

Substance Abuse and Domestic Violence

*Saving Lives...
Building Hope...
Ending Violence...*

There is a strong correlation between domestic violence and substance abuse. Some of those include:

1. Between 25-50% of men committing domestic violence has a substance abuse problem (Gondolf, 1995).
2. Victims of domestic violence are more likely to receive prescriptions for and become dependent on tranquilizers, sedatives, stimulants, and painkillers and are more likely to abuse alcohol (Stark and Flitcraft, 1988).
3. Women who abuse alcohol or drugs are more likely to be victims of domestic violence (Miller, 1989).
4. Women in recovery are more likely to have a history of violent trauma and are at a high risk of being diagnosed with posttraumatic stress disorder (Fullilove, 1993).

While there is a strong correlation between domestic violence and substance abuse, alcohol and other drugs do not cause domestic violence. *Abusers often use substance abuse as an excuse for battering.*

Intoxicated victims are more likely to be blamed for the domestic violence than sober victims (Aramburu and Leigh, 1991). Sexist attitudes such as; "good women can keep their men happy and prevent domestic violence" contribute to substance abuse in domestic violence cases (Downs, 1993). *Some victims will use alcohol and other drugs to "self-medicate" or anesthetize themselves to the pain of their situations.*

Batterers often get angry when their partner seeks treatment for substance abuse. He may sabotage her treatment because he is losing control over her. He views her treatment as a possible way for her to get away from him.

Victims of domestic violence must feel safe before they will be able to work through substance abuse issues. *Refuge House will work with clients on safety issues and substance abuse issues.* If you are addicted to alcohol or other drugs and you are a victim of domestic violence, Refuge House will provide services. Call the Refuge House at 1-800-500-1119.

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