

DEALING WITH ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIPS



A workshop
sponsored by



TRiO
STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIPS

- ❧ One in three women will experience at least one physical assault by a partner.
- ❧ The most prevalent age range of women that suffer violence from a partner is 19-29.
- ❧ Mark Evans, Ph. D., reported that in Oregon, 90% of domestic violence victims are white, 47% have at least some college education, and 43% have household incomes of at least \$35,000.

(M. Evans)

ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIPS

- ❧ Domestic violence is not limited to one particular race, one education level, or one income level. Depending on the section of our country, the racial majority in that section, the level of college attainment of most people in that section, and the income level of most people in that section correlate with the majority of people who suffer domestic violence.

ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIPS

- ❧ Some relationships are mutually abusive.
- ❧ Most abusive relationships have an imbalance of power. In other words, one is the aggressor and the other is the submitter.
- ❧ Abuse can take different forms:
 - *Physical attacks (hitting, kicking, slapping, choking, biting, throwing things, rape (whether married or not))
 - *Verbal attacks (yelling, sarcasm)
 - *Emotional attacks (put downs, coercing) (M. Evans)
 - *Financial control and coercion (www.loveisrespect.org)

SIGNS OF ABUSE



- ❧ Constant put downs or statements that show a lack of appreciation for one's worth or ability.
- ❧ Controlling behavior; for example, telling one's partner what will be done instead of discussing it and deciding together.
- ❧ Intense jealousy of friends, family, or other outside social contact, and trying to isolate one's partner.
- ❧ Yelling, shouting, and intimidation.

(M. Evans)

SIGNS OF ABUSE



- ❧ Interrogating one's partner about time spent apart from the relationship; for example, wanting to know exact details of what happened, who the partner was with, and where he/she went.
- ❧ Feeling threatened and intensifying the abuse when one's partner begins to move toward autonomy or independence; for example, getting a better job, going back to school, making new friends, or seeking counseling.
- ❧ Demanding or coercing sex when one's partner is not interested, AKA rape. This applies even if the partners are married.

(M. Evans)

SIGNS OF ABUSE



- ❧ Borrowing money without repaying it or taking things without asking and not returning them.
- ❧ Destroying the property of one's partner; for example, sentimental items, keying his/her car.
- ❧ Physical abuse or the threat of physical harm.

Individuals who abuse others are sometimes addicted to substances like alcohol, illegal drugs, or prescription medications. They may also have other addictive behaviors.

(M. Evans)

FINANCIAL ABUSE



- ❧ Can be very subtle like telling you what you can and cannot buy or requiring you to share control of your bank accounts. Other examples include:
- ❧ Giving you an allowance and closely watching what you buy.
- ❧ Placing your paycheck in his/her account and denying you access to it.
- ❧ Keeping you from seeing shared bank accounts or records.
- ❧ Forbidding you to work or limiting the hours you do.

(www.loveisrespect.org)

FINANCIAL ABUSE



- ❧ Preventing you from going to work by taking your car or keys.
- ❧ Getting you fired by harassing you, your employer, or coworkers on the job.
- ❧ Hiding or stealing your student financial aid check or outside financial support.
- ❧ Using your social security number to obtain credit without your permission.
- ❧ Using your child's social security number to claim an income tax refund without your permission.

FINANCIAL ABUSE



- ❧ Maxing out your credit cards without your permission.
- ❧ Refusing to give you money, food, rent, medicine, or clothing.
- ❧ Causing visible bruises and scars so that you are too embarrassed to go to work.
- ❧ Using funds from your children's tuition or a joint savings account without your knowledge.
- ❧ Spending money on him/herself but not allowing you to do the same.

For more information, visit www.loveisrespect.org

WHY DO PEOPLE STAY IN ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIPS?



- ❧ Fear of what will happen if he/she leaves, especially if he/she has been threatened by his/her partner, family, or friends.
- ❧ Believing abuse is normal because of having grown up in that kind of environment.
- ❧ Embarrassment and fear of being judged for getting involved with an abusive partner.
- ❧ Low self-esteem (taking the blame for his/her partner abusing him/her).
- ❧ Love (believing and hoping that his/her partner will change).

WHY DO PEOPLE STAY IN ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIPS?



- ❧ Social/Peer Pressure: If the abuser is popular, it can be hard for a person to tell his/her friends, for fear that no one will believe him/her or that everyone will take the abuser's side.
- ❧ Cultural/Religious Reasons: examples may include a young man not wanting to admit to being abused or fear of bringing shame on the family.
- ❧ Pregnancy/Parenting: a person may feel pressured to raise his/her children in a home with two parents, despite the abuse. The abusive partner may threaten to take or harm the children if the abused partner leaves.

