



NEW MEXICO MARRIAGES FIRST PROJECT PRESENTS:

MARRIAGE LIFE LINE!

Getting Help When Relationships Go Wrong

(by Leonie Oliva)

Welcome to the Fall edition of the Marriage Lifeline! As readers of our last edition will know, the Marriage Lifeline now also includes the Youth Lifeline on pages 4 and 5. We hope you will pass this edition on to any teens in your life once you have read it.

In this issue we are addressing the difficult and often hidden issue of domestic violence within relationships. This is a subject that most people do not want to talk about but it is a very real issue for many families - and there are no rules for the "type" of family it affects: Affluent, low income, well educated, less educated, any ethnic group, any religion, any age, and any stage of the relationship. Although there is a gender distinction, in that the majority of victims are women, there are also male victims. Caught in the crossfire are any children living in the household who may be subject to physical injury, trauma and devastating psychological impacts. Sometimes even pets become the silent victims of one partner wishing to inflict pain and hurt on the other by abusing the pet.

According to the U.S. Department of Justice, between 1998 and 2002:

- Of the almost 3.5 million violent crimes committed against family members, 49% of these were crimes against spouses.
- 84% of spouse abuse victims were females, and 86% of victims of dating partner abuse were female.

Other statistics indicate that one in four women (25%) has experienced domestic violence in her lifetime. It is important to emphasize that "domestic violence" does not just refer to "battering" or physical violence. **Domestic violence is a pattern of abusive or coercive behavior used to control an**

intimate partner, whether:

- Physical;
- Sexual abuse/violence;
- Psychological/emotional abuse; or
- Verbal abuse.

It is an act of power and control used to frighten or hurt the other individual.

We hope that our readers are not living with domestic violence, but the probability is that some will be, and others will know of someone who is a victim. The aim of this issue is to provide an awareness of the dynamics of domestic violence, the symptoms of abusive relationships and the resources that are available to assist victims. If you have a friend, neighbor or colleague who is in an abusive relationship, or you suspect they may be, there are some things that you can do to help. You can discretely make them aware of the resources available to assist them in the local area (see page 6). You can let them know that you are there to support them in their decisions regarding how to deal with the situation. You can make them aware of the benefits of having a "safety plan" - a plan for keeping themselves safe at home and especially if they decide to leave. The most dangerous time in an abusive relationship is when the abused person decides to leave. A local crisis center can help them prepare a safety plan, or visit:

www.domesticviolence.org/personalized-safety-plan/
Be informed and be safe!

6 things to say to a battered person:

- I am afraid for your safety.
- I am afraid for the safety of your children.
- It will only get worse.
- I am here for you.
- You don't deserve to be abused.
- It is not your fault.

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Featured Upcoming Event:
PUMP UP YOUR PASSION

(for couples!)

Mondays in November
2, 9, 16 & 23, 2009, 7-9pm

“But I Thought He Loved Me” And Other Excuses For Violence

(by Candie Tafoya, NMMFP Marriage Mentor)

Domestic violence. I looked up the word domestic to add to the definition of what one may feel when going through domestic violence. There are several meanings for this word. One definition is “enjoying home or family life” but better yet is “intended for use at home”. The latter clearly giving way to accurate thoughts. Yes, here is the winner. **“Violence intended for use at home”**.

Participating in the NM Marriages First Project as marriage mentors has allowed Patrick and I to be very transparent of our previous marriage experiences with the couples we work with. Having to go through the domestic violence courses gave me new thoughts and I came to the conclusion that there was something missing. I knew what it was and volunteered to add that to the DV instruction. To me what was missing was a testimony from someone who had lived that life and not only survived but overcame many of the lies that affected that life.

As you begin to read this, please look around you. Look to your neighbor and look to your colleagues. You could be looking at someone who has the face of domestic violence. Living in a violent home means that you learn to be a great magician. Everything is an illusion and the real act is hidden with mirrors. You become a master of hiding bruises, anger, hurt, pain, frustration, lack of confidence, fear, and on and on and on.

