

ABIPA – ASHEVILLE BUNCOMBE INSTITUTE OF PARITY ACHIEVEMENT

Eight Common Myths About Domestic Violence

By JéWana Grier-McEachin, Executive Director

This month we honor survivors of Domestic Violence.

Statistics show that only 1% of domestic violence disputes are reported to police each year. And, as many as three out of four Americans know of a person who was or is being abused by another individual. But, a lot of times, nothing is done about it.

Here are some of the most common myths about domestic violence.

1. Domestic Violence is Only Physical

Emotional abuse can be just as devastating as physical violence, and have long term effects. When a victim only hears and receives negative reinforcement from a person they should be able to trust, they start to buy into all those lies. This can lead to depression, lack of social development, or low self-esteem.

2. Domestic Violence Should Stay Behind Closed Doors

Extended family members and friends will often see evidence of domestic violence and do nothing. They have the misconception that it is a private family matter. When a violent situation is happening right in front of you, something more serious could happen to the victim later on.

3. Most Times Domestic Violence Isn't That Serious

No matter the degree of violence that is taking place, domestic violence should always be taken seriously. It's an illegal offense in the US and is considered to be a serious crime that's punishable by law. Domestic violence, however tiny it may seem, if left unchallenged, will only worsen as time goes by.

4. Domestic Violence is Due to an Anger Management or Impulse Control Problem

While abusers may have anger issues, they deliberately choose who they lash out at. For instance, violent people won't typically punch or slap their boss, but they won't hesitate to use violent force on their spouse or children.

5. A Person Can't Break Away from the Domestic Violence Cycle

If a person was abused as a child, there is a greater chance that they will have violent tendencies towards their children as well. They might find themselves living out the same poor choices of their parents. This doesn't have to be everyone's story. There are hundreds



JéWana Grier-McEachin. Photo: Pro16 Productions

and thousands of victims who came from violent situations and decided to break the cycle. A parent can't necessarily be blamed for the behavior of their violent adult child.

6. Victims Provoke Violence

It doesn't matter if a family member or spouse provokes someone to anger. There is never an excuse or a situation where it is justifiable to hurt or verbally abuse another person.

7. Violence Usually Only Happens to People of Lower Income

Domestic violence does not just happen to people who live in lower-income communities, or families that struggle with substance abuse. People from the middle-class and upper-class deal with violence as well. They just do a better job of covering it up.

8. It's Easy for a Victim to Escape from an Abusive Relationship

From an outside perspective, it might seem easy for a victim in an abusive situation to get out or seek help. But fear has a crippling effect on the victim, immobilizing them from any attempt or thought of escape. They're wrestling with the fear of the unknown—of not making it financially without their partner, of being discovered by the abuser after they've tried to escape, of so many things. They may have even been told by their abuser that if they ever tried to escape, they and their children would be put in extreme danger. Their situation can become critical if the abuser sees them leaving, or discovers the victim's intentions.

Help End the Cycle of Abuse

It's easy for individuals who have never been through an abusive experience to believe these myths. We all seem to have our own opinions about everything. Because of this, myths and misinformation can easily spread, which can lead to neglect, or turning a blind-eye, when victims desperately need our help.

Do you know of someone in a situation that just doesn't sit right with you? Maybe at this very minute, you may be thinking of someone who needs someone else to speak up for them. Don't sit back and do nothing. Be their voice when they can't speak up. Domestic violence is never okay, no matter the circumstances.

If you or someone you know is in need of help, contact the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-7233 or TTY 1-800-787-3224.



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Kelly White, MHE, MPH. Photo: Pro16 Productions

Celebrating Strong Women

by Kelly White, MHE, MPH,
ABIPA Health Education Program Manager

October happens to be one of my favorite months!

Not only is it my birthday month, but we also celebrate the lives of those women who, seen and unseen, are fighting the battle against breast cancer. This month, we are lifting them up and bringing awareness about the importance of getting a mammogram.

The more we know about our health leads us to better health outcomes. Arming yourself with health information is called having health literacy. Health literacy helps us to understand what is needed to improve our bodies and minds. It is a fact that health literacy and health outcomes are linked to one another.

For example, as a patient with a new diagnosis of diabetes, it will be important to know how to check your blood sugar and what range it should be in. Knowing that diabetes can affect more than just one body system, as well as some of the things you need to watch for are also important. Not knowing this information could lead to long-term health issues that have the potential to limit your ability to live the life you want to live.

Communication and building a partnership with your provider are the first pieces of the puzzle. Asking your provider questions about what optimal health looks like for you, and making sure that you understand any medications that are prescribed, are just a couple of things that we can do to increase our health literacy.

Since everyone does not digest health information at the same level of understanding, it may be a good idea to take someone with you who can be your advocate and ask any questions you

may not feel comfortable asking.

If you would like to know more, meet up with the ABIPA and HERS team this month at our annual Breast Cancer Awareness night where we will light up the night, share love and laughter, talk about health and wellbeing, and take care of each other.

Special Events



Pretty in Pink Night Walk Saturday, October 28

The walk begins at 5:30 p.m. at TC Roberson Track. We encourage you to wear pink in honor of cancer survivors and those we have lost.

Trunk or Treat Tuesday, October 31

Held at Maple Crest from 5:30 until 8 p.m. If you or your organization are interested in donating or participating, please email jewana@abipa.org, or call or text (828) 778-7122.

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ABIPA promotes economic, social, and healthy parity achievement for African Americans and other underserved populations in Buncombe County through advocacy, education, research, and community partnerships.

