

SAFE HAVEN – CHEATHAM COUNTY'S DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SHELTER

COMMUNITY EDUCATION HANDOUT

Definition of Domestic Violence:

A form of control that one person exerts over another. It is never about anger – it is all about control – a process that escalates over time.

Likely components:

- abuse can be mental, financial, sexual (rape), verbal, physical, emotional (if you love me you will.....”
- abuser isolates victim away from family, friends, church members, co-workers – keeping victim from reaching out for help
- abuser usually withholds funds telling the victim they don't deserve any money
- abuser will use threats – “I'll hurt your family if you leave, I will track you down wherever you go, I will find you and hurt you if you leave, I'll take the children away from you if you leave, you can't even take care of yourself, look at you – you're pitiful, nobody will hire you!”
- abuser usually has 'buddies' join in on the abuse and the victim becomes afraid of them knowing they would help find the victim
- fear is the greatest motivator – an abuser will use it to their full advantage to control their victim – most dangerous moment is when victim decides to leave – now the abuser is losing power over the victim and this can lead to her death

Responses you/we can make:

- listen – you may be first person who the victim trusts enough to tell -- don't tell them what to do (big mistake, as they are being controlled already)
- give options and offer to help them out of the situation (Safe Haven phone number 615-681-5863; facebook Safe Haven Cheatham County)
- help them make arrangements, being aware of safety first for parent and children