

Understanding Domestic Violence

By *PRO Molly McKay, Beta Psi-Alabama*

Attorney for Domestic Violence, Family Law, Child Abuse and Neglect

Domestic violence is the leading cause of injury to American women ages 15-54. This statistic has remained fairly constant over the last 25 years, despite increased awareness and intensified legal responses to the problem. The U.S. Justice Department reports that more than 2.5 million women experience violence every year.

These startling statistics are only the beginning of the problems. Children who grow up in homes with domestic violence, show significant physical impacts from the experience — even if they are not physically abused themselves. Medical studies using MRI technology have found that young children who live in war-torn areas, such as the Middle East, Africa or Belfast, show a marked decrease in brain structure development. This disadvantage impacts their cognitive and emotional functioning for the rest of their lives. Young children who reside in homes with domestic violence show the same impact on brain development. They are essentially living in a war zone.

Law enforcement reporting standards in many jurisdictions now require officers who respond to domestic disturbance situations to state in their incident report whether there were children present when the violence occurred. This information can then be used by victim assistance coordinators to assist the abused woman in seeking help, not only for herself, but also for her children. In some states, if she fails to seek such assistance for her children, that failure can result in a report to Child Protective Services and the potential loss of custody of her children. She may become a victim again.

Common traits of domestic violence victims

You may wonder why a woman would fail to act if faced with that possible loss of her children. There is no easy answer. What common traits do victims of domestic violence share that lead them to remain in this situation? The single most powerful trait is a lack of self-esteem or poor self image. These traits augment feelings of powerlessness and a sense of no control over their lives.

Victims often accept the abuser's premise that the abuse is her fault; that no one else would put up with her and that society will blame her for the failure of the relationship. The abuser will often isolate the victim from family and friends who might challenge his control. He will often control the financial resources and use the threat of taking custody of the children from her as tools to reinforce his control and her powerlessness.

What can you do?

If you suspect that a friend, relative or sister is in a domestic violence situation, first and foremost, approach her in a caring and non-judgmental way with your concerns. Don't be surprised or embarrassed if she denies the possibility. Keep lines of communication open so you are there for her in crisis situations and the suspected abuser cannot cut her off from you. Keep contact in a

manner that doesn't put her at greater risk. If she acknowledges abuse, but minimizes the frequency or brutality, help her recognize the impact on herself and her children. Assist her in developing a safety plan. (Check a local women's shelter for details and resources.)

Components of a safety plan

In general, the components of a safety plan must vary to fit a particular situation, but there are common elements to consider.

- If there is an opportunity to leave the situation, secure financial accounts and credit cards free from the abuser's control.
- Store copies of important documents (Social Security cards, birth certificates and tax records) where they can be accessed.
- Find a new residence, even if it is temporary.
- Develop a written emergency plan, and ask a co-worker, friend or trusted family member familiar with the situation to hold it. This person has the important responsibility to check up on her welfare if she doesn't make it to work one day or otherwise can't be found to assure her safety.

Firsthand experience

I was part of a client's safety plan and the person to call if the client unexpectedly didn't come to work. When the client didn't show up for work one day, I got a call from a worried co-worker. I forced law enforcement to take the situation seriously, but I was too late. She was found dead as a result of her partner's abuse.

As society's awareness of domestic violence has increased, the responses to it have improved. The American Medical Association encourages family practitioners and gynecologists to assess patients for signs of domestic violence, raise the question and offer services if there is suspected abuse. Law enforcement has put response protocols in place to improve services to victims and their children. Emergency response systems, like 911 service, has improved the tracking of "hang up" or interrupted calls so that a response can be made to the site of a suspicious call. Do these improvements assure the safety of every woman? No. Are there are still many things that need to be done? Yes.

Remember, domestic violence doesn't just happen to others. It happens to our friends, our family members, our sisters and to us. Reach out to a woman who is hurting and offer her your strength, your compassion and your knowledge. You may save her life.

Molly McKay is an attorney for domestic violence, family law, child abuse and neglect. She is a member of the North Carolina and Alabama State Bar Associations, has served as a guest lecturer at numerous forums and is an active Delta Gamma alumna.



Wellness for
Women

WELL AWARE

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The Blueprints of Etiquette

By Alpha Iota advisory team chairman Kate Brady Stanton, Alpha Iota-Oklahoma

Have you ever noticed the blueprints of a beautiful home? There are many drawings perfectly prepared to scale. Each drawing depends on the next. The attention to detail — including lighting fixtures, cabinet hardware and door trim — all well-planned, thought-out and documented. When building a home, the little things make a difference!

