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Boston Medical Center  
**HEALTH SYSTEM**

# Understanding and Responding to Domestic Violence and Stalking

Joanne Timmons, MPH  
Manager, Domestic Violence Program  
Boston Medical Center



## “First do no harm”

### Myths



- Abuse is easy to recognize
- Abusive people are easy to recognize
- Leaving an abusive relationship is easy
- **Leaving will automatically make you safer**

### Facts



- Any act can be used to control or instill fear in someone
- Anyone can be abusive, and abusive people can hide in plain sight
- **Women are at the greatest risk when leaving**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0RfojD5WHWl>

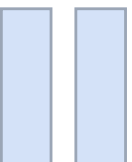
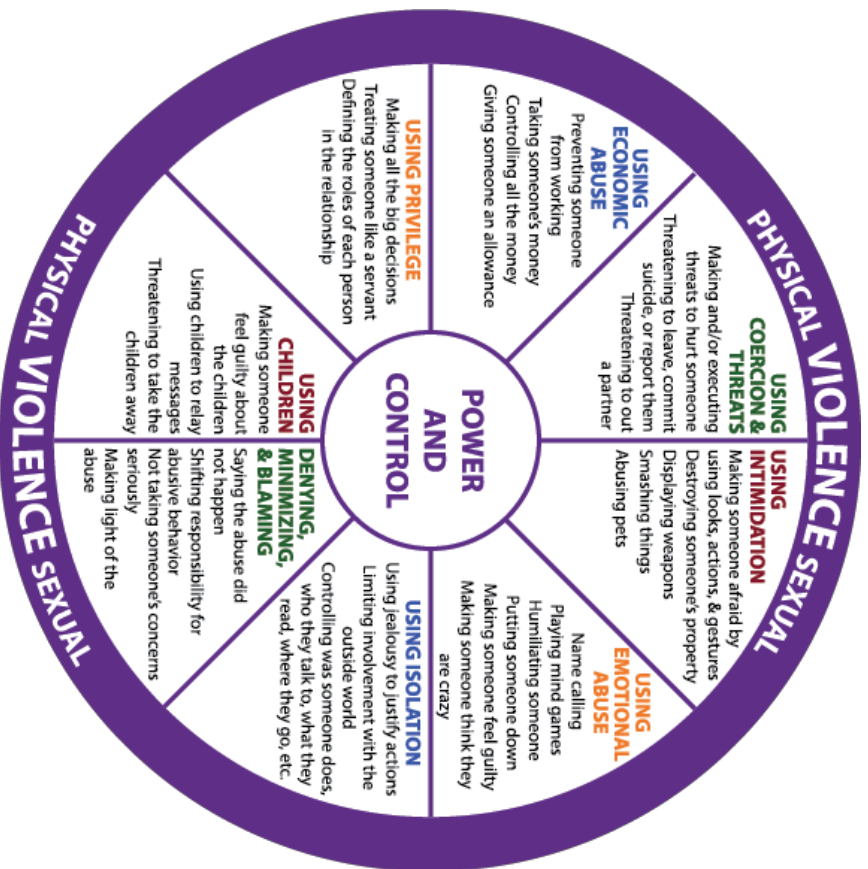


# What is Domestic Violence?



# Abusive and controlling people...

- Use a variety of tactics and strategies based on what they want to accomplish and what will work.



## Abusive and controlling people...

- Manipulate others' perceptions of themselves as well as their partner.
- Use apologies, promises to change, “best behavior” along with denial, threats, and violence to achieve the desired response by their partner.
- Exploit vulnerabilities in those they want to control; hold double standards.
- **Escalate violence frequency and severity over time**, often when they learn partner is telling others or seeking help.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vcfd7rEcBig>



