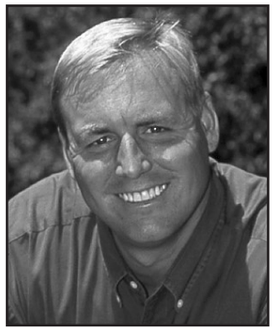

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Prepared with the assistance of the Office of the Attorney General
Crime and Violence Prevention Center

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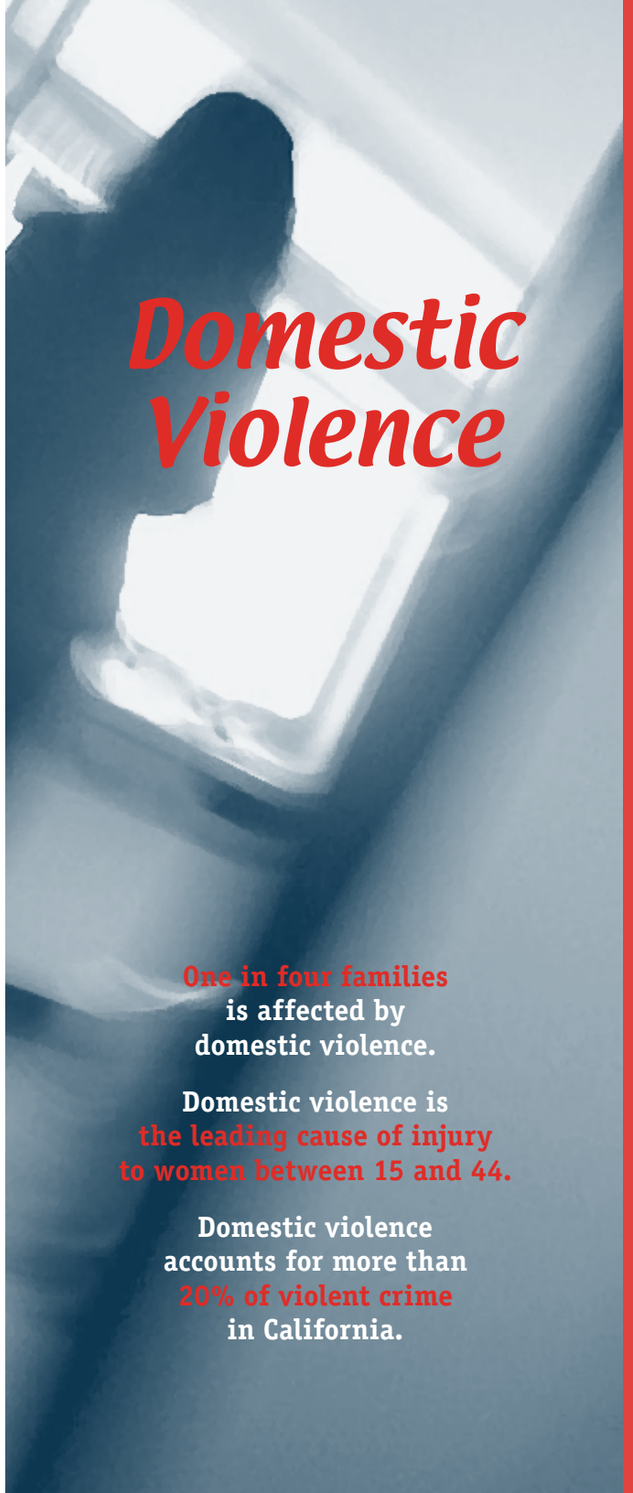

Domestic Violence

One in four families is affected by domestic violence.

Domestic violence is the leading cause of injury to women between 15 and 44.

Domestic violence accounts for more than 20% of violent crime in California.