The same principles apply when it comes to etiquette. Being aware of what is acceptable for a business meeting is similar to a city planner drawing plans in accordance with the zoning laws. Be aware of what is legal, acceptable and needed to "Do Good."

Building the thank-you tunnel

It is believed the White House lights were not extinguished until Jackie Kennedy wrote her thanks from the days' events. In today's world of e-mail and cell phones, it does not take much effort to remind someone that you care. However, a letter on nice paper or a self-addressed thank you note provides a personal touch. Purchase note cards, write timely messages and do not start off with the words "thank you." Make the note longer than three sentences and be sure to include a business card (you never know where the thank you might lead!).

Creating a napkin nook

In business or social dining, be sure to place the napkin on your lap as soon as you sit down at the table. If you leave the table for any reason, place the napkin on your chair. Do not place a soiled napkin near the eating environment. When you exit, either leave the napkin on your chair or place it on the table, but only if everyone is leaving the table, as well.

Pouring phone call patios

From volunteer positions to full-time jobs, be prompt when returning phone calls. Attempt to return all phone calls within the same day. If you cannot return someone's call, try to send an e-mail stating when you plan to do so.

While patios are meant for relaxing and good times, personal calls should be made from your *home* patio. Within the business environment, personal phone calls inhibit the pace of your work. Be mindful of what is acceptable to your supervisor and peers.

Designing a lipstick living room

Lipstick is only for your lips, not napkins or glassware. Be sure to blot your lipstick prior to arriving at an event. If you plan to reapply, it is best to excuse yourself and do so in the restroom.

Wallpapering perfume powder rooms

While many of us enjoy wearing a fragrant scent, overpowering perfumes are not welcome at the office. With many allergies in today's community, it is safe to refrain from wearing any perfumes or only wear those that are light.

Decorating e-mail entry halls

While e-mail communication has increased various areas of productivity, keep its challenges in mind. Do not put anything in an e-mail message you would not want published on the front cover of the *ANCHORA*. If you hesitate in sending a message, you most likely should refrain from sending the note. Remember, you can not manage people, relationships or your sisters by e-mail alone.

Kate Stanton is a Higher Education Administrator at The University of Oklahoma and well loved ATC at Alpha Iota-Oklahoma. She is an extremely active alumna, having contributed to the ANCHORA and other publications in the past.

Career Corner



Name: Kathleen (Kate) Brady Stanton

Chapter of Initiation: Alpha Iota-Oklahoma

Favorite chapter memory: Laughing! We laughed all the time and still do. As we say now, "We are the funniest people we know."

Occupation: Higher Education Administrator

Place of employment: Executive Director, Health Sciences Center Student Affairs, The University of Oklahoma

Required education: bachelor's degree (master's degree preferred) and four or five years of relative experience within higher education.

Hours worked per week: 60-75 (and then there are weekends with student leadership retreats, campus and student events!)

Favorite attribute of job: Students! Working with professional students is a dream. They are amazing individuals with the world ahead of them. It is a joy to be part of their adventure. I also love the ability to do a variety of tasks within my role, from hiring new employees, overseeing budgets and helping a student plan an event to celebrating the University daily by living our mission.

Least favorite attribute of job: Nothing! I love my job! Every job has trade-offs, this is by far my favorite and most challenging one.

Words of advice for women interested in pursuing this career: Work in multiple areas on a university's campus. Know that higher education is full-circle: from fundraising and special event planning to building upkeep and ground maintenance, each staff member is vital to the university's success. Learn to communicate and be assertive. Trust your instincts and be the first to say you were wrong. Follow up every event with a thank you note.

*Wellness e-mails are now online:
www.deltagamma.org/wellness_emails.shtml*

Make the Cable Connection

www.deltagamma.org/cable_connection.com

Just graduated, relocated or changed career paths?
Cable Connection can help!



Funded by the Delta Gamma Foundation, Cable Connection is a networking program that matches DGs looking for career advice with mentors who offer their guidance and expertise.

Go to www.deltagamma.org/cable_connection.shtml and fill out the "Requesting Advice" form today!

