin to make changes that will last.
- You may have your own needs to address as a result of withstanding the abuse.
- Children may need to speak with a trained professional in order to address the problems they experience as a result of experiencing and/or witnessing abuse.
- Drug/alcohol abuse counseling does **not** automatically include help for abusers. While the problems are often seen in the same person, you should remember that they are separate issues.
- Couples counseling can only work in a safe environment and works best when individual issues have been addressed.
- Counseling may be ordered as part of a court order in criminal or family court but it is still up to the individual to do the hard work needed for positive change.

VIOLENCE IS NOT AN ACCEPTABLE WAY TO DEAL WITH ANGER, STRESS, FINANCIAL OR RELATIONSHIP PROBLEMS. VIOLENCE IS LEARNED BEHAVIOR, WHICH MAY BE UNLEARNED AND REPLACED WITH ALTERNATIVES THAT ARE CONSTRUCTIVE AND NOT HURTFUL

**Make time to complete a violence log--a template of important information to document is listed below. Complete this log as soon as possible after a violent incident. Keep the log in a safe place – as it may become evidence.**

## **XI. VIOLENCE LOG**

Directions for keeping a violence log. Your log should include the following information:

Date and Time of incident:

Where the incident happened:

Who hurt you or your child(ren) or damaged your property:

Name:

Address:

Phone:

Describe what happened to you/your child(ren) or your property and how it happened:

Did you or your child(ren) receive any injuries? Describe them:

Did you or your child(ren) receive medical care?

If so:

When:

Where:

Name of physician/provider:

Diagnosis:

Was there any property damage or expense? Provide details:

Were there photographs taken of injuries/damage?  Yes  No

If yes, who has the photographs?

Was law enforcement notified?  Yes  No

If yes, which agency?

Witnesses to this event. There may be more than one witness.:

Name:

Address

Phone:

Name:

Address

Phone:

Name:

Address

Phone:

## **XII. INFORMATIVE READINGS ON DOMESTIC ABUSE**

Bancroft, Lundy. *Should I Stay or Should I Go?* (Berkley Trade, 2011.)

Feerick, M. and Silverman G. *Children Exposed to Violence*. (Brookes Publishing, 2006).

Groves, Betsy McAlister. *Children who see too much: lessons from the child witness to violence project*. (Boston: Beacon Press, 2002.)

Hattery, Angela. *Intimate Partner Violence*. (Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2008.)

Waldal, Elin Stebbins. *Tornado Warning: A Memoir of Teen Dating Violence and Its Effect On A Woman's Life*. (Sound Beach Publishing, 2011.)

### **XIII. HELPFUL RESOURCES FOR VICTIMS**

#### **Barron County:**

**Barron County Domestic Abuse Victim Advocate** -Barron County

Department of Health & Human Services

335 E. Monroe Ave., Barron WI 54812

Phone: 715- 537-6334

Crisis Line: 888-552-6642

**Victim/Witness Coordinator** - Barron County District Attorney's Office

715-537-6220

#### **End Domestic Abuse Barron County (Formerly Barron County Domestic Abuse Project)**

P.O. Box 605

Rice Lake, WI 54868

[www.edabc.org](http://www.edabc.org)

endabuse@edabc.org

#### **Douglas County:**

Center Against Sexual and Domestic Abuse in Superior, WI

Crisis Line: 800-649-2921

#### **Dunn County:**

The Bridge to Hope in Menomonie, WI

Crisis Line: 800-924-9918

#### **Eau Claire County:**

Bolton Refuge House in Eau Claire, WI

Crisis line: 800-252-4357

#### **Polk County:**

Community Referral Agency (C.R.A.) in Milltown, WI

Crisis line: 800-261-7233

**Rusk, Washburn, and Price County:**

Time-out Family Abuse Shelter in Ladysmith, WI

Crisis line : 800-924-0556

**Sawyer County**

Oakwood Haven in Hayward, WI

Crisis Line 877-552-7474

**Statewide Resource Contact:**

End Domestic Abuse Wisconsin

[www.endabusewi.org](http://www.endabusewi.org) or 608-255-0539

**National Resource Contact:**

**National Domestic Violence Hotline 800-799-7233**

[www.thehotline.org](http://www.thehotline.org)

**Barron County Hospitals:**

Mayo Clinic Health System (Hospital and Clinic)

1222 E Woodland Avenue, Barron

715-537-3186

Cumberland Hospital

1110 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Cumberland

715-822-2741

Lakeview Medical Center

1700 W. Stout Street, Rice Lake

715-234-1515

**In case of emergencies, dial 911!!!**

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (July 2000). *Extent, Nature, and Consequences of Intimate Partner Violence: Findings From the National Violence Against Women Survey*. Washington, DC. Tjaden, P., & Thoennes, N.

<sup>2</sup> Bureau of Justice Statistics, Intimate Partner Violence in the U.S. 1993-2004, 2006.

<sup>3</sup> Breiding, M.J., Chen J., & Black, M.C. (2014). Intimate Partner Violence in the United States — 2010. Atlanta, GA: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

<sup>4</sup> McDonold, R et al. (2006). “Estimating the Number of American Children Living in Partner Violent Families.” *Journal of Family Psychology*,30(1),137-142.

<sup>5</sup> 10 Felitti, V.J., Anda, R.F., Nordenberg, D., Williamson, D.F, Spitz, A.M., Edwards, V., Koss, M.P. & Marks, J.S. (1998) “Relationship of Childhood Abuse and Household Dysfunction to Many of the Leading Causes of Death in Adults: The Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study” *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 14(4).

<sup>6</sup> Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice and Statistics, “Intimate Partner Violence in the United States, 1993-2004.” December 2006.

<sup>7</sup> Wolfe, D.A., Wekerle, C., Reitzel, D. and Gough, R. 1995. “Strategies to Address Violence in the Lives of High Risk Youth.” In *Ending the Cycle of Violence: Community Responses to Children of Battered Women*, edited by E. Peled, P.G. Jaffe and J.L Edleson. New York, NY: Sage Publications.

<sup>8</sup> Whitfield, C.L., Anda, R.F., Dube, S.R., & Felitti, V.J. (2003). “Violent childhood experiences and the risk of intimate partner violence in adults.” *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 18, 166-185.