Where To Go for Help

911 FOR LIFE-THREATENING EMERGENCIES

- **National Domestic Violence Hotline**
  This 24-hour line refers you to the local shelter or support group in your community.
  1-800-799-SAFE (1-800-799-7233)
- **Victims of Crime Resource Center**
  1-800-VICTIMS (1-800-842-8467)
- **Statewide California Coalition for Battered Women**
  1-888-722-2952
- **Office of the Attorney General Crime and Violence Prevention Center**
  The "Domestic Violence Handbook: A Survivor's Guide" is an invaluable resource, available through this office.
  1-916-324-7863
- **California Youth Crisis Line**
  1-800-843-5200
- **Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network Hotline**
  1-800-656-4673
- **SafeNetwork**
  A project of the California Department of Health Services, this website provides a directory of local resources and other helpful information.
  www.safenetwork.net

Make Note of these Numbers in Your Area

- **Local Police Department**
  _____
- **County Sheriff's Department**
  _____
- **Hospitals and Emergency Clinics**
  _____
  _____
  _____
  _____
- **Shelters**
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  _____
  _____
- **Emergency Crisis Hotline**
  _____
- **Child Protective Services**
  _____
- **Counseling**
  _____
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  _____
  _____
- **Legal Aid Office**
  _____
  _____

What is Domestic Violence?

Domestic violence is a crime. In California, it is a crime for any person to threaten, beat, sexually assault or otherwise harm another person, even if they are married to that person. Domestic violence includes hitting, yelling, threatening, name calling and other forms of verbal, sexual, emotional and physical abuse.

Domestic violence can be lethal. Although battering is not exclusively a crime against women, in 90% of reported incidents, women are the victims. Approximately 30% of female homicide victims in the United States are killed by their husbands or boyfriends.

Getting Out

Outsiders often say victims of domestic violence simply should walk away from their abusers. But for victims themselves, leaving can be much more complicated – and potentially deadly.

Fear, guilt, love, children, pride, embarrassment and finanical dependence can make it hard to face the cold reality of domestic violence. But more victims of abuse are breaking the cycle of violence and leaving dangerous relationships. When they do, victims often leave because they realize that the violence isn't going to stop, that it is getting worse or more frequent, or that one day the violence very well could kill them. Victims also leave to protect their children: children who are exposed to domestic violence can suffer long-term harm even if they themselves are not the victim.

People who suffer relationship violence find the courage to leave when they understand the violence they are suffering is not their fault, and that, like everyone else, they too have a right to live free from violence.

Are You in Danger?

- Does your partner frighten or intimidate you?
- Does your partner impose restrictions on the way you dress or your appearance?
- Is your partner extremely jealous?
- Are you forced to choose between your partner and your family and friends?
- Does your partner have an explosive temper?
- Have you been held down, shoved, hit, kicked, slapped, pushed or had things thrown at you?
- Has your partner forced or intimidated you into having sex?
- Are you afraid to end the relationship because you fear for your safety?

What if You Become a Victim?

- **Call 911 if the situation is life-threatening.**
- Call your local police or sheriff.
- **Get to a safe place.** Take your children, money, keys, driver's license, medicines, etc. with you. You can find a shelter or get help by calling 1-800-799-SAFE.
- **Get medical attention.** You may be hurt worse than you think.
- **Get help.** Contact local battered women's shelters or support groups.
- **Save evidence.** Photograph your injuries. Keep a record of all incidents. You may not want to press charges now, but you may change your mind later.

California Laws Against Domestic Violence

- Domestic violence – physical abuse committed against another adult in an ongoing or prior intimate relationship – is against the law.
- In California, spousal rape is a crime.
- Stalking is a crime.
- Restraining orders can be issued to protect the victim from the abuser. They can also be issued to stop stalking, destruction of personal property and harrassment.
- Law enforcement officers responding to domestic violence calls are required to give the victim the number of the local shelter and information on legal options.
- Law enforcement officers can make an arrest even if they didn't witness the incident.
- Victims will be notified when their abusers are to be released from jail or prison.
- Persons who violate domestic violence restraining orders will be arrested and held for at least 48 hours.

- Survivors of domestic violence cannot be discriminated against by insurers.
- Persons convicted of spousal abuse, stalking or violating a domestic violence restraining order cannot own or possess a gun for ten years.

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