For more information, visit www.loveisrespect.org

FACTS ABOUT THE ABUSER



- ❧ Interestingly, he/she often depends on his/her partner for his/her own sense of self-esteem.
- ❧ Sometimes, he/she expects his/her partner to do things that he/she should do for him/herself; for example, putting on his/her shoes, getting him/her a drink.
- ❧ He/she often feels powerless in the larger world, so the relationship may be the only place where he/she feels a sense of power or control.

(M. Evans)

FACTS ABOUT THE ABUSER



- ✧ In trying to maintain a sense of control, power, and self-esteem, an abusive person will sometimes tear down his/her partner's sense of self-worth and abilities.
- ✧ Often, because of his/her own feelings of low self-worth and fears of abandonment, an abuser will do things to try to keep his/her partner in a dependent, fearful, and diminished state so his/her partner will not believe that he/she can leave him/her.

(M. Evans)

STEPS FOR CHANGE FOR ABUSERS



- ❧ Taking a deep breath, focusing on your body, and walking away from your partner can help you to cool down when you are feeling angry.
- ❧ Fear and hurt usually lie beneath the anger. Anger is often used to mask these more vulnerable feelings.

(M. Evans)

STEPS FOR CHANGE FOR ABUSERS



- ❧ Realize that you may drive your partner away through angry outbursts instead of gaining a sense of control.
- ❧ You might try using intense physical activity, like exercise or sports, to redirect your anger so that you won't hurt others.
- ❧ Writing down your thoughts and feelings in a journal when you become angry may help to work out the anger.

(M. Evans)

STEPS FOR CHANGE FOR ABUSERS



- ❧ When you feel hurt by something your partner says or does, don't assume that he/she meant to hurt you. Your feelings may be a reflection of your own insecurities.
- ❧ Seek out help from friends and others to help you change.
- ❧ Working with a counselor can help you learn to express your feelings so that you don't hurt or belittle your partner.
- ❧ Go to an anger management workshop or join an anger management group.

(M. Evans)

ENABLING ABUSIVE BEHAVIOR



- ❧ Partners of abusive people often “enable” the behavior. Examples include:
- ❧ Taking care of the abusive partner, making excuses for him/her, or just going along with the pattern of abuse.
- ❧ Pretending that a problem does not exist or believing that things will just automatically get better without help.

(M. Evans)

ENABLING ABUSIVE BEHAVIOR



✧ Putting up a front to outsiders that all is well when it clearly is not. Covering up for the abusive partner when he/she makes messes and outbursts; for example, intervening for him/her at work; apologizing for starting the fight; fixing broken doors, windows, or other things; putting on make-up to cover up bruises that he/she inflicted.

(M. Evans)

ENABLING ABUSIVE BEHAVIOR



- ❧ “Walking on egg shells” to try to avoid getting hurt and to try to keep the peace.
- ❧ Doing everyday tasks for the abuser that most adults should do for themselves.
- ❧ Enabling behavior can be a sign of poor self-esteem. Taking care of one’s partner physically or emotionally can make one feel needed or loved.

(M. Evans)

ENABLING ABUSIVE BEHAVIOR



- ❧ Subconsciously, the enabler may feel that unless he/she can serve and provide for others, no one could ever love and accept him/her for who he/she is.
- ❧ This is how abusers can often convince their partners that “no one else would want them.”
- ❧ Understanding one’s relationship patterns can help break the cycle of being trapped in an unhealthy, unsupportive and mutually dependent relationship.

(M. Evans)

POSITIVE WAYS TO COPE WITH AN ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIP



- ❧ Avoid isolating from other relationships.
- ❧ Talk to others if you believe your partner is abusive. Other people can give you their view.
- ❧ Check on resources that can help people who are in abusive relationships. Your local CASA organization is a good contact.
- ❧ Find your “safe place” to go to if your partner becomes violent.

(M. Evans)

POSITIVE WAYS TO COPE WITH AN ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIP



- ❧ Learn about healthy and unhealthy relationships through self-help books.
- ❧ Talk to a professional counselor or a trusted friend to identify what may be causing you to stay in an abusive relationship.
- ❧ Start to identify people in your life that could serve as a support system for you –to prevent your being alone should you choose to leave your abusive partner.

(M. Evans)

POSITIVE WAYS TO COPE WITH AN ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIP



☞ Choose not to dwell on past failures. Instead, focus on the present and on planning a brighter future for yourself. (M. Evans)

Sources for this workshop:

Article, “Abusive Relationships,” by Mark Evans, Ph.D., University of Oregon Counseling Center.

Internet website: www.loveisrespect.org

DEALING WITH ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIPS



We hope that you have gained some valuable information from this workshop. Please print the evaluation that is located on the TRiO website, fill it out, and return it to Patricia Nicholas, Rm. 114, Bldg. B; Kayla Owens, Rm. 110, Bldg. B; or Tawanie Shanks in the TRiO Lab.