



### **What is domestic violence?**

- Domestic violence is an offense under the United States Code, the Uniform Code of Military Justice, or state law, involving the use, attempted use, or threatened use of force or violence against a person, or the violation of a lawful order issued for the protection of a person, who is: (a) a current or former spouse; (b) a person with whom the abuser shares a child in common, or (c) a current or former intimate partner with whom the abuser shares or has shared a common domicile, or, (d) a domestic partner of a military member.
- High-profile cases of domestic violence often attract headlines, but thousands of people, both men and women, experience domestic violence every day. They come from all walks of life.

### **How extensive is the problem?**

- One in four women will be the victim of domestic violence at some point in her lifetime.
- The rate of DV within Coast Guard has increased steadily over the past three years and remains a critical public health issue with adverse effect on children, families and mission readiness.
- Domestic violence is one of the most underreported crimes in the U.S.

### **Why do victims sometimes return to or stay with abusers?**

- The deck is often stacked against the victim when confronted with leaving or staying. Leaving is not so easy, and many victims suffer from domestic violence for decades.
- Victims are at the greatest risk of abuse at the time they attempt to leave or have recently left.
- Chronic abusers are very good at making victims think that the abuse is their fault. Victims often believe that if they caused the violence, they can also stop it.
- Survivors want the abuse to end, not necessarily the relationship.
- A victim may return to the abuser because the abuser is the person the victim fell in love with, and believes the abuser's promises of change. It's not easy for anyone to let go of hopes and dreams.

### **Are men victims of domestic violence?**

- Yes. Within DoD and the Coast Guard, females were identified as the alleged offender in approximately 35% of all incidents reported in FY13.

### **What can I do to help?**

- Read Family Advocacy Program (FAP), [COMDTINST 1752.1](#). Note that Enclosure (3) provides a one-page "COMMAND FAP CASE ACTION SUMMARY GUIDE" that provides bottom line expectations for commands.
- Implement a domestic violence awareness campaign at your unit.



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- Speak out against domestic violence.
- Remind everyone that we can teach our children about what healthy relationships look like by example and by talking about it.
- Support community efforts to address the problem with services and efforts to hold perpetrators accountable.
- Encourage people to talk to the person suspected to be a victim. Some do's and don'ts:
  - **Do:**
    - Ask if something is wrong
    - Express concern
    - Listen and validate
    - Offer help and information.
  - **Don't:**
    - Wait for him or her to come to you
    - Judge or blame
    - Pressure him or her
    - Tell a victim what to do
    - Place conditions on your support
- Just as we empower bystanders in potential sexual abuse situations so too should we empower bystanders who see or hear about domestic violence to take action. The message: when you hear shipmates talk or act abusively regarding intimate partners listen carefully and take positive action.
- Coast Guard policy is to report incidents when there is reasonable suspicion of abuse. Reporter can request to remain anonymous.

### **How can persons in the Coast Guard who recognize they have been abusive to their partner get help without getting into trouble?**

- There is no guarantee that self-referring to Family Advocacy will protect an offender from disciplinary action, however, this is always the best kind of referral to make. Seeking help for abusive behavior takes courage and greatly improves chances of making positive and meaningful change before a bad situation gets worse.

### **What resources available to help?**

- Victims and alleged offenders can receive services through the Coast Guard's [Family Advocacy Program](#) (FAP). Family Advocacy Specialists are available at Health, Safety, and Work-Life Regional Practice. See contact information at <http://www.uscg.mil/worklife/>.
- Under the restricted reporting option, it is possible for active duty and dependent victims to receive support services from the FAP without initiating command and



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CGIS notification. Victims can request the restricted reporting option by contacting either a Coast Guard Victim Advocate, Family Advocacy Specialist or a DoD or Coast Guard healthcare provider.

- Victims can also obtain a civilian protection order or explore options through support group or anonymous calls to a local domestic violence shelter or hotline program.
- The Coast Guard prefers that victims request the unrestricted reporting option so a fuller range of protective measures are possible, including military protection orders if the alleged offender is on active duty.
- The Chaplain Corps is source of confidential assistance. Contact 1-855-USCG-CHC, 855-872-4242 or visit <http://www.uscg.mil/chaplain/locations/>.
- CG SUPRT Program at 1-855-CGSUPRT (1-855-247-8778) can also provide counselling and support either by phone or in person. See <http://www.CGSUPRT.com> for information and additional resources.