



CANTON'S COMMITMENT TO COMBAT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE



In recognition of October as Domestic Violence Awareness Month, the Canton Police Department will publish a weekly series of articles about family violence. This is the first of the four articles.

Risk Factors

Domestic violence is a pattern of coercive, controlling behavior that can include physical abuse, emotional or psychological abuse, sexual abuse or financial abuse. It is a pervasive, life-threatening crime that affects thousands of individuals in Connecticut regardless of age, gender, economic status, race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation or education. Victims are left feeling scared, confused, dependent and insecure about their ability to survive on their own, financially or otherwise. The children of an abused parent must contend with these same fears and realities.

While there are many types of abuse, there are also warning signs that abuse is present in your relationship, as well as several risk factors that indicate a greater risk for increased violence.

Warning Signs

Do you think that you might be in an abusive relationship, or are you concerned for someone you know? Take a moment to review our checklist. Domestic violence isn't just about being physically hit; it's also about patterns of coercion and control that may be emotional or financial.

Does your partner...

- Stalk or harass you, such as follow you or show up at your home or place of employment uninvited?
- Get suddenly angry, refuse to compromise, and constantly blame you for his/her mistakes?
- Act overly jealous about your relationships with others and prevent you from seeing family and friends?
- Control your means of communication, such as your phone and computer?
- Humiliate or embarrass you in front of your friends and family?
- Hit, push, slap or act in an otherwise violent manner towards you?
- Threaten to hurt you, your children, your family members or your pets?
- Force you to have sex or perform other sexual acts when you do not want to?

Risk Factors

Dr. Jacquelyn C. Campbell, who is a professor with the Johns Hopkins University School of Nursing, has done extensive research on the factors present in an abusive relationship that often lead to greater risk for increased violence that could turn fatal. Take a moment to review our checklist below and determine whether or not these risk factors are present in your relationship.

- Has your abuser ever used a weapon against you or threatened you with a weapon?
- Has your abuser ever threatened to kill you or your children?
- Do you think your abuser might try to kill you?
- Has the physical violence increased in frequency or severity in the past 6 months?
- Does your abuser have a gun or can s/he easily get one?
- Has your abuser ever tried to choke you?
- Have you recently left, separated from or divorced your abuser?

Things You Can Do

If you answered yes to any of the questions above then you may be in an abusive relationship and risk factors may be present that indicate a possible increase in violence. There are steps that you can take to increase your safety:

- Call 911 if you're in immediate danger.
- Always trust your gut – if you think you're in danger, you probably are.
- Don't minimize your abuser's behavior or the level of danger present.
- **Contact the Interval House in Hartford at 860-527-0550 or www.intervalhousect.org or the statewide, toll free domestic violence hotline at 888-774-2900 (English) or 844-831-9200 (Español)** to speak with a certified domestic violence counselor.
- Work with your local domestic violence agency to develop a safety plan.
- Speak with a Family Violence Victim Advocate at your local domestic violence agency about the legal options that are available, such as restraining orders.

For additional information call the Canton Police Department at 860-693-7872.