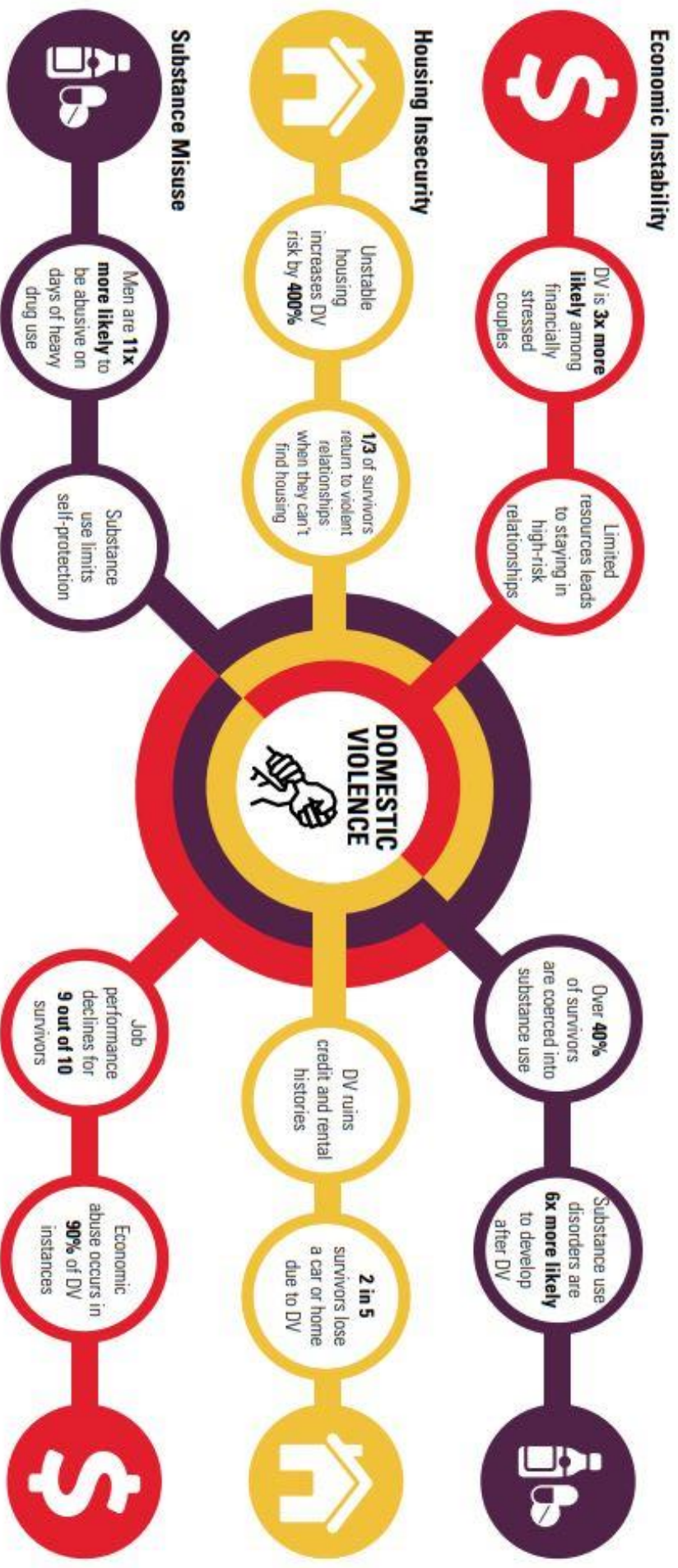
# 1 in 4: Who are Victims of Domestic Violence?



# CAUSE & EFFECT:

## The Interconnection of Social Issues and Domestic Violence

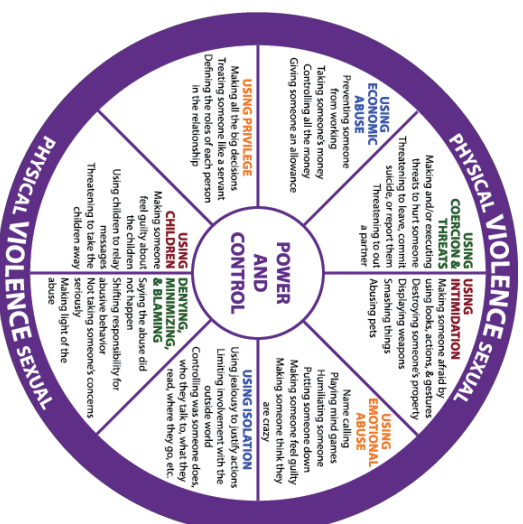
One in three women will experience domestic violence (DV) in her lifetime. DV does not occur in isolation; pathways exist to and from a whole spectrum of social issues. Individuals, families and communities experience these issues as deeply entwined and simultaneous, which calls for an integrated approach to addressing DV. The graphic below depicts three pathways from a much broader set of social issues.



