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Domestic Violence Doesn't Take a Holiday

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For most, the holiday season is a wonderful time of year, filled with love, family and last minute shopping. Aside from the gift wrapping and holiday parties that need to be setup, the holiday season comes with other stressors that not everyone thinks about. Many people struggle with money during this time of year but it's increasingly difficult when victims of domestic violence are also victims of economic abuse. With that being said, victims may not be allowed to purchase any item, let alone have access to money to buy presents.

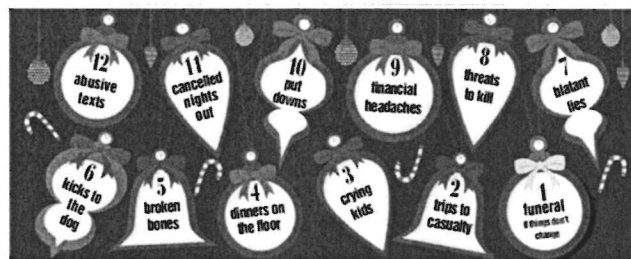
Domestic violence doesn't care that it's Christmas or any other holiday for that matter. Domestic violence doesn't take holidays off, and this makes the holiday season even more stressful for victims and for those who are at risk for domestic violence. In fact, domestic violence around the holiday season increases dramatically. According to experts, domestic violence can increase during the holidays for a number of reasons: the stress of the holidays, gift giving and close quarters with family members can all factor into a violent situation. With this being said, domestic violence is never the answer, there is no justifiable reason to partake in violence because of stressful situations.





Domestic violence includes many components that consist of isolation, physical abuse, mental abuse, and economical abuse to name a few. The holiday season can be extremely stressful for victims of domestic violence because maybe they are being isolated by their batterer and can't see their family, maybe they don't have access to money to buy gifts because of economic abuse, and maybe the shame of not being able to afford gifts makes the victim feel as though they need their batterer. Always keep in mind that not everyone is able to enjoy the same holiday festivities that you and your family celebrate.

Even though domestic violence peaks around the holiday season The National Domestic Violence Hotline reports a decrease in calls—nearly 53 percent fewer—on Thanksgiving Day and Christmas Day compared to the calls that are received on New Year's Eve and New Year's Day. Many believe this occurs because the victims do not want to disturb or be scrutinized by family during events on Thanksgiving and Christmas. Also, since Thanksgiving and Christmas are usually consumed with family, it is also thought that maybe the victims cannot find a moment alone to call a hotline for assistance and advice. Domestic violence doesn't take a holiday so just because calls to hotlines might be low because of multiple variables, this doesn't mean that incidents do not occur. Victims may feel as though they can't call because of family commitments, this makes the holiday season even more stressful for victims.



The holiday seasons can be difficult for children also, especially for children who reside in a home of domestic violence. Most loving mothers will do whatever is necessary to create a fun and festive holiday environment for her children, however, for children living in a home where violence occurs, very often, Christmas represents a prolonged period of trepidation due to the anticipation of violence. This pattern occurs because the child is so used to the domestic violence cycle. Children of domestic violence can later carry over the same violent behavior that they had witnessed.



So what can you do to help? If you know someone or if you are in a relationship where domestic violence occurs please feel free to call our hotline 1-800-544-8293, we can provide counseling services, legal services and a number of other services such as emergency housing. Explain the importance of having a plan, a safety plan can help save someones life. For more information about safety planning please contact our Hotline. For helping children who witness domestic violence, you should always listen to what they are saying and to wait until they are ready to talk. Please keep in mind that even though the holiday season means family and fun for you, sometimes not everyone is as fortunate.

References:

<https://www.domesticshelters.org/domestic-violence> (<https://www.domesticshelters.org/domestic-violence-articles-information/domestic-violence-doesn-t-take-a-holiday#.WEcUI1zVsQg>)

<http://www.wtvm.com/story> (<http://www.wtvm.com/story/24196797/domestic-violence-increases-during-holiday-season>)

<http://www.huffingtonpost.com> (http://www.huffingtonpost.com/tanya-young-williams/domestic-violence-holidays_b_1133994.html)

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Services at The Women’s Center

The Women’s Center offers educational training’s on sexual assault. To schedule any of our training’s please contact the Education Department at 570-784-6632.

If you are a victim of domestic violence and sexual assault and want to know the resources that are available to you, then you can always reach out to The Women’s Center at 570-784-6631 or toll-free at (800) 544-8293. All of our services are free and confidential.



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