You work hard, not just at being pleasing and avoiding conflict, but also at making sure the world does not see how inept you are at having a perfect life and a perfect marriage. I lived that lie. I lived that life. I was told when things went wrong it was always my fault and therefore my responsibility to make sure it would not happen again. I was told that no one could know. Not family, not friends, not co-workers.....no one. That makes it real hard to have friends for a long time. It makes it real hard to have family get together. It makes it real hard to go to work with a concussion and black eye. It makes it real hard to explain why your finger and hand are in a cast when the hospital is asking you if you want shelter from the man that brought you in for the cast.

We all ask why do you stay with a man or woman that does nothing but torture you and cause you physical and mental pain. Here is my answer...

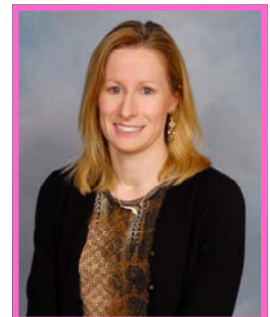
I didn't think I deserved his anger or his brutality.

Sometimes I reasoned that he knew nothing else. Other times, I knew he was ill, mentally. But, sometimes, I felt sorry for him. My love had changed from passion and desire to sorrow and pity. Like looking at an abandoned kitten or puppy; I believed I was all he had left to stand up for him or beside him. I was living another lie. I believed that I had the strength to change him. I believed that I did not matter and that if I could bear his pain he would appreciate me more and love me the way I needed. Sometimes I believed that I was stronger than him and could live this out for him and the children. What I did not see until much later were the lies that had trapped me, the damage done to me and ultimately, the damage done to our children and our marriage. What I did not do was ask him to stop and tell him that he needed to know that he had to show *me* he was worthy to be my husband.

Oh, he was sorry and sometimes that gave me power and importance when it came to him making it up to me. In the end, it took a great deal to make him respect me. It happened when I respected myself enough to confront him that he had to stop.

I am talking about this because there are obvious cases of abuse that can be spotted a mile away. Heritage, upbringing, modeling; you know the rest. It is easy to get involved in these cases and sometimes it is taken out of their hands to separate and get treatment. But there are those that are taking great care to hide the abuse. These are the lives that are in the most jeopardy because if they are not helped, they will continue a different path. *One of indifference. One of neglect. One of despair.*

I no longer live that life and no longer live those lies. I get involved and I tell others. It is no longer a dirty little secret. I have the scars, but now I have a love that breaks the lies. I agreed to bring this up to stop, get involved and let everyone know. It is not acceptable to abuse, demean, hurt or injure anyone. **Not your spouse, your children, your elders, your friends, your neighbor. No one.** I hope you feel the same.



**Leonie Oliva,
Project and Events
Coordinator**

New Mexico Marriages First

Project

(NMMFP)

exists to:

Provide culturally appropriate relationship education, relationship enrichment events, and programs that explore positive relationship models for married couples, engaged couples, couples interested in marriage and teenagers thus strengthening marriage and reducing the incidence of divorce.

*The
NMMFP
Motto:
"Relationship
Education
Rocks!"*

The Domestic Violence Wheel Of Power And Control

(by Rebecca Holland)

Domestic violence has reached epidemic levels in the United States. As our understanding of family dynamics as well as the psychology of the victims and perpetrators have increased, we have come to understand that domestic violence can take many forms. We learn more about these forms of abuse from the **domestic violence power and control wheel**.

Traditionally, violence has always been interpreted as physical and the signs of persistent physical violence have been clear and unmistakable. However, we must also learn to discern the signs of other forms that are no less damaging. Remember that domestic violence affects children as well as the partner of the abuser.

Domestic Violence Wheel - Forms of Physical Abuse

We start off with physical abuse that itself takes many forms. Observation of the lives of battered persons has taught us that there is a cycle of violence that takes place in three stages. The first stage is the build up of tension in the relationship. The second stage consists of the actual act of violence and the third stage is characterized by an absence of violence. In fact, it is this third stage that is the most dangerous as it leads the victim to believe that a "change" has come over the perpetrator and that it's fair to give her/him another chance. Over time however, the cycle becomes shorter and the violent stage becomes more intense and serious.

