

Why Victims Stay



- Fear**
 - Of more serious injury or of death.
 - Of trying to make it on her own.
- Shame**
 - Of having a failed marriage.
 - Traditional responsibility for the home rests with the wife (e.g., if she had been a better cook)
 - Social Stigma - "It's not supposed to happen in families like mine!"
- Hope**
 - Every time abuser apologizes, the victim wants to believe.
 - When abuser isn't being abusive, abuser is nice.
 - If victim could be a better spouse or partner, maybe victim could control abuser's violence.
- Money**
 - Abuser controls the money. The checking account and credit cards are in the abuser's name only.
 - The victim may not have a job.
 - Abuser gives victim an allowance and demands receipts for everything spent.
- Dependence on Batterer**
 - The more dependent batterer makes victim, the less likely victim will leave.
 - Batterer may force victim to give up working outside the home.
 - Batterer may not allow victim to go to school or to work.
 - Batterer may sell or disable victim's car.
 - Batterer may isolate victim from family and friends.
 - Batterer may disable or remove phones from the house when batterer is not home.

6. **Children**

- Victim wants the children to have two parents.
- Victim both stays and leaves because of children.
- A batterer may threaten or abuse the children as a means of intimidating and controlling the victim's behavior.
- People who choose not to report violence may not realize that they risk losing custody of their children.
- Abused children may remain silent out of fear that the batterer will retaliate and further abuse their parent, themselves, or their siblings.
- Child welfare agencies and domestic violence services routinely function along parallel tracks but with no coordination. At times they are in conflict with each other, as child welfare agencies' commitment to keeping victims safe. In the extreme, victims whose children have been abused may be taken to court for failing to protect their children, with no investigation into whether the person may have been abused.

7. **Love**

- Victim may stop loving the batterer despite the abuse.
- Battering doesn't usually occur every day. About 1 in 5 women victimized by their spouse or ex-spouse reported that they had been a victim of a series of at least 3 assaults in the last 6 months.
- Batterers can - at times - be very loving and caring, lavishing gifts on the victim, writing personal notes and poems, or doing other things that are very romantic.

8. **Family Pressure**

- Lack of family support.
- "You made your bed, now lie in it."

9. **Religious Reasons**

- Marriage is "for better or for worse."
- Batterers sometimes use scriptures to justify their actions.
- Clergy may be misinformed about the phenomenon of domestic violence or child abuse and may inadvertently send a signal to abused women and children that they should endure the abuse to protect another family member or to save the marriage.

10. **Victims in Rural Areas**

- Referral services may be located in towns or cities miles away from home.
- Victims may be reluctant to make long-distance phone calls that will be listed on the monthly bill.
- Public transportation is scarce.
- Victims may fear that their batterer will check the mileage on vehicles, which they often do.
- Police officers are often miles from the scene of abuse, and it may take hours for them to respond.
- Families residing in rural areas move less frequently, often staying in the same county, or even the same house, for generations. Physical safety means leaving behind family, friends, and all that is familiar.
- Because some adults and children seldom leave the immediate communities in which they live, they may not know that domestic violence and child abuse are crimes.
- Close relationships among community members may lead victims and children to seek assistance from family members or friends rather than from police, advocates or other services.
- Orders of Protection may be issued only at courthouses during limited hours on specified days of the week.
- Circuit-riding prosecutors and judges who try and hear cases throughout the district or state may be available only periodically. []