

# DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

*"When we hear of domestic violence, our question should not be 'why does the woman stay,' but rather 'why does the man hit her?'"*

*— Jennifer M. Joyce, Circuit Attorney*

## The Problem

Domestic violence is a nationwide problem. On average of 3 women per day are killed by an intimate partner.<sup>1</sup> In Missouri, 22% of women report being physically hurt by an intimate partner in their lives.<sup>2</sup> Last year, the St. Louis Circuit Attorney's Victim Services had 673 new domestic violence cases. 3,568 domestic violence incidents were reported to the St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department in 2010. Domestic violence affects people equally regardless of economic status, education, or race. Domestic violence is not a gender issue, but a power issue.<sup>3</sup> Domestic violence is committed by the abuser as a way to intimidate and control their victim.

## Effects of Domestic Violence

The direct health care costs of domestic violence are approximately \$4.1 billion, with an additional \$1.8 billion in productivity losses associated with premature death. Domestic violence is not only perpetrated by men, women commit domestic violence acts as well.

Domestic violence has long-term health effects on the victim. Women who experience domestic violence are 80% more likely to have a stroke, 70% more likely to have heart disease, and 60% more likely to have asthma than women who are not abused.<sup>4</sup>

Domestic violence affects the entire family. 50% of men who assault their wife also assault their children.<sup>5</sup> 80-90% of children in homes with domestic violence are aware of the violence.<sup>6</sup> The strongest risk factor for transmitting violence from one generation to another is exposure to an abusive father.<sup>7</sup>

## How to Get Help

If you're a victim of domestic violence, there are national and local resources available to help. You can contact the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-SAFE or the local domestic violence hotline at 314-531-2003. If it's an emergency, call 911. The domestic violence hotlines will connect you with legal advocacy, counseling, and crisis intervention. There are shelters across Missouri that can assist victims. 93% of Missourians who utilized domestic violence programs report now having strategies to enhance their security.<sup>8</sup>

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### SOURCES

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5. Physical Violence in American Families; Risk Factors and Adaptations to Violence in 8,145 Families
6. Pagelow, "Effects of Domestic Violence on Children," *Mediation Quarterly*
7. American Psychological Association, *Violence and the Family: Report of the APA Presidential Task Force on Violence and the Family*, 1996
8. <http://www.mocadsv.org/>

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