

# I PLEDGE<sup>®</sup>...

## Talking Points and Key Messages

- Domestic violence affects 1 in 3 women across the United States. This is an issue that impacts you, your family, your neighborhood, your workplace and your community.
- It has widespread implications for the entire city, impacting the workforce, emergency rooms, the courts, the child welfare system, law enforcement, the behavioral health sector and many other access points where people receive services.
- The iPledge<sup>®</sup> Campaign offers the community a clear way to get involved in the effort to end domestic violence.
- This is a public health issue that will only end when we take a collective stand against it.
- Please sign the pledge against violence at [www.iPledgeWAA.org](http://www.iPledgeWAA.org) and download the toolkit to get involved!

## MYTH BUSTERS

**MYTH:** If the victim doesn't leave the relationship or press charges, they are partially to blame for the abuse.

**TRUTH:** There are serious factors that weigh on a person's decision to leave, including financial implications, shared custody of children, lack of affordable housing options, shame and stigma, cultural and religious norms, and fear of reprisal. Leaving is often one of the most dangerous times in the relationship, since abusive partners feel they are losing control and will often use extreme tactics including threatening to hurt or kill the victim and/or their family if they attempt to leave. A person experiencing abuse should

[www.iPledgeWAA.org](http://www.iPledgeWAA.org)

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create a safety plan to identify strategies for enhancing safety in navigating the relationship. Trained counselors can assist with this through the National Domestic Violence Hotline 1-800-799-7233 or the Philadelphia Domestic Violence Hotline 1-866-723-3014.

**MYTH:** If a person had better self-esteem their partner wouldn't abuse them.

**TRUTH:** Domestic or dating violence has nothing to do with self-esteem. It is about the perpetrator wielding power and control over their loved one. It is not the victim's fault, and will not go away with better self-esteem.

**MYTH:** Abusers use violence against their partners because they have anger management problems.

**TRUTH:** Domestic violence is an effort by the perpetrator to control their partner, and is not caused by anger management issues, a "hot temper," alcohol abuse or stress.

**MYTH:** Teens who are being abused usually tell an adult about the abuse.

**TRUTH:** Research shows that about 61% of physically or sexually abused teens tell a friend about the abuse, while only 6% tell a family member.<sup>1</sup> This is a major reason why it is so important for teens to learn about this issue, whether or not they are in an abusive relationship. They need to know how to help a friend if he/she comes to them for support.

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<sup>1</sup> The Prevention Researcher, vol. 7, no. 1, February 2000, p. 3. [www.TPRonline.org](http://www.TPRonline.org).

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**MYTH:** Domestic violence only happens in heterosexual relationships.

**TRUTH:** Domestic or intimate partner violence also occurs in LGBTQ relationships. In addition to the universal coercive tactics, LGBTQ individuals may experience the added fear of being “outed” to family, friends, and peers if they leave the relationship, or they may feel as if they no longer are a part of their community.

**MYTH:** Some people deserve to be hit, kicked, or put down. They asked for it and brought it on themselves by the way they looked, or something they said.

**TRUTH:** No one deserves to be hit or abused. The only person responsible for the abuse is the person who is committing the crime. Emotional, verbal, sexual and physical violence is wrong.

**MYTH:** Most rapes and sexual assaults are committed by strangers who attack at night on the streets.

**TRUTH:** Most sexual assault actually occurs between people who know each other.

**MYTH:** If someone is in a romantic relationship or has had sex with the person before, uninvited sexual intercourse can't be considered rape.

**TRUTH:** Regardless of whether the persons are romantically involved or even married, uninvited sexual intercourse is rape and it is a crime.

**MYTH:** It is not considered domestic abuse if both parties use physical violence against each other.

**TRUTH:** Assessment of domestic violence hinges on patterns of coercive behavior in order to control another person. A victim may use physical violence in self-defense.

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