

# Things Housing and Homeless Providers Should Know About Domestic Violence

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## *Survivors are the experts*

Survivors know best about what their abuser will and won't do. They've often been surviving for longer than we have been in their lives. You may need support around this – Domestic violence programs also offer support to folks who aren't survivors themselves.

### **How does this impact you?**

*Trust survivors' judgment about what their abusers will or won't do. They are the ones who know what is safe and what is not.*

## *Not telling is not the same as lying*

Disclosing domestic violence is often a complex and multi-layered decision. Survivors need to weigh the risks and benefits of disclosing, including concerns about confidentiality, judgments, and the impacts of sharing personal information.

### **How does this impact you?**

*You might suspect that a dv is happening but it isn't your role to call it out. Make sure you build trust and rapport with the family, listen for ways you can support survivors and their children. Your ability and willingness to connect them with support and resources is very important.<sup>1</sup>*

## *The best way to support children is to support parents*

Many of us get into this work because we care about families and want to help them succeed. We know that supporting the non-abusive caregiver is what helps children cope better and become more resilient.<sup>2</sup>

### **How does this impact you?**

*Your work to support the non-abusive parent helps to ensure better outcomes for the children.*

## *Coercion and abuse is about power and control over another person*

Ultimately domestic violence is about power and control.<sup>3</sup> This can look different in each relationship but the core dynamic is where one person seeks to coerce and manipulate their partner in order to get what they want. This often results in one person's control over their partner's decision-making, finances, and ability to care for their children.

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<sup>1</sup> For a list of local domestic violence programs, go here: <http://wscadv2.org/memberprograms.cfm>

<sup>2</sup> Strengthening mother-child bonding is a key strategy for helping children exposed to violence. Bancroft L, Silverman J. The Batterer as Parent. 2002. Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, California.

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.ncdsv.org/images/powercontrolwheelnoshading.pdf>

**How does this impact you?**

*Every relationship looks different, but when power and control are at the center of one person's actions and intents, the results can be devastating. You can support domestic violence survivors and offer referrals to supportive services when you can.*

*Leaving doesn't equal safety*

So often our systems and responses are set up to tell survivors to leave and that leaving leads to safety. What we know from over 10 years of the Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence's fatality reviews is that danger actually increases and violence often escalates after a victim leaves the relationship. In fact, nearly half of all victims killed by their intimate partners in Washington State were killed after they had separated or were in the process of leaving.<sup>4</sup> The bottom line is that while we want survivors and their children to be safe, there are many different options besides simply staying or leaving that survivors must consider. Survivors can access safety planning resources by connecting with a local domestic violence program.

**How does this impact you?**

*Know that there are many ways of coping with abuse. From the outside, leaving might seem to be the safest choice, but it may not be.*

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<sup>4</sup> <https://fatalityreview.files.wordpress.com/2013/11/2010-dvfr-report.pdf> p. 17 under Separation Violence.