Broader structural factors, such as discriminatory policies and cultural norms, shape the expression of these social issues and their relationship with DV. This results in disparities and inequities based on race, ethnicity, geography, socio-economic status, sexual identity, among many others. **It's time for leaders from multiple sectors to look at the whole picture and work together to develop bold response strategies that account for the complexity and scale of the issues.**

## Survivors face additional risks when they are...

- blamed, shamed, or not believed.
- pressured (or even required) to do certain things, some of which may actually put them at even greater risk.

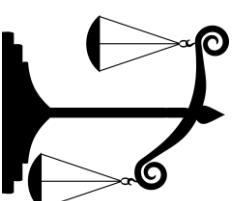
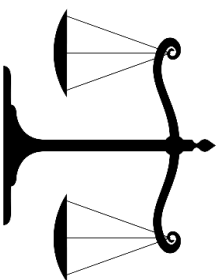
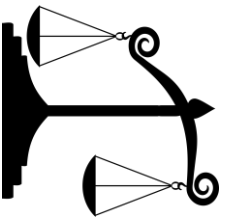


- experiencing intersecting forms of oppression, discrimination, etc.



## “Why do victims stay? Why don't they leave?”

- Many do leave, or end the relationship, or have made attempts.
- Decision-making process complicated by control and fear.
- “Staying” may mean survival; “leaving” may take time, planning, and lots of support.



# STALKING AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

## UNDERSTANDING THE CONNECTIONS:

OVER HALF OF STALKING OFFENDERS ARE CURRENT OR FORMER INTIMATE PARTNERS.<sup>1</sup>



Because of the possibility of multiple perpetrators, combined percentages might exceed 100%.

- 31.5% – Acquaintances
- 16% – Strangers
- 9% – Family Members
- 2.5% – Person of Authority

ALL STALKERS CAN BE DANGEROUS...<sup>2</sup>

**BUT INTIMATE PARTNER STALKERS, ON AVERAGE, POSE THE GREATEST THREATS TO THEIR VICTIMS.<sup>2</sup>**

They are more likely than non IP stalkers to physically approach the victim, use weapons, escalate behaviors quickly, follow through on threats and re-offend.

OFTEN CO-OCCURRING?<sup>3</sup>

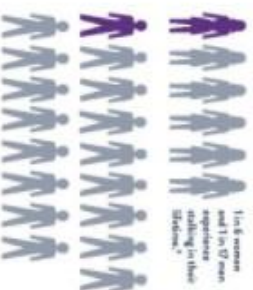
If an abuser follows, tracks, watches, excessively contacts, shares images of, gathers information about, threatens and/or otherwise scares their intimate partner, it is domestic violence AND stalking.

Stalking can happen before, during and/or after a domestic violence relationship.

WHEN DOES PARTNER STALKING OCCUR?<sup>3</sup>



BOTH STALKING AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ARE PREVALENT IN THE U.S.



81% of women who were stalked by a current or former husband or cohabiting partner were also physically assaulted by that partner.

85% Stalking often precedes intimate partner homicide. In 85% of completed and 75% of attempted femicides, there was at least one episode of stalking the year prior.

2 The average duration of intimate partner stalking is 2 years.

1. Bates, S.L., Thomas, L., Alameda, M.T., Brown, M., Murphy, M., Adams, A. (2018). "Stalking Prevalence Among and Types of Stalkers: Results from the National Crime Survey for England and Wales." *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 33(12), 2607-2620. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260518774441>  
2. Bates, S.L., Thomas, L., Alameda, M.T., Brown, M., Murphy, M., Adams, A. (2018). "Stalking Prevalence Among and Types of Stalkers: Results from the National Crime Survey for England and Wales." *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 33(12), 2607-2620. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260518774441>  
3. Bates, S.L., Thomas, L., Alameda, M.T., Brown, M., Murphy, M., Adams, A. (2018). "Stalking Prevalence Among and Types of Stalkers: Results from the National Crime Survey for England and Wales." *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 33(12), 2607-2620. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260518774441>  
4. Bates, S.L., Thomas, L., Alameda, M.T., Brown, M., Murphy, M., Adams, A. (2018). "Stalking Prevalence Among and Types of Stalkers: Results from the National Crime Survey for England and Wales." *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 33(12), 2607-2620. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260518774441>  
5. Bates, S.L., Thomas, L., Alameda, M.T., Brown, M., Murphy, M., Adams, A. (2018). "Stalking Prevalence Among and Types of Stalkers: Results from the National Crime Survey for England and Wales." *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 33(12), 2607-2620. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260518774441>