Women in the Workforce

By Laura Coutant, Gamma Rho-Wittenberg
Immigration Coordinator for World Wrestling Entertainment, Inc.,

Women are often overlooked for promotions and are seemingly underappreciated in today's work force. According to a report by the University of Maryland Women Studies Program, there are currently more women holding management positions than at any other time, though few have made the breakthrough to top-level executive positions. The report states that estimates suggest only one to two percent of senior executive level officials are women.

The reasons for being passed over for a promotion are not specific and the general consensus has been that men will "dedicate" themselves more to the job than women. Moreover, the report states that men are doing the hiring, and trends have shown that they would prefer to hire a man over a woman because it is a relationship with which they are comfortable.

The American Federation of Labor – Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) reports that since the 1970s, there has been a 100 percent increase in the number of women workers. This development is important. Although more women are joining the work force, the wage gap has continued to widen. According to the report, women earned 77 cents for every dollar a man earned in 2002. It states that the average 25-year-old woman, who works full-time, year-round until she retires at age 65, will earn \$523,000 less than the average man.

Now is the time to make a difference for generations to come. It is the responsibility of this generation to carry on the successes of those women who came before us. There are different ways to make your presence in the workforce distinguished and recognized:

1. Be consistent.

Prioritize your agenda and meet deadlines. Show that you are dependable and an asset to any company.

2. Apply for a promotion.

Let the company know you are interested in taking on new and advanced assignments. It will make you a valuable employee and show you are interested in a leadership position.

3. Know your product.

Learn and become proficient in your field. Being knowledgeable about your career attests to your willingness to be more involved in the company.

4. Speak up for yourself.

If you feel you are doing a great job, and no one is noticing, take time out and discuss it with your

supervisor. Many times, they are just as busy as you and may not take the time to acknowledge your hard work like.

Great strides have been made in the past century for women in the workplace. While we value what has been done, all the hard work that our mothers, grandmothers and great-grandmothers have accomplished will make the transition we are now experiencing in the workplace seem effortless.

Laura Coutant is the Immigration Coordinator for World Wrestling Entertainment, Inc. She has coordinated multiple international tours and has been repeatedly recognized for her efforts by the Pentagon and other U.S. Government Agencies.

PROs are a special group of alumnae who volunteer as resources for the Fraternity. They make up Delta Gamma's speakers bureau and are available to alumnae and collegiate chapters for presentations and workshops. We will feature PROs in this and upcoming Well Aware issues. For more information or to schedule a PRO visit, contact Coordinator of Resource Development Leslie Loop at lesliel@deltagamma.org.

Susan Rhein Stewart, Beta Zeta-Denison
Healthcare Executive and Consultant
Syracuse, New York

Workshop and Presentation Topics:

- Fraternity Heritage
- Fraternity Lifetime/Opportunities
- Motivation
- Goal Setting
- Creating/Living a Personal Mission Statement
- Grief Loss and Education
- Community Service/Volunteerism
- Leadership
- Life Stages
- Caregiving/Life Care Options
- Celebrating Marriage at End of Life



from the
PROfiles

Kristine Adams Marsella, Delta Eta-Cal State, Sacramento
Organizational Development and Human Relations Director
Modesto, California

Workshops and Presentation Topics:

- Communication
- Group Behaviors
- Team Building
- Conflict Resolution
- Goal Setting
- Leadership
- Career Development
- Time Management
- Presentation Skills
- Conducting Effective Meetings
- Power of Positive Influence
- Facilitation Skills for leaders
(group problem-solving)



The information in this Well Aware Update should not be considered complete or used in place of a call or visit to a professional.

Monthly Observances and Contacts

Each organization has materials available unless otherwise noted.



March

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American Diabetes Alert Day

American Diabetes Association
1701 N. Beauregard St.
Alexandria, VA 22311
(800) DIABETES
askada@diabetes.org
[www.diabetes.org/
communityprograms-and-
localevents/
americanidiabetesalert.jsp](http://www.diabetes.org/communityprograms-and-localevents/americanidiabetesalert.jsp)

1-31

National Eye Donor Month

Eye Bank Assn. of America
1015 18th St., N.W., Suite 1010
Washington, D.C. 20036
(202) 775-4999
info@restoresight.org
www.restoresight.org
Contact: Comm. Coordinator

1-31

National Nutrition Month®

2005: Get A Taste for Nutrition!

