



CONTACT THE  
FAMILY GUIDANCE  
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#17 Hwy 70 SE  
HICKORY, NC 28602  
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# Spotlight On Domestic Violence

First Step Newsletter  
A Program of  
The Family Guidance Center

THE MISSION OF FAMILY GUIDANCE CENTER'S FIRST STEP DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PROGRAM IS TO PROVIDE NEEDED SERVICES TO VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND TO INCREASE THE COMMUNITY'S AWARENESS ABOUT THE PROBLEM.

## A Connection Between Eating Disorders and Domestic Violence



More than 10 million men and women experience physical abuse by an intimate partner per year in the U.S. alone. A person who's experienced domestic violence can suffer many physical, mental, and psychological problems . . . one of these can be an eating disorder.

Troubled family and personal relationships and a history of physical or sexual abuse are two of the greatest interpersonal factors which cause people to develop eating disorders (National Eating Disorder Association).

The root of eating disorder is the need for control. People with an eating disorder feel they have no control over their lives or the things that happen to them. They tend to feel inadequate, have low self-esteem, and/or suffer from depression, anger, anxiety, or loneliness.

It's easy to see how domestic violence and eating disorders are connected. Victims of domestic violence are stripped of their power and have very little or no control over their own lives or actions. They're also often depressed and anxious. *The one thing they can control is their eating or not eating.*

## Eating Disorders Defined

Eating Disorders describe illnesses that are characterized by irregular eating habits and severe distress or concern about body weight or shape. The three most common types of Eating Disorders are:

ANOREXIA NERVOSA - person will typically have an obsessive fear of gaining weight, refuses to maintain a healthy body weight and has an unrealistic perception of body image. Many will exercise excessively, weighs several times a day, and rigidly limits the quantity of food they consume. View themselves as fat even when they're clearly underweight. *The risk of death is highest with this disorder.*

BULIMIA NERVOSA – this disorder involves repeated binge eating followed by behaviors, such as forced vomiting, excessive exercise, or extreme use of laxatives or diuretics. The binge-eating and purging cycle is typically done in secret, creating feelings of shame, guilt, and lack of control.

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**BINGE EATING** – person will frequently lose control over their eating. It's different from bulimia in that the episodes of binge-eating are not followed by purging or fasting. Many with this disorder are obese or significantly overweight.



## Signs And Symptoms of an Eating Disorder

- ~ Chronic dieting despite being hazardously underweight
- ~ Constant weight fluctuations
- ~ Obsession with calories and fat contents of food
- ~ Engaging in ritualistic eating patterns, such as cutting food into tiny pieces, eating alone, and/or hiding food
- ~ Continued fixation with food, recipes, or cooking; the individual may cook intricate meals for others but refrain from partaking
- ~ Depression or lethargic stage
- ~ Avoidance of social functions, family, and friends. May become isolated and withdrawn
- ~ Switching between periods of overeating and fasting

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## A Teen's Question...



This question came from last month's newsletter on teen dating violence.

*Can I get a protective order without telling my parents?*

The answer depends upon the state in which you live as laws vary from state to state. In North Carolina, a teen under 18 must have an adult file for a protective order on behalf of the teen. The adult can be a parent or another adult who can be appointed as the teen's guardian.



## Gloria Allred

Marriage can be dangerous to your health. If they don't treat you as an equal partner, if they treat you as someone who needs to be controlled, who needs to be undermined, who needs to be hurt, who needs to be told what to do, that's going to be a dangerous relationship. Marriage can be toxic.

## Another Connecting Fact

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE CAN CAUSE DEATH. SO CAN EATING DISORDERS. EATING DISORDERS HAVE THE HIGHEST MORTALITY RATE OF ANY MENTAL ILLNESS.

A WOMAN IS BEATEN  
EVERY **NINE SECONDS**  
IN THE U.S.

# YOU MADE A DIFFERENCE

## CENTURY<sup>®</sup>

Thank you to Century Furniture for donating furniture to our Purple Ribbon. The furniture is beautiful and will be a big boost to our store. We appreciate your wonderful support of our thrift store and its mission "to support victims of domestic violence."

### Old St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church

We so much appreciate your partnership and support of our agency. Your recent help with repairing our offices was truly a blessing. THANK YOU!

## Special Thanks to Ridgeview Recreation Department.

The Ridgeview Recreation Department has a unique way of increasing awareness about domestic violence. On March 10th. they held the "Steam Funk Fashion Show" to promote awareness and to educate the community about the problem. A victim of our First Step Program spoke about her abuse and how First Step services had helped her. We appreciate the Ridgeview Recreation Department staff for all their support, the models, and attendees who brought donations for our shelter. THANK YOU!



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