

# Domestic Violence

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# Goals and Objectives

- Increase understanding of signs and symptoms of domestic violence, both medical and psychological.
- Give a framework for the extent of the problem
- Increase comfort level with asking the questions
- Practice interviewing patients.

# Domestic Violence

- Domestic Violence is a learned pattern of behaviors used by one person in a relationship to control the other person. The partners may be married or not married, gay or lesbian, living together , separated or dating.

# Examples of Domestic Violence

- Actual or threatened physical harm.
- Emotional abuse through mind games, name calling or put-downs
- Isolation from friends and/or family
- Economic abuse by withholding money or being prevented from getting a job or holding a job
- Sexual Assault
- Stalking
- Intimidation

# Pre Test

- 1.Domestic Violence affects a small number of people.
- Answer False: According to the FBI 1 out of every 4 women is a victim of some type of Domestic Violence in her life.
- 2. Battering is just a momentary loss of temper.
- Answer : False: The surgeon General of the US reports that 1 of 5 woman battered by their partners have been victimized over and over again by the same person. The AMA defines domestic violence as an ongoing , debilitating experience of physical, and /or sexual Abuse



# Pretest

- 3. Domestic violence does not produce serious injuries
- False : The leading cause of injury for women age 15-44 is domestic violence. In the United states about 3 women die as a result of Domestic Violence
- 1Bureau of Justice Statistics, [Intimate Homicide Victims by Gender](#)

# Pretest

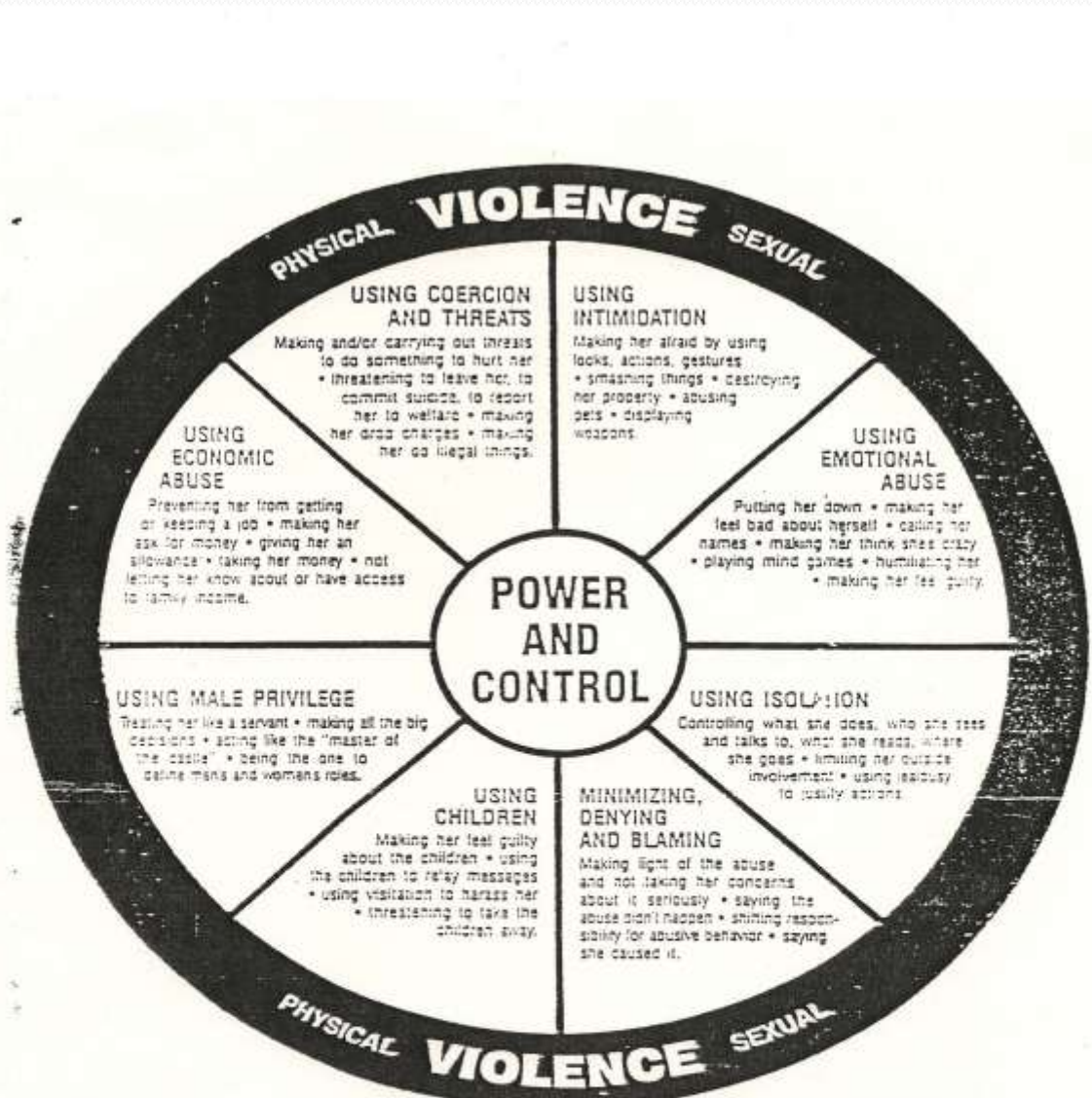
- 4. Leaving an abusive relationship is easy
- False : A study by the US Department of Justice states that the most dangerous time for a woman who is being battered is when she leaves
- 5. Battered women always stay in violent relationships
- False: Many battered women do leave their abuser permanently and succeed in building a life free of violence . Almost all battered women leave at least once.

