



## **What is the National Domestic Violence Hotline?**

In 1994, Congress took a much-needed first step to solving the problem of domestic violence in our country. Milestone legislation was passed that positively impacted millions of families. The Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) of 1994 created programs that have bolstered the prosecution of child abuse, sexual assault and domestic violence cases.

One of the programs established under VAWA was the National Domestic Violence Hotline (NDVH). In 1996, NDVH took its first call and began providing life-saving assistance to those experiencing domestic violence. Since its creation, more than 2 million calls have been answered by the Hotline and lives have been saved because the Hotline was there when someone needed help.

NDVH continues to receive more than 19,500 calls each month from those affected by domestic violence as well as friends and family of those affected by domestic violence throughout the United States and U.S. territories.

Callers can receive crisis intervention, referral information and support from the Hotline's trained crisis advocates, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, in more than 170 languages. NDVH operates a TTY line (1-800-787-3224) for the Deaf, Deaf-Blind and Hard of Hearing.

Widespread demand for the Hotline's services continues. NDVH experienced a 13% increase in calls received from 2004-2007 alone, and numbers continue to rise. According to an April 2006 Harris Poll, approximately 33 million or 15 percent of all U.S. adults, admit that they were a victim of domestic violence and six in 10 claim that they know someone personally who has experienced domestic violence. Behind every high profile, headline-drawing occurrence of domestic violence, there are countless more victims who are dealing with the issue on a daily basis.

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## **Sheryl Cates, Chief Executive Officer**

Texas Council on Family Violence,  
National Domestic Violence Hotline & the Teen Dating Abuse Helpline  
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Austin, TX

## **Bio**

In March 1999, Sheryl Cates became the leader of the Texas Council on Family Violence (TCFV) and the National Domestic Violence Hotline (NDVH).

The Texas Council on Family Violence is one of the largest domestic violence coalitions in the country serving domestic violence programs and battered women in Texas.

The National Domestic Violence Hotline is the only service of its kind, connecting people in crisis to more than 5,000 sources of help in communities across the U.S., Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. The Hotline operates 24-hours a day, 365 days a year and has answered more than 2 million calls since 1996.

Loveisrespect.org, National Teen Dating Abuse Helpline was launched in February 2007. The Helpline is a 24-hour resource for teens that are experiencing dating abuse. It is specifically designed with teens and young adults in mind, operating around the growing technologies that they use most often: the phone, web and chat.

Sheryl has more than 20 years of experience in the movement to end violence against women. She is recognized as a national leader in this effort. She is a recipient of the Legacy Award from the Institute on Domestic Violence in the African American Community. Sheryl has been prominently featured as an expert in the field of domestic violence on The Oprah Winfrey Show, ABC's Prime Time, Fox News Fox and Friends, The Queen Latifah Show, The John Walsh Show, CBS Saturday Early Show, The Montel Williams Show, Larry King Live, and Court TV. Sheryl has been a featured speaker at a roundtable dialogue at the White House to provide feedback on family violence programs to Attorney General John Ashcroft and Attorney General Alberto Gonzalez. Sheryl has been appointed to the National Council on Violence Against Women, and is a founding member of MADE (Moms and Dads for Education to Stop Teen Dating Abuse).

Nominated as Lubbock's Woman of the Year in 1998, Sheryl is also the recipient of the Liberty Bell Award from Lubbock County Young Lawyers Association, the Citizen of the Year Award from National Association of Social Workers; and the Women Helping Women Award from Soroptimist International. Sheryl is a Leadership Texas graduate and has served on boards and

as a member of a number of community service organizations including the Texas Council on Family Violence Board of Directors, where she served for five years and was Chair from 1997-1998. She has served on the Advisory Board to the Corporate Alliance to End Partner Violence, American Bar Association/Commission on Domestic Violence, National Advisory Committee on Violence Against Women, WomensLaw.org, Allstate Foundation's Domestic Violence Program, National Network to End Domestic Violence, and Cut-it-Out. She has also served in an advisory capacity for the Texas Governor's Commission for Women, and in a leadership capacity on the Council for Crime Victims for the Texas Office of the Attorney General.



# Abuse in America

- Since its inception in February 1996, the National Domestic Violence Hotline (NDVH) has answered more than 2 million calls from all 50 states, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. The call volume has steadily increased from an average of 7,000 calls a month to the NDVH's current average of more than 19,500 calls a month. The majority of calls (approximately 84 percent of the 2004 calls) are crisis calls from victims of domestic violence or their concerned family and friends. Approximately 60 percent of callers indicated that calling the NDVH was their first attempt to address the domestic violence they were experiencing; they had not called police or local domestic violence programs. *(NDVH Statistics)*
- One in three American women will report physical or sexual abuse by a husband or boyfriend at some point in their lives. *(Congressional Findings Violence Against Women and DOJ Reauthorization Act of 2005)*
- Four million American women experience a serious assault by a partner during an average 12-month period. *(Issues and Dilemmas in Family Violence: Report of the American Psychological Association Presidential Task Force on Violence and the Family. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association; 1996.)*
- From 1993-2001 more than three women were murdered by their husbands or boyfriends every day. *(Bureau of Justice Statistics Crime Data Brief, Intimate Partner Violence, 1993-2001, February 2003)*
- Nearly 5.3 million intimate partner victimizations occur each year among U.S. women ages 18 and older. This violence results in nearly 2 million injuries and nearly 1,300 deaths yearly. *(Center for Disease Control 2002 Report)*
- 92 percent of American women prioritize addressing domestic violence and sexual assault higher than equal pay and reproductive rights. *(Center for the Advancement of Women, July 2003)*
- Violence against women costs companies \$72 million dollars annually due to lost productivity. *(Costs of Intimate Partner Violence Against Women in the United States, 2003; Center for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Atlanta)*
- 37 percent of all women who sought care in hospital emergency rooms for violence-related injuries were injured by a current or former spouse, boyfriend or girlfriend. *(U.S. Department of Justice, Violence-Related Injuries Treated in Hospital Emergency Departments, August 1997)*