Other forms of Domestic Abuse

A quick glance at the Domestic Violence wheel shows us the various forms that domestic violence can take.



Dominance — Abusive individuals need to feel in charge of the relationship. They will make decisions for you and the family, tell you what to do, and expect you to obey without question. Your abuser may treat you like a servant, child, or even as a possession.

Humiliation — An abuser will do everything he/she can to make you feel bad about yourself, or defective in some way. Insults, name-calling, shaming, and public put-downs are all weapons of abuse designed to erode your self-esteem and make you feel powerless.

Isolation — In order to increase your dependence, an abusive partner will cut you off from the outside world. He/she may keep you from seeing family or friends, or even prevent you from going to work or school. You may have to ask permission to do anything, go anywhere, or see anyone.

Threats — Abusers commonly use threats to keep their victims from leaving or to scare them into dropping charges. Your abuser may threaten to hurt or kill you, your children, other family members, or even pets. He/she may also threaten to commit suicide, file false charges against you, or report you to child services.

Intimidation — Your abuser may use a variety of intimidation tactics designed to scare you into submission. Such tactics include making threatening looks, smashing things, destroying property, hurting your pets, or putting weapons on display. The clear message is that if you don't obey, there will be violent consequences.

Denial and blame — Abusers are very good at making excuses for the inexcusable. They will blame their abusive and violent behavior on a bad childhood, a bad day, and even on the victims of their abuse. Somehow, the violence and abuse will be your fault.

It's not easy to fight domestic abuse alone. Victims of domestic violence desperately need outside help in order to break the cycle of violence and salvage their dignity. If you need assistance and don't know where to turn, contact the NMMFP and we will provide you with resource referrals. Don't face another day of violence and pain; reach out for some help.

THE YOUTH LIFELINE

(by Ashley Salazar)



You could be in an abusive relationship....

1. When your boyfriend or girlfriend puts you down in front of other people or calls you names.
2. When your boyfriend or girlfriend acts extremely jealous when you talk to people of the opposite sex.
3. When you constantly apologize for and make excuses for your boyfriend or girlfriend's behavior.
4. If you have seen your boyfriend or girlfriend lose his/her temper and even break or hit things when he/she is mad.
5. When you are constantly worried about upsetting him/her or making him/her mad.
6. When your boyfriend or girlfriend is constantly checking up on you, calling, texting, IMing, facebooking, or myspacing demanding to know where you are.



It isn't just one thing...

Dating abuse can be.....

- **Physical:** *Pinching, shoving, grabbing, slapping, intimidation, use of weapons, etc.*
- **Verbal/Emotional:** *Putdowns, insults, possessiveness, overdependence, threats, accusations, mood swings, attempts to isolate you, humiliation, etc.*
- **Sexual:** *Unwanted touching, forced sexual activity, pressure to have sex etc.*



**Ashley Salazar,
Youth Educator**

THE YOUTH LIFELINE

(by Ashley Salazar)

STATS

1. 80% of teens regard verbal abuse as a "serious issue" in their age group
2. Nearly 80% of teens girls who are abused continue to date their partner
3. About 1 in 11 teens report being involved in a physically abusive relationship
4. About 1 in 4 girls report verbal, physical, emotional, or sexual abuse each year
5. 1 in 3 teens say they know someone who has been hit, choked, slapped or otherwise physically hurt by their partner
6. 1 in 5 teens abused say their partner threatens to hurt them if they break up with them
7. Teen abuse often takes place in the home of one of the teens



Places to go for help

1.800.SAFE(7233)

(National Domestic Violence Hotline)

505. 896.4869

(Haven House)

505.247.4219

(Albuquerque Abused Women's Shelter)

For More Information go to:

