

Sheriffs Points

By your Sheriff Byron Nogelmeier

I have wanted to do an informational article in the local newspapers for quite sometime. I have finally quit my procrastinating and I am going to start. It is my intention to do an article every other week. My hope is to give you, the public, some information that may help you in everyday life. I know that each article will not directly affect everyone, but hopefully the information that I will provide will help someone.

This week I chose to write abuse domestic violence. The definition of Domestic Violence according to South Dakota State Law is any family or household member who inflicts physical harm, bodily injury, or attempts to cause physical harm or bodily injury, or the infliction of fear of imminent physical harm or bodily injury. The term family or household member means, " spouses, former spouses, or persons related by consanguinity, adoption, or law, persons living in the same household, persons who have lived together, or persons who have had a child together. If you are being abused, threatened, or physically or sexually assaulted by a partner, a former partner, or a family member, that is domestic violence.

In addition to actual physical violence, domestic violence can involve a wide range of abusive and controlling behavior, including threats, harassment, criminal damage, financial control and emotional abuse.

Domestic violence is often used to maintain power and control over another person.

Domestic violence is much more common than most people realize. Even if you are not experiencing it yourself, you may well know someone who is.

Anyone can experience domestic violence - it can happen in all kinds of relationships and for any reason.

Physical and sexual abuse tends to get more severe and happen more often over time, sometimes only ending when one person actually kills the other.

This chain of events needs to be broken and a range of organizations are working to do this.

But individuals also have an important part to play. For people experiencing violence, the support of a trusted friend can be invaluable.

Breaking the chain is a job for everyone and we all have a vital role to play in supporting victims and helping law-enforcement and other agencies to reduce violent and controlling behavior.

We all have the right to live without fear of violence and abuse.

For a long time people thought this was a family problem and it should be ignored. I would say that years ago law enforcement thought the same thing until wives, live in girlfriends, husbands or boyfriends showed up being beaten or dead in some cases. Domestic violence is much more common than most people realize. Even if you are not experiencing it yourself, you may well know someone who is. Anyone can experience domestic violence – it can happen to you. These types of crimes cannot and will not go ignored.

Recognizing domestic violence

Domestic violence is usually a pattern of abuse which may include destructive criticism, pressure tactics, and disrespect, breaking trust, isolation and harassment. Some abusers are remorseful and persuade their partners that the abuse won't happen again. But, however persuasive they seem, the violence usually gets worse over time.

Domestic violence may happen to anyone, and in all kinds of relationships regardless of age, race, gender, sexuality, disability, wealth, geography and lifestyle. The abuse can begin at any time-in new relationships or after many years spent together.

Accepting that you are not to blame

It is not easy to accept that a loved one can behave so aggressively. And because you can't explain your partner's behavior, you may assume that you are to blame. You are not. No one deserves to be assaulted, abused or humiliated, least of all by a partner in a supposedly caring relationship. It is your abuser's behavior that needs to change. There is no excuse.

Getting help

The most important thing you can do is tell someone you trust. You may quite easily and quickly decide to ask for help. Or you may find the

process long and painful as you try to make the relationship work and stop the violence, while struggling against the practical and emotional reasons for staying.

Most people try to find help a number of times before getting what they need, and even after leaving the relationship, there may still be a risk. The point of separation is sometimes the most dangerous time. Never be afraid to ask for help again and remember, in an emergency, always call the police by dialing 911.

Police officers have the power to arrest where they have reasonable grounds for believing that an arrest is necessary to prevent the offender from causing physical injury to you or your child.

Remember that domestic violence is often a crime and agencies are there to work together to wipe out and prevent that crime, while protecting its victims. It is not simply the responsibility of a victim of domestic violence to end the abuse and you have the right to live without violence or fear of violence.

The Turner County Sheriffs Office investigated 13 cases of domestic violence in Turner County in 2004.

What should you do if you are a victim of domestic violence? There are several things you can do to protect yourself. 1) Call Law Enforcement as soon as possible. Law enforcement is required to arrest the predominant aggressor if probable cause can be established 2) Seek a protection order from the court to keep the perpetrator from having contact with you. 3) Seek a victim advocate who can help you with questions you may have about domestic violence. You can contact Childrens Inn Sioux Falls 1-888-378-7398 . There is a Childrens Inn Advocate that comes to the Courthouse on every other Wednesday in the afternoon.

I hope that you have found this information useful. For more information who can look on the internet and go to www.homeoffice.gov.uk/crime/preventionadvice.