

# STRATEGIES for MINDFUL LIVING

## FOR HOMEWOOD CITY SCHOOL SYSTEM EMPLOYEES

*Courtesy of UAB Employee Assistance & Counseling Center*

October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month

# DOMESTIC VIOLENCE MYTHS

### **MYTH #1: IT ISN'T THAT COMMON.**

**REALITY:** On average, nearly 20 people per minute are physically abused by an intimate partner in the United States. During one year, this equates to more than 10 million women and men.

### **MYTH #2: IF IT WAS THAT BAD, SHE'D LEAVE.**

**REALITY:** Women stay in abusive relationships for many different reasons, and it can be very difficult for a woman to leave an abusive partner – even if she wants to. Like any other relationship, one that ends in abuse began with falling in love and being in love. Abuse rarely starts at the beginning of a relationship, but when it is established and often harder to leave. A woman may still be in love with her partner and believe him when he says he is sorry and it won't happen again; she may be frightened for her life or for the safety of her children if she leaves; she may have nowhere to go; she may have no financial independence. Abusers often isolate their partners from family and friends in order to control them, making it even more difficult for an abused woman to exit the relationship.

Women and men in abusive relationships need support and understanding — not judgment.



### **MYTH #3: DOMESTIC ABUSE ALWAYS INVOLVES PHYSICAL VIOLENCE.**

**REALITY:** Domestic abuse does not always include physical violence. Domestic abuse is any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening, degrading and violent behavior, including sexual violence, by a partner or ex-partner. These incidents can include coercive control; psychological and/or emotional abuse; physical abuse; sexual abuse; financial abuse; harassment; stalking; and/or online or digital abuse.

### **MYTH #4: ALCOHOL AND DRUGS MAKE ABUSERS MORE VIOLENT.**

**REALITY:** Alcohol and drugs can make existing abuse worse, or be a catalyst for an attack, but they do not cause domestic abuse. Many people use alcohol or drugs and do not abuse their partner, so it should never be used to excuse violent or controlling behavior. The perpetrator alone is responsible for his actions.



**MYTH #5: THE PARENTS' RELATIONSHIP DOESN'T HAVE TO AFFECT THE CHILDREN.**

REALITY: An estimated 90% of children whose mothers are abused witness the abuse. The effects are traumatic and long-lasting. When a child witnesses domestic abuse, this is child abuse. Between 40% and 70% of these children are also direct victims of the abuse which is happening at home.

**MYTH #6: WOMEN ARE MORE LIKELY TO BE ATTACKED BY STRANGERS THAN BY THOSE WHO CLAIM TO LOVE THEM.**

REALITY: Women are far more likely to be assaulted, raped and murdered by men known to them than by strangers. According to Rape Crisis, only around 10% of rapes are committed by men unknown to the victim. Women are far likelier to be attacked by a man they know and trust.

**REALITY: HELP IS AVAILABLE IF YOU OR SOMEONE YOU KNOW IS EXPERIENCING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE.**

**HELP IS AVAILABLE**

- **Alabama DV Hotline:** 1-800-650-6522
- **Birmingham Rape Response:** 205-323-7273
- **Birmingham Crisis Center:** 205-323-7777

Visit [uab.edu/codeblaze](http://uab.edu/codeblaze) for an extensive list of domestic violence resources.

— Adapted from [womensaid.com](http://womensaid.com)