

BREAKING the *SILENCE*

Do you know someone
who is abused?

You can help them

*"Speak up for those who cannot
speak for themselves, for the
rights of all who are destitute.
Speak up and judge fairly;
defend the rights of the poor
and needy."*

Prov. 31:8,9, NIV

What Is Abuse?

To abuse someone is to intentionally or unconsciously injure or damage him/her physically, psychologically/emotionally, or sexually with the purpose to intimidate, dominate, control and/or exercise power. Abuse can be isolated or habitual, premeditated or spontaneous. The one who inflicts the abuse is typically called the abuser, the one who is **abused** is typically called the **victim**.

Types of Abuse:

Physical: actions which cause humiliation, physical pain or injury, such as kicking, pushing, or punching.

Psychological/Emotional: actions which cause loss of self-esteem, and/or loss of self-determination, such as name calling, isolation, or criticizing.

Sexual: actions of a sexual nature that are unwelcome, uncomfortable, or forced; this includes rape.

Child Abuse: all of the above definitions, as well as neglect. This includes not providing for a child's basic needs such as food and clothing, and abandonment.

Abuse Is Wrong Because...

It destroys the body

“Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy: for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.”

I Corinthians 3: 16, 17

It robs children of their innocence

“But whosoever shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.”

Matthew 18:6

It lowers self-esteem

“Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it might benefit those who listen.”

Ephesians 4:29 (NIV)

It warps the perception about God

“Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons [and daughters] of God.”

I John 3:1

It is not God's plan for families

“...The Lord desires His people to give in their homes a representation of the order and harmony that pervade the heavenly courts.”

—Counsels On Health, p.101

It is not God's plan for our lives

“‘For I know the plans I have for you,’ declares the Lord, ‘plans to prosper you and not to harm you. Plans to give you hope and a future.’”

Jeremiah 29:11 (NIV)

Be Careful!

Abuse is a frightening and traumatic experience.

It is very important not to blame the victim.

Avoid Using Statements Such as These When Dealing with a Victim:

- “Are you making this up?”
- “Why are you telling me this?”
- “Are you sure you were raped? It’s probably all a misunderstanding.”
- “Everybody gets abused in some form at least once in their lifetime!”
- “What did you do to provoke it? You must have done something!”
- “It’s no big deal; you’ll get over it.”
- “Don’t tell anyone else about this; it’s too embarrassing.”
- “I’ve never heard of a man being abused! What kind of man are you, anyway?”
- “I’m sure she/he didn’t really mean to hurt you.”
- Don’t feel sad or bitter; Christians are suppose to be loving and happy!”

Instead, Use Comforting Statements Such as These:

- “I’m so sorry you had to go through this; no one should have to hurt.”
- “Let’s pray right now that the Lord shows us what to do next.”
- “Thanks for confiding in me; together we can find you some help!”
- “I believe you, and I know that you are telling the truth.”
- “I’m here for you whenever you feel like sharing and praying.”
- “It’s okay to cry.”
- “You have the right to feel the way you do.”
- “It’s not your fault; you didn’t do anything to deserve this.”
- “I may not know how you feel, but God does.”
- “I’ll keep checking up on you.”

Why Do They Stay?

- Fearful for his/her life.
- He/She has no other choice.
- He/She will be accused of lying.
- He/She will lose his/her children.
- Embarrassed to tell people.
- Feels it is his/her Christian duty to keep marriage together no matter what.
- Telling on older people is disrespectful.
- Guilt for what may happen to abuser if he/she leaves.
- Feels responsible for abuser's actions.
- He/She feels abuse is deserved.
- He/She may not get support from family and friends.
- A need to hold on to the good times in the relationship.
- Abuse may get worse if he/she tries to leave.
- Feels he/she may be strong enough to handle abusive situation.
- Fearful about surviving financially without abusive spouse.
- Hopes that abuser may change or has genuine love for abuser.

You Can Help:

- If he/she is in immediate danger, call the authorities and accompany him/her to the appropriate offices.
- Don't try to solve the abuse problem by yourself. Find out about abuse prevention agencies in your area and initiate contact to offer him/her the help needed.
- Listen without interrupting and don't feel as if you need to offer advice.
- Allow him/her to cry, and talk as he/she feels comfortable to do so.
- Encourage him/her to seek professional counseling from a licensed therapist who specializes in abuse cases.
- Don't bad mouth the abuser.
- Offer to be a prayer partner, to daily pray and offer encouragement when he/she feels weak or lonely.
- Invite them to join you on outings without bringing up the abuse situation.
- Keep your word and daily follow-up to see how he/she is doing.

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