# Pretest

- 6. Only poor and minority groups are victims of domestic violence
- False : People of all socio-economic classes, races, religions, ethnic backgrounds, and sexual orientations can be victims of domestic violence
- 7. Only married women are victims of domestic violence
- False



# Violence Wheel



# The American Medical Association Treatment Guidelines

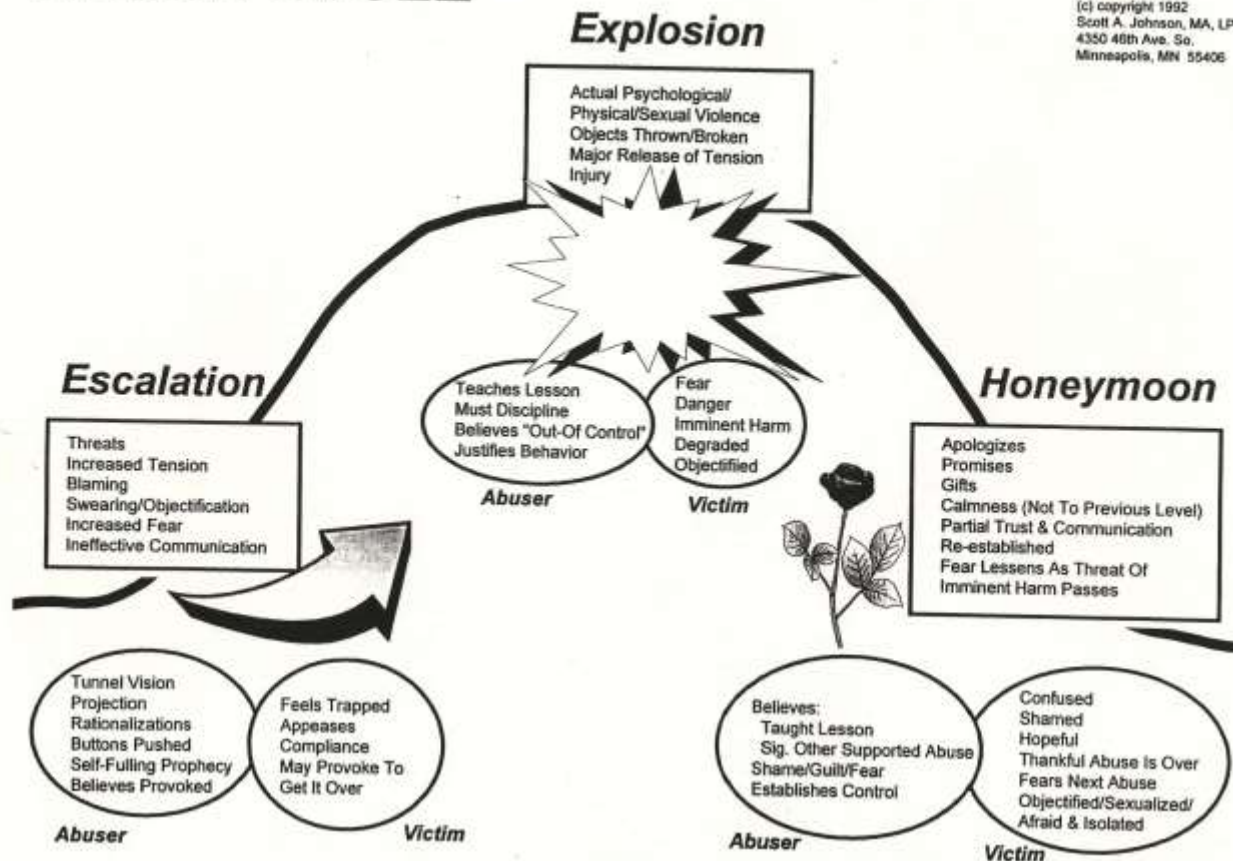
The American Medical Association offers the following points to doctors in its Treatment Guidelines on Domestic Violence, published in 1992:

