



**Michigan Coalition  
to End Domestic and Sexual Violence  
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**The Michigan Coalition to End Domestic and Sexual Violence is a statewide membership organization dedicated to the empowerment of all survivors of domestic and sexual violence.**

### **Mission**

Develop and promote efforts aimed at the elimination of all domestic and sexual violence in Michigan.

### **Vision**

MCEDSV is Michigan's catalyst for creating empowered individuals, communities, and societies committed to building a lasting legacy of equality, peace and social justice, where domestic and sexual violence no longer exists.

### **Leadership**

- Provide statewide leadership on public policy issues affecting survivors and the programs that serve them
- Advance comprehensive, community based social change efforts to end domestic and sexual violence and build peaceful communities
- Promote availability and accessibility of high quality, culturally relevant, domestic and sexual violence services and prevention programs
- Build capacity for community specific solutions to ending domestic and sexual violence
- Deliver comprehensive, expert technical assistance and training to national, state, and local allied organizations
- Encourage the leadership of women

### **Services Provided by Members**

- 24 hour crisis intervention hotlines
- Advocacy, counseling, and support groups
- Outreach, public education and social change efforts
- Legal advocacy/court accompaniment
- Forensic Nurse Examiner programs
- Emergency safe shelter
- Children's programming

## October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month

**DOMESTIC VIOLENCE** is a pattern of coercive, controlling behavior used by one partner to gain or maintain control over another intimate partner. Abusers employ a range of tactics, including use of physical and sexual violence, stalking, threats and intimidation, emotional / psychological abuse, isolation, and economic abuse to exert power and control over their partners. Many forms of domestic violence/abuse can occur at the same time.

Domestic violence affects millions of individuals across the United States regardless of age, economic status, race, culture, religion, or education.

### WHY DOES THE ABUSER CHOOSE TO ABUSE?

Abuse is a learned behavior. Sometimes learned in families; other times learned / reinforced by society. However, abuse is a choice. Most people who experienced or witnessed abuse growing up decide not to behave in such controlling, harmful, and detrimental ways in their relationships. Abusive people believe they have the right to control and restrict their partners. Oftentimes they believe that their own feelings and needs should be the priority in their relationships. While drug or alcohol use can sometimes escalate abuse, it is important to recognize that these issues are not causal factors. *[Adapted from the National Domestic Violence Hotline, [thehotline.org](http://thehotline.org)]*



### WHY DO VICTIMS SOMETIMES STAY / RETURN?

- For many survivors, leaving can be a particularly dangerous time. The fear of increased violence, sometimes resulting in death, is borne out by survivor experiences and statistics:
  - A victim's risk of getting killed greatly increases when they are in the process of leaving, or have just left<sup>1</sup>
  - On average, three women die at the hands of a current or former intimate partner every day<sup>2</sup>
- Abusers are adept at making victims think they caused the abuse. Victims sometimes believe that if they caused the violence, then they may be able to stop it.
- Survivors with children often stay because they fear losing custody of their children if they leave. Survivors also fear that if they leave the abuser will hurt, or even kill, their children.
- Some victims are afraid they cannot survive on their own, financially or otherwise. Abusers often create a financial situation that makes leaving nearly impossible.
- Many survivors report wanting the abuse to end, not the relationship. A survivor may stay / return based on the abuser's promises to get help and change. It is often difficult to let go of love, hopes, and dreams for the future.

### CAN ABUSERS CHANGE?

Some do. However, such change requires a serious, deliberate decision. It also often requires specialized intervention specifically designed to focus on survivor safety, abuser accountability, and commitment by the abuser to relationships based on respect. That includes respecting and accepting that the person the abuser harmed may never want to reconcile.

*[For information on Battering Intervention, visit [biscmi.org](http://biscmi.org)]*

<sup>1</sup> Bachman, R. and Salzman, L., U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics. *Violence against Women: Estimates from the Redesigned Survey 1*. (January 2000).

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics. *Homicide Trends in the U.S. from 1976-2005*. U.S. Department of Justice (2008).