

- **Stats- Universality**
 - 1 in 3 women are physically or sexually abused by an intimate partner in their lifetime (Family Violence Prevention Fund).
 - Women account for 85% of domestic violence victims, men account for 15%. However, women are much more likely to be injured. (Family Violence Prevention Fund).
 - Most incidents of domestic violence are not reported to law enforcement. Only about 20% of sexual assaults and 25% of physical assaults are reported to the police (CDC).
 - In the U.S. an average of 3 women are murdered each day by an intimate partner (Family Violence Prevention Fund).
 - Women who leave their abusive partners are often still at risk of violence (CDC).
 - Pregnant women are very much at risk of violence, 4-8% of pregnant women are abuse at least once during their pregnancy (CDC).

- **Dynamics of Domestic Violence**
 - Power and Control Wheel
 - Cycle of Violence

- **Why Women Stay in Abusive Relationships**

- **What helps women escape an abusive relationship (Davis and Srinivasan, 1995):**
 - **Validation:** It is important that survivor's experiences and reactions are validated. They are so often not believed and told that they are crazy; it can be incredibly powerful and meaningful when someone does believe what they say.
 - **Self-Determination:** This is part of the NASW code of ethics, however it is especially important when working with a survivor of DV. An abuser exercises all the power and control in the relationship, rendering the victim powerless. When working with survivors, it is so important that we give them information and then allow them to make their own decisions. If we tell them what to do, we are taking control over them and again leaving them powerless. Most importantly, we should not second guess our client's decisions. The fact is that she knows the abuser much better than we do, so she knows what is safest for her. And the most dangerous time for a woman is when she leaves the abusive relationship, so we need to trust her instincts and decisions.

- **Emotional Support:** Many DV survivors were isolated by their abuser. Having support from a therapist or from members of a support group can be amazingly powerful and validating.

Information/Education: Education about the dynamics of DV, the cycle of violence and healthy vs. unhealthy relationships can be empowering. For women who are still in the abusive relationship, it is important that they understand what abuse is so that they can recognize their relationship as abusive. The cycle of violence is also important, because even if they are in a “calm” or “honeymoon” phase, they will be able to realize that their partner will become abusive again. Also essential is information about resources in the community, the Criminal Justice System, legal services, etc.

- **Motivations to Act/Children as Major Catalysts:** The article discusses small events that prompt women to call or seek out help. I find that many of the women that I work decide to leave for the well-being of their children.

- **Help From Others**

- **How Domestic Violence Survivors Experience Treatment (Shamai, 2000):**

- This study looked at how domestic violence survivors experience treatment, including what aspects of the treatment was most significant to the women. The sample included 50 women from 6 different agencies.
- The author explains that many women use denial, identification with the abuser, and rationalization as defense mechanisms. However, this can lead to a “denial of the self (p. 87).” The study found that the most important aspect of the treatment was the women’s realization in treatment that they had a right to be heard, have feelings, thoughts, and desires. They had a right to be human. They discovered their sense of self. All women in the study experienced this realization and it was identified as a unique aspect of treatment that they had experienced in past treatment situations.
- The two elements that the women identified with their realizations were: being given the space and time in treatment to be heard and attentive and attuned social workers.
- The author compared the client-worker relationship to a newborn baby and caregiver. The client was given the space and room in a safe, holding environment to grow and development her sense of self, to be reborn.