- As many as 324,000 women each year experience intimate partner violence during their pregnancy. (*"Violence and reproductive health; current knowledge and future research directions."* Gazmararian JA, Petersen R, Spitz AM, Goodwin MM, Saltzman LE, Marks JS. *Maternal and Child Health Journal* 2000; 4(2):79-84.)
- Women of all races are equally vulnerable to violence by an intimate partner. (*U.S. Department of Justice, Violence Related Injuries Treated in Emergency Departments, August 1997*)
- Battered women who have permanent protection orders in place are 80 percent less likely to be physically assaulted by their partners in the year after their attack than are women without protection orders. One in five women in the United States who experiences intimate partner violence obtains civil protection orders. (*2002 Journal of the American Medical Association Report*)
- 74 percent of employed battered women were harassed by their partner while they were at work. (*"The Workplace Guide for Employer, Unions, and Advocates"* Family Violence Prevention Fund. San Francisco, 1998.)
- Most murder-suicides with three or more victims involve a "family annihilator"-- a subcategory of intimate partner murder-suicide. Family annihilators are murderers who kill not only their wives/girlfriends and children, but often other family members as well before killing themselves. (*Violence Policy Center (VPC), American Roulette: Murder-Suicide in the United States, April 2006.*)
- 74 percent of all murder-suicides involved an intimate partner. Of these, 96 percent were women killed by an intimate partner. (*"American Roulette: Murder-Suicide in the United States", Violence Policy Center, 2006.*)



## On the Line

Every hour of every day, Hotline Advocates answer calls from around the nation. The calls are dramatic, touching and real. Here are a few examples of those calls:

### **“A survivor’s thanks...”**

A woman called to say “Thank you!”

Her husband had pushed her out of a window some years ago, and she had called the Hotline for help.

She called to say that she had survived the violence, and that her husband was serving a lengthy prison sentence. She explained that she was contacting each agency that she had called many years ago. She wanted to share the outcome and tell of the difference we made in her life.

### **“Am I an abuser too?”**

A male caller wanted to know if his daughter and her husband could possibly reconcile after he hit her and read her private email.

The caller believed that his son-in-law was truly sorry about his actions. He said he called because he wanted to know how he could tell if his son-in-law was really remorseful. He also repeatedly said that his daughter was probably guilty of having an affair. He said his son-in-law had shown him an e-mail that alluded to an affair.

After discussing with him the signs of abusive behavior, as well as the relationship in question, the caller became very quiet. He said he was beginning to wonder if *he* was actually abusive as well.

Shortly after the call was completed, the Hotline received another call. This one was from a man whose father-in-law had urged him to seek help in a batterer’s intervention program.

### **“Will I lose everything I worked for if I leave?”**

The caller had been married for eight years. The physical abuse stopped four years ago after her husband was arrested. Though the physical part ended, her husband continued to emotionally and verbally abuse her.

With no car and no privacy, the caller said she felt trapped by her husband. He never left the house, and she was rarely alone. After we brainstormed about possible ways to change her situation, the caller’s tone of voice became hopeful and positive.

I spoke to her about local services and ways to access them without her abuser finding out. She said she would overcome her situation despite her lack of privacy and transportation.

### **“The voice coming in through my headset sounded shocked and defiant at the same time.”**

“I just beat up my girlfriend,” he said. I immediately asked where his girlfriend was and if she was ok. He said that she was sitting next to him. He added that he wanted to marry her, then put her on the line.

After asking about her physical well-being, I told the woman that she didn’t deserve to be abused and that the Hotline could support and guide her. Concerned for her safety, I suggested that she call the Hotline when she was alone and safe.

The man came back on the line and attempted to explain why he “had” to be abusive. He turned down the Batterer’s Intervention and Prevention Program (BIPP) that I suggested, but I encouraged him to call us back as well.

I tried to keep him on the line, knowing that every minute he was talking with me was another minute she was safe.

*Due to confidentiality, the circumstances of the calls have been summarized to protect anonymity.*



**1-800-799-SAFE (7233)**  
1-800-787-3224 TTY For the Deaf

## Calls Answered

### Hotline Call Volume 1996-2007

Year	Number of Calls
1996	73,740
1997	96,572
1998	109,549
1999	123,567
2000	134,983
2001	165,606
2002	171,748
2003	171,958
2004	172,314
2005	198,172
2006	215,224
2007*	197,594
Total	1,831,027

\*As of November, 2007

### Hotline Monthly Call Average 2004-2006

Year	Average # of Calls Received per Month	Average # of Calls Answered per Month
2004	17,480	14,360
2005	19,005	16,514
2006	20,355	17,867
Total	18,897	16,444

### Calls Received by State 2003-2007

Rank	State
1	California
2	Texas
3	Florida
4	New York
5	Pennsylvania