**Stalking Prevention and Resource Center (SPARC) funded by DOJ's  
Office on Violence Against Women**

<https://www.stalkingawareness.org/awareness-educators/>

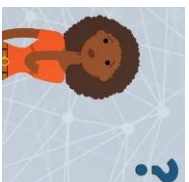
# WHAT IS STALKING?

## Behavioral Definition

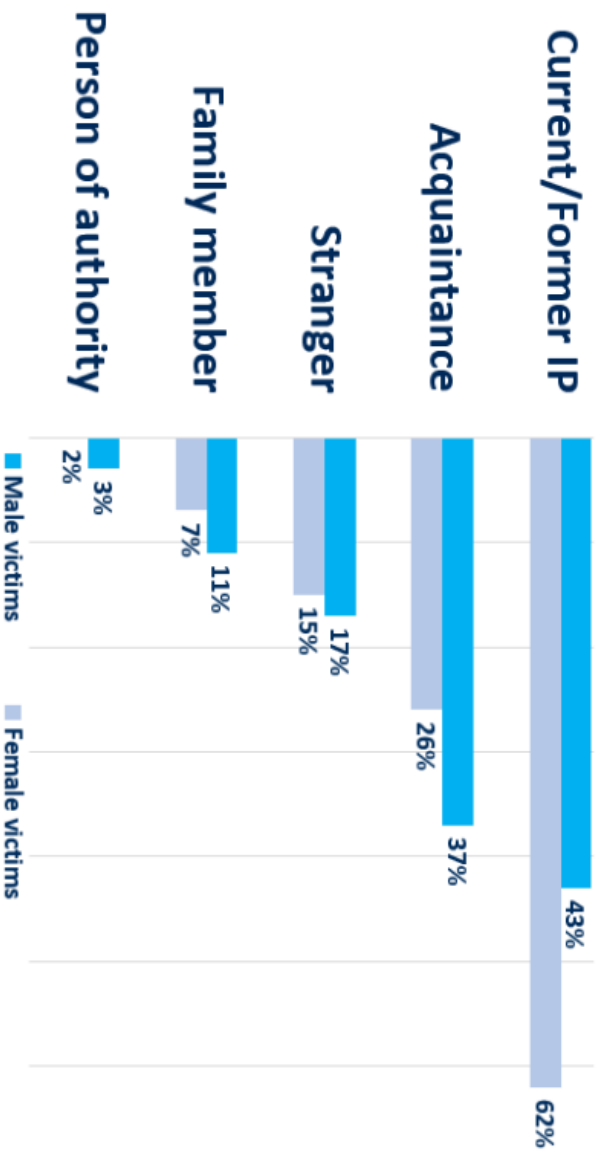
**Stalking is a pattern of behavior directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to feel fear for the person's safety or the safety of others; or suffer substantial emotional distress.**

# Overview of stalking

SPARC



# Who are Stalkers?



Smith, S.G., Chen, J., Basile, K.C., Gilbert, L.K., Merrick, M.T., Patel, N., Walling, M., & Jain, A. (2017). The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS): 2010-2012 State Report. Atlanta, GA: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control. CDC.

SPARC

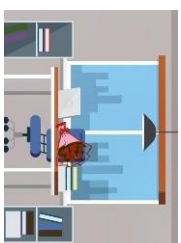
## More about stalking

*NIPSVS, more citations available at SPARC*

- At least 1 in 6 women and 1 in 17 men experience stalking in their lifetime.
- In vast majority of cases, the victim knows the person stalking them.
- Women are more likely than men to experience stalking.
- The majority of victims report the stalker is male, regardless of the victim's sexual orientation.
- Fewer than 40% of stalking victims report it to law enforcement.