American Dietetic Assn.
120 S. Riverside Plaza, Suite 2000
Chicago, IL 60606-6995
(800) 877-1600 x4771
nnm@eatright.org
[www.eatright.org/Public/
NutritionInformation/92_11422.cfm](http://www.eatright.org/Public/NutritionInformation/92_11422.cfm)
Contact: Knowledge Center

1-31

Workplace Eye Health and Safety Month

Prevent Blindness America
211 W. Wacker Dr., Suite 1700
Chicago, IL 60606
(800) 331-2020
info@preventblindness.org
www.preventblindness.org

1-31

American Red Cross Month

American Red Cross
431 18th St. N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20006
(202) 303-4498
info@redcross.org
www.redcross.org
Contact: Greta Petrilla

1-31

Save Your Vision Month

American Optometric Association
243 N. Lindbergh Blvd.
St. Louis, MO 63141
(314) 991-4100
slthomas@aoa.org
www.aoa.org
Contact: Susan Thomas

1-31

National MS Education and Awareness Month

Multiple Sclerosis Foundation
6350 N. Andrews Ave.
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33309
(800) 225-6495
toni@ms.focus.org
[www.msfocus.org/
programs_events/prog_edumth.html](http://www.msfocus.org/programs_events/prog_edumth.html)
Contact: Toni Somma

April

7

National Alcohol Screening Day

Screening for Mental Health, Inc.
One Washington St., Suite 304
Wellesley Hills, MA 02481
(781) 239-0071
nasd@mentalhealthscreening.org
www.NationalAlcoholScreeningDay.org
Contact: Sharon Pigeon

17-23

National Volunteer Week

Points of Light Foundation
Volunteer Centers National Network
1400 I St. N.W., Suite 800
Washington, D.C. 20005
(202) 729-8168
volunteerweek@pointsoflight.org
www.pointsoflight.org/nvw/nvw.cfm
Contact: Kimberli Meadows

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2005 WalkAmerica

March of Dimes Birth Defects Fntn.
1275 Mamaroneck Ave.
White Plains, NY 10605
(888) M-O-DIMES
(800) 525-WALK
walkamerica@modimes.org
www.walkamerica.org
Contact: Katrina Edwards

1-30

Cancer Control Month

American Cancer Society
1599 Clifton Rd., N.E.
Atlanta, GA 30329
(800) ACS-2345
www.cancer.org
Contact: Local chapters

1-30

Counseling Awareness Month

American Counseling Assn.
5999 Stevenson Ave.
Alexandria, VA 22304-3300
(800) 347-6647
aca@counseling.org
www.counseling.org
Contact: Jean Gaskins

1-30

National Autism Awareness Month

Autism Society of America
7910 Woodmont Ave., Suite 300
Bethesda, MD 20814-3067
(800) 3-AUTISM
conference@autism-society.org
www.autism-society.org
Contact: Edward M. Shipley

1-30

Women's Eye Health and Safety Month

Prevent Blindness America
211 W. Wacker Dr., Suite 1700
Chicago, IL 60606
(800) 331-2020
info@preventblindness.org
www.preventblindness.org

1-30

National Donate Life Month

Division of Transplantation U.S. Dept.
of Health and Human Services
Parklawn Building, Rm. 12C-06
5600 Fishers Lane
Rockville, MD 20857
(301) 443-7577
ask@hrsa.gov
[www.organdonor.gov/
donatelife.htm](http://www.organdonor.gov/donatelife.htm)
Contact: Joy Demas

1-30

Sexual Assault Awareness Month

National Sexual Violence
Resource Center
123 N. Enola Dr.
Enola, PA 17025
(877) 739-3895
resources@nsvrc.org
www.nsvrc.org

1-30

Sports Eye Safety Month

American Academy of Ophthalmology
P.O. Box 7424
San Francisco, CA 94120
(415) 447-0213
eyemd@aao.org
www.aao.org
Contact: Comm. Dept.

1-30

Candlelight Vigil for Eating Disorders Awareness

Nat'l Assn. of Anorexia Nervosa
and Associated Disorders
Box 7
Highland Park, IL 60035
(847) 831-3438
anad20@aol.com
www.anad.org
Contact: Millie Plotkin

1-30

National Child Abuse Prevention Month

Children's Bureau
Admin. for Children and Families
330 C St. S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20447
(800) 394-3366
nccanch@caliber.com
[http://nccanch.acf.hhs.gov/topics/
prevention/index.cfm](http://nccanch.acf.hhs.gov/topics/prevention/index.cfm)
Contact: Customer Services Dept.

Source: 2005 National Health Observances, National Health Information Center, Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Washington, D.C.