



*Giving voice to the unspeakable...
responding to domestic abuse in Jewish homes.*

Myths and Misconceptions of Domestic Abuse

If the abuse isn't physical it is not considered domestic violence. *Physical violence is the easiest to detect, but abuse has various forms, which are often misunderstood and unreported. Abuse is emotional, verbal, psychological, financial, sexual and physical.*

Domestic abuse occurs in only the "non-religious"/ "religious" community. *Domestic abuse happens equally throughout the Jewish community regardless of religious belief or practice. 1 in 4 women will experience abuse in their lifetime.*

Abusers have psychological issues and therefore are unable to control their behavior. *It is a systematic pattern of using power and control for the sole purpose of manipulating a partner in an intimate relationship. Domestic abuse is often a learned behavior. Physical abuse is a choice.*

Abuse often stops on its own. Abusers can change. *Abuse cannot stop without intervention. Change can occur only if the abuser accepts responsibility for his/her behavior and gets treatment with a domestic abuse specialist.*

An abused woman could stop the abuse by changing her behavior. She provokes him. *Abuse is not caused by a woman's behavior, stress or financial problems. Abusers must take responsibility for their actions. There is no justification for domestic abuse.*

Middle class and affluent women are not abused. *Domestic abuse occurs equally among all sectors of society regardless of education, race, religion, or socio-economic status.*

"I would never stay in an abusive relationship." "She must be crazy." *Women stay because they are frightened of: losing their children, having limited finances, losing their home, the continuing harassment and the feeling that they will never be safe. Abuse is not 24/7, he can be loving and kind as well as abusive.*

If the abuse is kept quiet, it won't affect the children. *Approximately 90% of children are aware of the abuse directed at their mother. As silent witnesses they experience emotional, behavioral, cognitive, and physical effects that may impact their future relationships.*

Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender population do not experience domestic abuse. *Domestic abuse occurs equally within all communities regardless of sexual orientation.*

Abusers are abusive in all their relationships and are easy to detect. *Generally abusers appear charming, rational and likeable in public. Whereas, abused women often appear emotional, irrational, and difficult.*

Couples counseling is effective with couples experiencing domestic abuse. *Couples counseling can increase the risk of violence because it is based on equality. Domestic abuse is about one person having power and control over another.*

Women can be just as abusive as men. *It is reported that 5% of partner abuse victims are men. Of that number 3% were hurt due to women protecting themselves and their children.*



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Every marriage experiences some form of abuse. *Abuse is not about an occasional disparaging remark or flare of temper in the heat of an argument. It is a consistent pattern and very different from general family arguments.*

Jewish men are good husbands and good providers. They do not abuse drugs, alcohol or their wives or children. *Because we all tend to believe this image, Jewish women often blame themselves for the abuse, denying the reality of their lives. Abuse in the Jewish community mirrors society in general – Jewish families is not immune.*

There is no culturally sensitive place for Jewish Women experiencing Domestic Abuse to receive the support they need. *SHALVA is the only Jewish agency in the Chicago metropolitan area specifically certified by the State of Illinois to provide domestic abuse counseling. SHALVA is sensitive to the unique religious and cultural issues many Jewish families deal with while also addressing the universal needs all abuse survivors must face.*