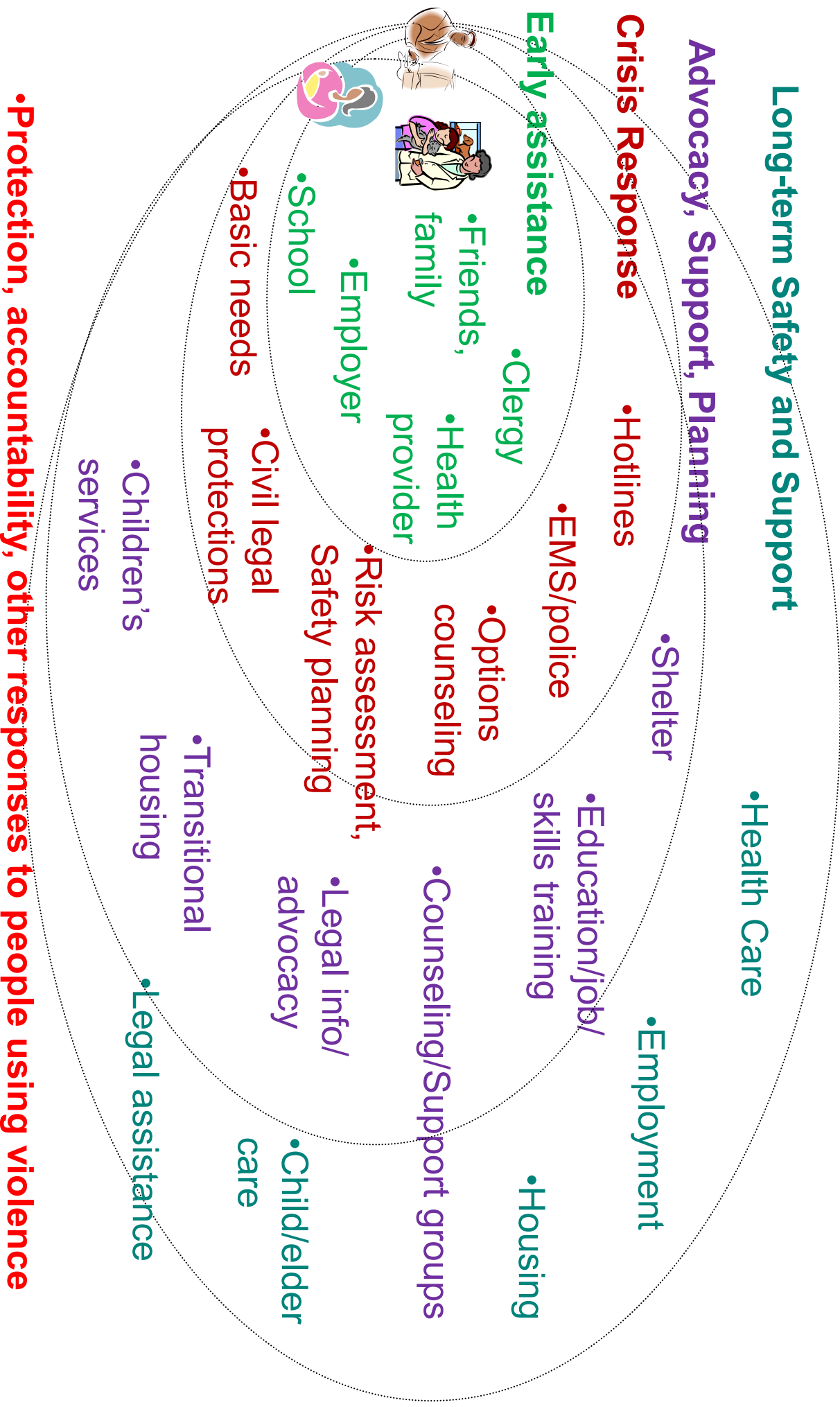
# Context is critical

SPARC



# Continuum of support for survivors

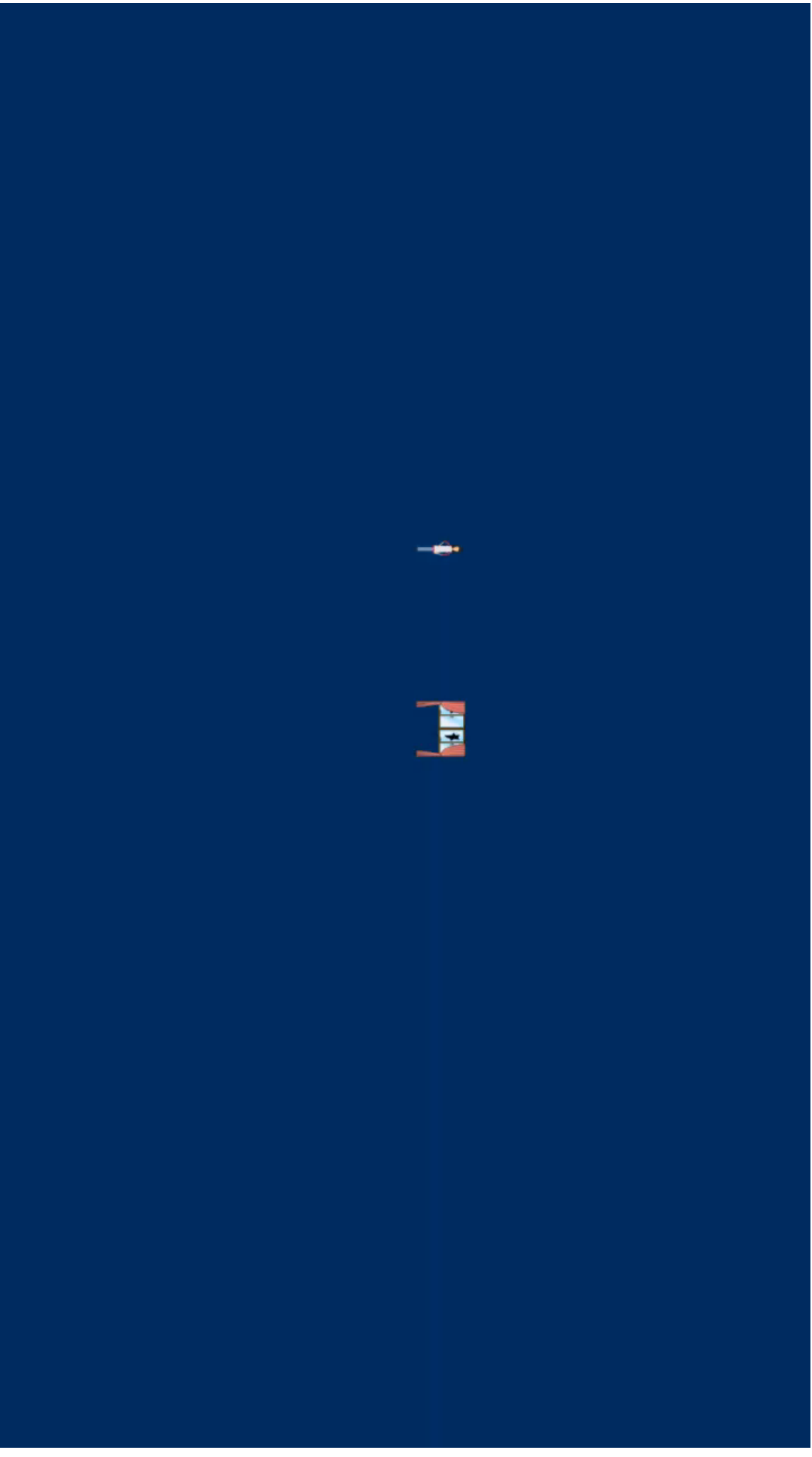
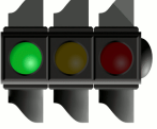
Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence (1997)





# Supporting those experiencing DV or stalking

SPARC



## Common pitfalls to avoid



- Reacting out of our own fear or a desire to “rescue”
- Assuming that leaving is the survivor’s goal, or that leaving will automatically make them safer
- Taking steps or actions on behalf of the survivor without their knowledge or permission
- Trying to mediate or intervene with the abusive person

## Offering resources



### NOT RECOMMENDED

- Couples/family counseling
- Mediation
- Anger management
- Individual counseling only