Loveisnotabuse.com

Chooserespect.org

NMMFP DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PROTOCOL

Scope and Purpose of Protocol

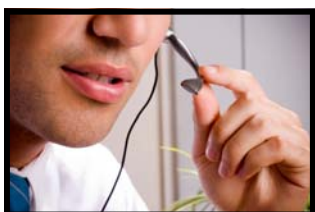
The NMMFP domestic violence protocol was developed to ensure that we address domestic violence in a comprehensive and appropriate manner. NMMFP is committed to identifying when participation in NMMFP services might be unsafe or otherwise inappropriate for couples experiencing domestic violence through the consistent use of screening and assessment approaches outlined in the protocol. NMMFP is also committed to providing training to ensure that the staff is fully informed about the domestic violence issues that might arise within the context of relationship and marriage education activities and prepared to respond appropriately. We will also rely on the identified domestic violence experts within the community to provide services to victims and perpetrators of domestic violence and provide ongoing assistance to staff as requested.

Guiding Principles

- The NMMFP believes that all people are entitled to the right to live free from violence or threat of violence from current or former partners. To end the cycle of domestic violence, services must be provided to victims and perpetrators, with victim safety the key priority.
- The NMMFP understands that disclosing domestic violence can be very difficult for many victims, and that a safe environment and trust are important to that process. Every effort will be made to assure couples that the information they share with us about domestic violence will remain confidential. Additionally, to be effective, screening and assessment for domestic violence will be conducted consistently and diligently by staff who have been well trained.
- Cultural competency is critical to understanding families and their relationships and providing services and supports that are meaningful and relevant. The NMMFP will respect the unique cultural identities, experiences, and circumstances of individuals and couples.
- If a person discloses that domestic violence is going on in his/her relationship, the NMMFP will do everything possible to get assistance for the person(s) needing help. This can range from the initial stages of referrals to counseling services and connecting participants with anger management classes or support groups all the way to assistance in utilizing domestic violence shelters.



**Mike Gibson,
Office & Public Relations
Manager**



**Contact NMMFP if
you would like to
schedule a marriage
event in your
community!!**

1207 Golf Course Road, Ste. E
Rio Rancho, New Mexico 87124
Phone: (505) 891-1846
Cell: (505) 401-5734 or 400-9869
Email:
mholland@themarriagelifeline.com
rholland@themarriagelifeline.com

Do You Have Someone To Lean On?

(By Mike Gibson)

When I joined the New Mexico State Police in 1980, domestic violence calls were abundant. So much so, officers were specifically trained on how to handle the problematic calls, particularly in the area of officer safety. Unfortunately, in 1980 officers received very little instruction on how to provide resources to the victims. In addition, it was not uncommon to respond to the same household over and over to address the ongoing issue of domestic violence. When I retired in 2000, domestic violence problems had begun to receive the attention that was desperately needed. This included intensive training for officers who would respond to domestic violence calls including resource information for the victims. We at New Mexico Marriages First are very fortunate to have an ongoing partnership with the Rio Rancho Department of Public Safety and specifically, Sergeant Roberta Radosevich. She has often used her own personal time to arrange and provide domestic violence instruction for the entire NMMFP staff. She has taught about the complex issues of domestic violence ranging from initial indicators to victim resource referrals. One clear message that Sergeant Radosevich elaborates on during her domestic violence instruction is this: *“There is help available for victims of domestic violence - there is someone to lean on!”* Even though it may take many times before a victim finally reaches out for help, the message is the same; *Help is available!*

Remember this - everybody has the right to be safe in their own home.

If you are a victim of domestic violence or you know someone who is and you do not know where to turn, here are some useful phone numbers and web sites:

Albuquerque Abused Women’s Shelter 505-247-4219	New Mexico Victim’s Rights Project 505-292-2838
Haven House/Rio Rancho 505-896-4869	New Mexico State Police 505-841-9273
Resources Inc. 505-768-2104	Albuquerque Police Department 505-242-2677
Victim Assistance of Rio Rancho 505-891-5851	Rio Rancho Department of Public safety 505-891-7226
GTEAP Victim Assistance 505-892-2071	Corrales Police Department 505-898-758
National Domestic Violence Hotline 1-800-799-SAFE (7233)	Bernalillo Police Department 505-867-2304
www.ndvh.org	www.domesticviolence.org



New Mexico Marriages First would like to thank Forms Plus for their incredible support and donations to our program over the past 3 years.

