

MY WORK WITH VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Domestic Violence refers to any form of abusive behavior that occurs within a relationship between partners, spouses, or family members. It can encompass physical violence, emotional abuse, sexual assault, financial abuse, and psychological manipulation.

When working with victims of domestic violence, I evaluate my client's relationship status and dynamic with their abuser. The goal when working with victims of domestic violence is not necessarily to encourage victims to leave their abuser or abandon their situation. Instead, my job is to advocate for those who have no voice and who can't advocate for themselves.

When working with a victim who has no intention of leaving their abuser, my first priority is to make a safety plan. My goal is not to push anyone to leave their abuser or their situation, especially if that's not what they are ready for, or want to do. However, the safety of my clients is paramount. Creating a safety plan includes identifying what works best to keep the client safe

during an emergency and who they can call in a crisis, establishing ways to communicate with social supports in a private way, calling 911, creating escape routes and identifying destinations if the client needs to flee the home, and packing a bag with clothing, medication, important documents, and travel necessities for children and pets. After creating a safety plan with a client, I provide education about domestic violence, what the different forms of abuse look like - emotional, physical, financial and sexual - characteristics of an abuser, and the cycle of abuse. Providing education helps the client better understand the pattern of abuse and decreases clients blaming themselves for the behaviors. We continue our work by highlighting their self-worth, identifying all they have to offer the world, and reclaiming their identity apart from their abuser.

I find that most people can't comprehend the ramifications of the emotional toll the relationship has

STATISTICALLY, 1 IN 3 WOMEN AND 1 IN 4 MEN HAVE EXPERIENCED SOME FORM OF PHYSICAL VIOLENCE BY AN INTIMATE PARTNER. THESE STATISTICS ONLY REFLECT THE CASES THAT ARE REPORTED.*

on an individual. Abusers can break an individual's sense of self and sense of deserving or feeling wanted. There are many reasons individuals stay in this environment, and it's not my job, or yours, to place judgment or criticism over someone else's situation.

As a survivor of domestic violence myself, I experienced traditional therapy through my healing process, which gave me insight to a system I knew I could improve. I pull from my experiences and share my story to create an approach that combines the philosophy of therapy with the pragmatism of life coaching to meet the needs of my clients. One factor that is of utmost importance to me is authenticity. I let my client's know who I am, I share stories about myself to allow them to see that therapists are human too. I believe that in order for someone to be completely vulnerable with you, they need to see that you are a real person.

The blend of life coaching and therapy together, creates an unique blend of highlighting the role of the past and the power of the present and future. I help people turn pain into power. It is an honor to work with this population, and the fragility of our work - that someone chose me to walk the path alongside them, towards healing or increased safety - is sacred to me.

If you or someone you know is a victim of domestic violence, it is crucial to seek help and support. There are many resources available including shelters, hotlines, counseling, and legal assistance. One thing to remember is that it is never the victim's fault, and there are resources available for assistance.

6 Reasons Why Victims Stay with Their Abusers

1. **Fear:** The abuser may threaten to harm or kill the victim, their children, or their loved ones if they try to leave or seek help. This fear can be very real and can make it difficult for the victim to take action in their own lives.
2. **Financial dependence:** The victim may rely on their abuser for financial support and may not have the resources to leave or support themselves and their children on their own.
3. **Isolation:** The abuser typically isolates the victim from friends and family, making it difficult for them to get help or support. This can make the victim feel as though they have nowhere to turn and that leaving the relationship is not an option.
4. **Emotional attachment:** The victim may have strong feelings of love or attachment to the abuser, despite the abuse. They may hope that the abuser will change or believe that the abuse is their fault.
5. **Cultural or religious beliefs:** Some cultures or religions may have beliefs that discourage divorce or prioritize family harmony over individual safety.
6. **Shame and embarrassment:** The victim may feel ashamed or embarrassed to admit that they are being abused, which can make it difficult to seek help or leave the relationship.

 **L.I. Against
Domestic Violence**
Prevention. Support. Healing.

24-Hour Hotline: 631-666-8833

FREE, 24/7, CONFIDENTIAL
NATIONAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
HOTLINE
1(800) 799-7233

* <https://ncadv.org/STATISTICS>