### RECOMMENDED

- DV hotlines
- Community-based advocacy programs
- Health care-based advocacy programs
- Providers who are DV knowledgeable



## DV shelters

- Space is hardly ever immediately available
- Many people can't or don't want to go to a shelter

***Support survivor in calling hotline themselves, assist with brainstorming other safe people they might stay with temporarily.***



## Restraining orders

- Offer a variety of protections under the law (Ch. 209A and Ch. 258E)
- Civil order, becomes a felony if violated – but still just a piece of paper
- Do not attempt to offer legal advice beyond your training

***Always offer to connect with a DV expert for more information and safety planning***



## Mandated reporting



In MA, DV is not reportable to protective services unless it involves reportable forms of abuse:

- Abuse of a child under 18
- Abuse of a person age 60 or older
- Abuse of a person with disabilities

***Disclose limits to confidentiality, consider risks associated with filing, connect survivor with DV expert for help with safety planning.***

## Help for people experiencing DV or stalking



- **National DV Hotline**

1-800-799-7233 (SAFE)

<http://www.thehotline.org>



- **National Center for Victims of Crime Stalking Resource Center**

<https://victimsofcrime.org/stalking-resource-center/>







Help for people who use abusive and controlling behaviors  
against a partner [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_xDQ8Vi5hZU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_xDQ8Vi5hZU)

## MA 10to10 Helpline

1-877-898-3411

<https://10to10helpline.org/>

**RATHER THAN  
HARMING YOUR PARTNER,  
CALL US FOR HELP.**

**10to10  
HELPLINE**

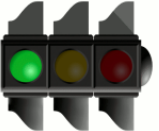
**365 DAYS A YEAR  
10am-10pm  
Confidential & Anonymous**

**REAL TALK. REAL HELP.  
877-898-3411**

Language Translation Services Available

Serving Massachusetts Adults/Teens  
247/365

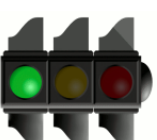
The graphic features a silhouette of a person's head and shoulders on the right side. The text is arranged in a clean, sans-serif font. The phone number 877-898-3411 is prominently displayed in large white letters. The background is a light gray with a subtle gradient.



## Intimate Partner Abuse Education programs

<https://www.mass.gov/service-details/intimate-partner-abuse-education-program-services>

- Designed for those who have been abusive, violent, or controlling toward a partner.
- Certified by DPH in MA, require certain components that prioritize offender accountability and victim safety.
- Take both court-referrals and self-referrals.



- **Sexual Assault Response and Prevention Center** provides free and confidential counseling and advocacy to Boston University students who have experienced a traumatic event (sexual assault, dating violence, and other types of interpersonal violence)

24/7    617-353-SARP (7277)    <https://www.bu.edu/shs/sarp/>

- **BU Faculty and Staff Assistance Office** provides free and confidential support for employees and immediate family members dealing with work or personal challenges.

M-F 9-5    617-353-5381    <https://www.bu.edu/fsao/>

- **Domestic Violence leave** (MGL ch.260) option for employees

# BMC Domestic Violence Program



Works across all BMC departments and disciplines to coordinate and improve the hospital's response to domestic violence.