- **Nearly a quarter of the women in the United States - more than 12 million - will be abused by a current - or former partner some time during their lives.**
- **19 to 30 percent of the women seeking treatment in emergency rooms have been battered.**
- **Domestic violence is prevalent enough to justify screening all women patients in emergency surgical, primary care, pediatric, prenatal and mental health settings.**
- **Since many women do not recognize that they are battered, physicians must ask direct, specific questions to determine the occurrence or extent of abuse.**
- **A medical encounter may provide the only opportunity to stop the violence before more serious injuries occur.**
- **Consider the possibility of assault when a victim's explanation of an injury does not seem plausible, or when the victim has delayed medical treatment.**
- **Patient may appear frightened or nervous or exhibit stress-related symptoms in addition to the physical injury.**
- **Maintain a complete and detailed description of the event, in the victim's own words if possible and of resulting injuries, including photographs if applicable.**
- **The severity of current or past injury is not an accurate predictor of future violence. The patient's safety should be discussed before leaving the physician's office or treatment center.**
- **Physicians should be aware of local resources to make appropriate referrals.**

# Cycle of Abuse

## ABUSE CYCLE

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# Physical Injuries to Consider

- Any time the injury does not fit the explanation
- Contusions, abrasions and minor lacerations
- Fractures or sprains
- Injuries to head, neck chest breasts and abdomen
- Injuries during pregnancy
- Numerous injuries in multiple sites
- Repeated or chronic injuries

# Related Medical Findings

- Chronic Pain, Psychogenic pain or pain due to diffuse trauma without evidence
- Symptoms related to stress, chronic PTSD, other anxiety disorders.
  - Sleep and appetite disturbance
  - Fatigue , decreased concentration, sexual dysfunction
  - Chronic headaches
  - Abdominal and GI complaints
  - Atypical chest pain



# Medical Findings

- Gynecological problems
- Frequent use of prescribed pain pills or tranquilizers
- Frequent Visits with vague complaints or symptoms without evidence of physiologic abnormality.

# Signs during Pregnancy

- Injuries , particularly to breasts, abdomen, and genital area, or unexplained pain
- Substance abuse, poor nutrition, depression, and late or sporadic access to prenatal care
- Spontaneous abortions, miscarriages and premature births

# Behavioral Signs of Patient and Partner

- Partner accompanies patient and insists on staying close and answers all questions.
- Reluctance of a patient to speak or disagree in front of her partner
- Intense irrational jealousy or possessiveness expressed by partner or reported by patient
- Exaggerated sense of personal responsibility for the relationship , including self-blame for her partners violence



# Medical Treatment Compliance

Abusive partners use of control may result in:

- Limited access to routine or emergency care
- Noncompliance with treatment
- Not being allowed to take medications
- Missed appointments
- Lack of transportation, access to finances, or access to phone
- Not being informed of medical conditions (HIV, STDs) of partner

# Interviewing the Patient

NEVER INTERVIEW THE PATIENT WITH THE PARTNER WHEN ASKING ABOUT ABUSE!!!!!!!

Has your partner ever physically or emotionally hurt you? Do you feel safe at home, with your partner

- Ask direct, non threatening questions empathicly
- “ I noticed you have a number of bruises , can you tell me how that happened?
- Many patients tell me they have been hurt by their partners, has your partner ever hurt you?

# Latinas and Domestic Violence

- A strong sense of culture keep Latinas from betraying long standing values
- Keeping the family together is the ultimate goal
- Women are deeply religious: abuse may be their cross to bear
- Economic or legal issues can arise
- Women are threatened that they will be deported or the children will be taken from them

# Internal barriers for Latina women


- Misunderstanding of what defines Domestic Violence
- Stigma
- Fear

# External barriers

- Language barrier
- Fear of racism and prejudice from Health care system
- Lack of family support
- Fear of deportation
- Traditional male/ female roles
- Lack of economic self-sufficiency
- Immigration issues

# Family Violence

- Child abuse
- Elderly abuse
- Domestic Violence
- Date Rape



- **JUST ASK**