

The invisible predator

Written by Dara Carlin | Examiner
Tuesday, 05 April 2011 17:18



I was always told if you want to keep a civil discussion going, stay away from the topics of religion and politics but there's a third topic that's more explosive than both and like the nature of the problem, it's one that's kept intentionally hidden from public view: DOMESTIC VIOLENCE.

Why is it more explosive than religion or politics? Because it cuts right through them and not only religion and politics, but through the issues of gender, relationships, race, family, culture, tradition, morality, law, economics, education, the professional and community response, personal/professional responsibility and accountability, human rights, civil rights, stereotypes, the myths that keep us all ignorant or "safe" from becoming directly involved and any other topic you can think of.

Domestic Violence is NOT an "equal opportunity employer". This statement alone is enough to trigger a heated "battle of the sexes" but consider a single act of physical violence by a man (say a punch to the head) against a woman, child and animal:

If the victim of violence is an animal or child, the general response is outrage and disgust - we hold the perpetrator solely accountable for the injury inflicted on the animal or child. If the victim is a woman, however, the immediate response is NOT outrage or disgust but curiosity: "What did she do to instigate/deserve it?" Then we sit back in judgment waiting for the answer and decide whether we believe her or not. The perpetrator's guilt or innocence is NOT decided upon the fact of the injury but upon whether we believe her story or not.

Additionally, WHO the perpetrator is also weighs in on whether we choose to believe her or not - if he doesn't "seem the type", if he's rich, famous, popular, charitable, is in a position of honor or respect (ie. the military, a pastor, a community leader), if we know him, how we know him - all excuses to make sense of and explain away a physical act of violence against a woman.

Rather than wait until the end to address this, I'm going to do it now to run with the

The invisible predator

Written by Dara Carlin | Examiner
Tuesday, 05 April 2011 17:18

punch-to-the-head analogy:

Yes, women can be violent and can be abusive towards men HOWEVER it is not the same nor "coming from the same place". A woman's strongest punch to a man's head will most likely result with a headache; a man's punch to a woman's head will most likely result with anything ranging from a contusion to a concussion to a skull fracture. Men's use of violence is not the same as a woman's use of violence and the absence in distinction is due - in part - to what we define domestic violence to be.

One aspect of our "problem" with domestic violence is that everyone THINKS they know what it is. The most common reply to "Do you know what domestic violence is?" is typically followed by a question after an affirmative answer: "Yea. Isn't that when someone beats up their wife?"

Well, yes and no - physical violence is only one small aspect of domestic violence but it's NOT its predominant form (nor is it a necessary ingredient for domestic violence) and without a solid foundation, domestic violence cannot exist or take hold. The primary form of domestic violence is INVISIBLE: power and control functioning through psychological/emotional/mental abuse. If domestic violence was viewed as the statement

"You will not leave me!"

physical violence (and/or sexual assault) would be the exclamation point at the end of the sentence. (Please note that if you took away the exclamation point, the statement would still remain, which is the same as domestic violence: in complete absence of physical and/or sexual violence that we can see, the psychological/emotional/mental abuse that we can't see remains - and so the domestic violence remains.)

My interpretation of domestic violence is an evolving definition that expands and clarifies the more I learn about it. The credit for my latest revision (the underlined below) belongs to Phyllis Frank, Director of the New York Model for Batterer Programs, whom I had the pleasure and honor of meeting this past weekend at the NOMAS (National Organization for Men Against Sexism) Conference in Tallahassee, Florida. In all future articles, whenever I speak about domestic violence I will be specifically talking about the following:

The use of oppression, coercive control and sometimes physical force to get ones wants or needs met at the expense of another as rooted in history, law and culture.

As you'll come to see, domestic violence is so much more than black eyes, bruises and broken bones. It's an invisible predator whose legacy ruins relationships and destroys families, breaking hearts and homes. Domestic violence flies in the face of logic and reason, defying the laws of God and man, coming at the expense of people's lives, futures and even our economy. I will show you what I see and invite you to join the effort to stop DV Hawaii.

The invisible predator

Written by Dara Carlin | Examiner
Tuesday, 05 April 2011 17:18

[Source Article](#)