

Health Unit Media Release



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Do You Know Someone who is Pregnant? They May Be at Risk and You Can Help

1 in 6 pregnant women are abused during their pregnancy.

Abuse during pregnancy is more common than high blood pressure or diabetes, conditions that are considered common side effects of pregnancy. Abuse that begins in pregnancy continues after the child is born in 95% of cases.

Why do partners abuse women during their pregnancy?

Is it because the partner is stressed, suffers from a mental illness or is addicted to drugs or alcohol? The answer is usually NO! Abuse is about power and control. During the pregnancy the partner may feel that the mother-to-be is paying more attention to the baby. The partner senses a loss of control and feels the need to reestablish control over her. This can happen in many different ways and has the potential of harming the woman or the unborn child.

What can you do if you suspect abuse?

Reach out and listen to her, let her know that:

- You believe her,
- She is not alone,
- She does not deserve to be treated this way
- It is not her fault.

Let her know that **support is available**:

- Interval House – Lanark: 1-800-267-7946; Leeds & Grenville: 1-800-267-4409
- Sexual Assault Centre – Lanark: 1-800-431-6121 Brockville: 345-3881 or 1-800-567-7415.
- Assaulted Women's Helpline 1-866-878-9588

Is there help for the abuser?

Yes! Abuse is a conscious action on the part of the abuser to control the actions of his/her partner. This may be a **learned behaviour**. There may be family history of abuse, or the person was bullied as a child. The person may have low self-esteem or poor social skills. There are any number of reasons for an individual to become an abusive adult, what we do know is that they need help to change.

Support for these individuals can be found by contacting:

- Lanark County Mental Health: call 283-2170 or 257-5915;
- Leeds, Grenville Rehabilitation & Counseling Service in Brockville call 1-800-267-4406
- The Employee Assistance Program in your workplace
- STOP Program, in Brockville call 342-6214; in Perth call 326-0628
- The Men's Project in Ottawa call 230-6179

Is abuse preventable?

YES! BREAK THE SILENCE! Abuse can no longer be considered a private issue. Abuse affects us all. Be part of the solution.

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