

Domestic Violence Myths & Facts

A DV Resource for Media

The Facts

1 in 4 women and 1 in 7 men have experienced severe physical violence by an intimate partner.

Almost 50% of all US women and men have experienced emotional abuse by their partner.

99% of domestic violence cases involve financial abuse.

The “most dangerous place” for women around the world is at home. Over half of female homicide victims are killed by a current or former male intimate partner.

More than half (54%) of transgender and gender non-conforming individuals have experienced some form of intimate partner violence.

Pittsburgh Area Resources

Name	Hotline Phone Number	Website
Women's Center & Shelter of Greater Pittsburgh (WC&S)	412.687.8005	wcspittsburgh.org
Alle-Kiski Hope Center	888.299.4673	akhopecenter.org
Center for Victims	866.644.2882	centerforvictims.org
Crisis Center North	412.364.5556	crisiscenternorth.org
Pittsburgh Action Against Rape (PAAR)	1.866.363.7273	parr.net

Myth: A PFA is “just a piece of paper.”

Reality: A PFA has the full power of the court behind it.

Protection From Abuse (PFA) orders have protected hundreds of thousands of PA domestic violence survivors.

A study in the Journal of the American Medical Association found that PFAs (issued for 12 months or longer) are likely to reduce police reported physical violence by 80%.

A PFA is never intended to be the only option for victims, who are encouraged to also work with an advocate at a DV program to create a safety plan that may include a shelter stay, relocation, pursuit of criminal charges, etc. It's important to recognize that a PFA is only as effective as the enforcement behind it, and lax and inconsistent enforcement by the courts and police can have deadly consequences.

Myth: Abuse doesn't happen in my neighborhood.

Reality: Abuse can happen to anyone.

Domestic violence happens in all communities, at all income and education levels, with victims and perpetrators representing a diverse cross-section of society. Where someone lives has little to do with the people they live with and what goes on behind closed doors.

Myth: Abuse is a momentary loss of control.

Reality: A person using abuse knows exactly what they're doing.

Domestic abuse is a system of power and control. An abuser doesn't just “snap.” The violence most often is methodical, calculating, and intended to cause fear.

Myth: A victim of abuse can just leave.

Reality: It's not that simple.

Leaving is often the most dangerous time for those experiencing abuse. 75% of DV-related homicides occur when a person tries to leave or after they've left. Victims may stay with or return to their batterers for multiple reasons, including:

- Fear for the safety of their children or pets.
- The hope their abusers can change if they seek therapy.
- The lack of support systems to help them escape because their abusers have systematically isolated them from friends and family that could help.
- The lack of available, affordable housing and economic resources.
- Cultural or religious beliefs that compel them to try to make even an abusive marriage work.