The one page flyer in this issue was generously donated by Forms Plus.

Please see Forms Plus for all of your printing needs!

www.TheMarriageLifeLine.com



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(505-891-1846)

Unhealthy Relationship Danger Signs

(by Michael Holland)

A great relationship can be a source of support, fun and fulfillment. But, no one said it was going to be easy to have one! Relationship success takes time, effort and commitment. Sometimes however, unhealthy relationships can take a turn for the worse, and even become abusive and dangerous. It is important to be aware of the signs of unhealthy relationships and if they become abusive, take steps to protect yourself and others.

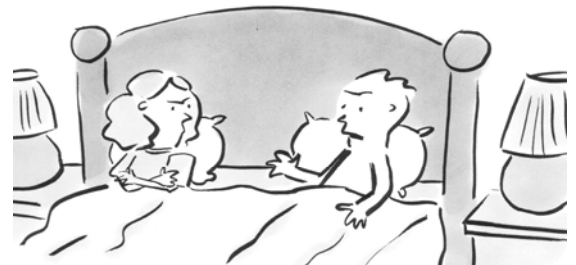
Identifying signs of an unhealthy relationship, and noticing them in your own relationship can help you decide if you need help. There is help available for you and your partner. If you identify any of these signs, we urge you to get help before your relationship deteriorates further. Here are some signs to watch out for:

- 1. The Aggressive Partner** - You are not responsible for your partner's happiness, moods or feelings. If your partner uses any aggressive methods to make you feel responsible for how he/she feels or behaves, you need to seek professional advice and support immediately. You need to get out of the situation right now if the aggression is physical.
- 2. The Bitter Partner** - They highlight your mistakes and mishaps all the time. They seem never to notice your gifts and talents or accomplishments. They manipulate through put downs and draining your emotional energy. They are never happy for you or what you are able to accomplish.
- 3. The Serial Woman-izer or Man-izer** - This partner doesn't know the meaning of the word "faithful." He/she feels guilty all the time, but makes you responsible for his/her suspicions, moods and stresses. He/she may even make you feel responsible for his/her "indiscretions." He/she may act very suspicious of you and interrogate you about your e-mails and cell phone use.
- 4. The Power Hungry Partner** - This can be

hard to identify - especially if he/she is passive-aggressive. Does he/she suddenly sulk when you want to spend time with your family or friends? Does he/she suddenly become sick, stuck in traffic, or have a 'crisis' just before an event that is important to you? Does he/she feel threatened by those who are important to you and continually need reassurances from you to keep him/her from feeling insecure and threatened?

- 5. Faulty Goods Partner** - He/she plays the eternal victim and has a long list of hurts. He/she never believes that you like or even love him/her. You will end up tired of constantly soothing his/her insecurities.
 - 6. I'm So Great Because Mom Says So Partner** - He/she thinks he/she can do no wrong. He/she is the innocent party and that is because Mom or Dad constantly told him/her that.
 - 7. The Helloooo I Do Exist** - This partner is often entirely focused on his/her self, his/her comfort, and his/her goals, forgetting that you exist. He/she still expects support and help from you, but you can forget about it if you need the same from him/her.
 - 8. The Eternal Child Partner** - He/she is still stuck in the 1960's. Accepting responsibility is not part of his/her character. He/she is more in need of a parent than a partner. He/she is often needy, possessive, and loves to be taken care of. You end up feeling drained, tired, and resentful because you give more than you get.
- If you recognize your relationship shows one or more of these danger signs, you should seek help right away. While these danger signs don't necessarily mean that your relationship is doomed to failure, the chances of it succeeding or even worse, becoming abusive indicate the need for getting professional help. Please see the other articles in this newsletter for the phone numbers of various agencies that can help you. You can also contact us at New Mexico Marriages First if you have questions or need more information.

DO YOU NEED TO LAUGH?



"Listen, I'm tired, you're tired. Would it kill us just this once to go to bed angry?"

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CHECK OUT OUR NEW WEBSITE!
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