## What we provide



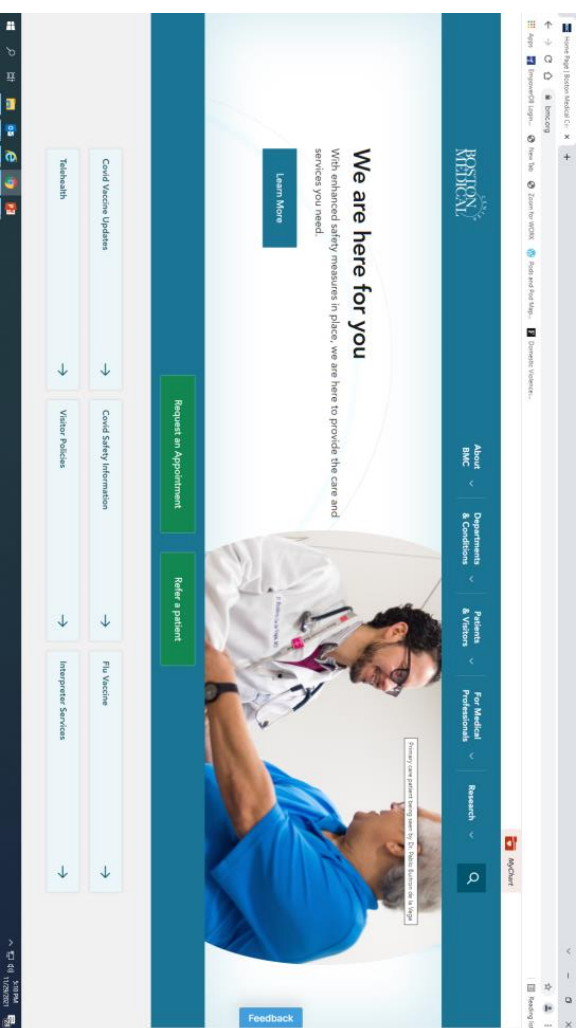
- Training and education
- Consultation and technical assistance
  - Policy, clinical practice, and research protocols
  - Identifying appropriate community resources for those impacted by DV
  - Concerns about an individual person or situation
- Safety and Support Advocacy Services

## Safety and Support advocacy services

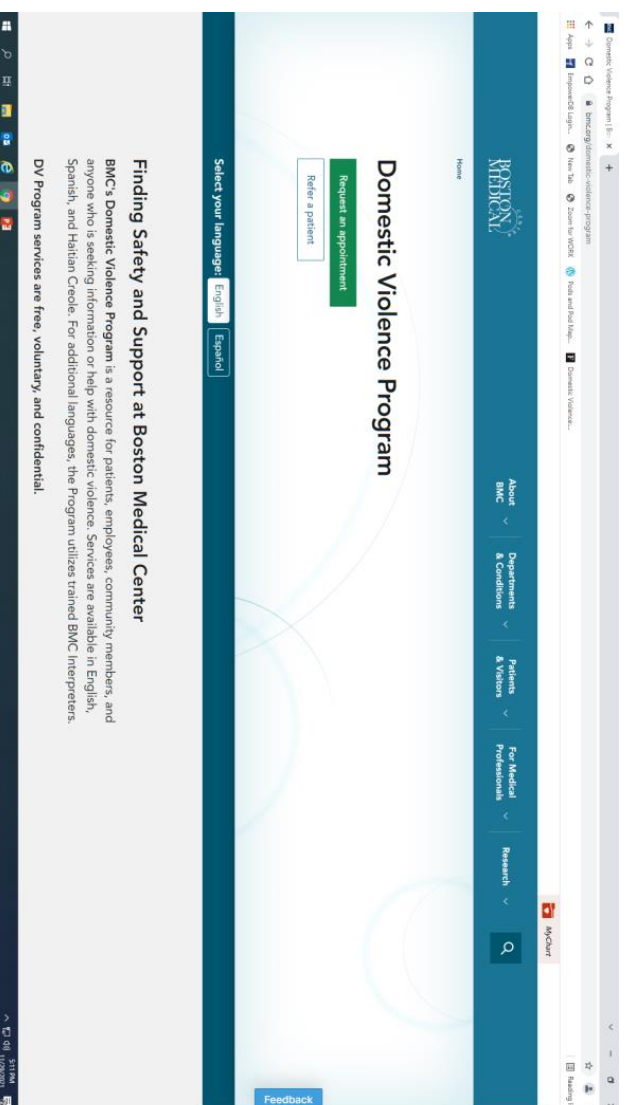


- Free, voluntary, and confidential (per state and federal statutes)
- Support survivor's priorities and goals, both short- and long-term
- Focus on risk assessment and safety planning  
regardless of relationship status; no requirement that they be planning to leave
- Provide advocacy, accompaniment, warm referrals to a wide range of additional resources

# For more information <https://www.bmc.org/programs/domestic-violence-program>



## Search “domestic violence”



# 14 languages



# Questions?

Contact Information:

To reach a Safety and Support Advocate  
617-414-5457

[Joanne.Timmons@bmc.org](mailto:Joanne.Timmons@bmc.org)  
617-414-7734

# Thank you!