

## What Can You Do?

There are several domestic violence counseling, support and shelter programs available in Pennsylvania to victims who seek refuge from an abusive relationship. For more information, call the toll-free numbers or visit the Web sites listed in this brochure.

Victims also have the right to take legal action to prevent abuse from happening by going to court and filing a protection from abuse order (PFA). This directs the abuser to stop the abuse and provides for the arrest of the abuser when the order is not followed. A final Protection from Abuse order in Pennsylvania lasts up to 3 years, and under certain circumstances, can be extended. Another legal remedy is to file criminal charges against an abuser.

Police are obligated to respond to domestic violence calls and must provide the abused person with oral and written notice of the availability of safe shelter and domestic violence services.

## For More Information

### **National Domestic Violence Hotline:**

theline.org | 1-800-799-7233

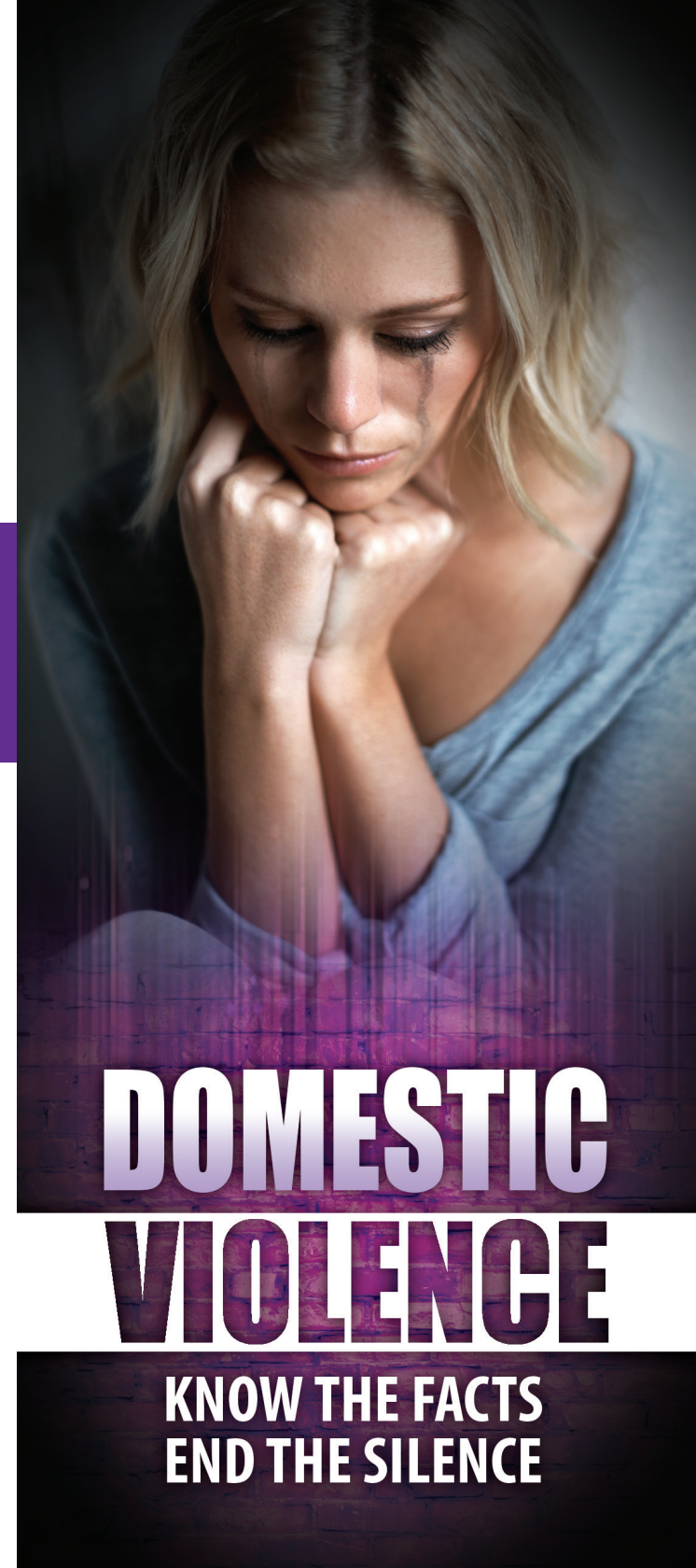
*This toll-free, 24-hour hotline links individuals to help in their area.*

### **Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence:** pcadv.org

*PCADV coordinates a network of 62 community-based programs and administers the contract for domestic violence services in Pennsylvania. This site has hotlines and resources by county.*

### **National Coalition Against Domestic Violence:** ncadv.org

*Online home of the national domestic violence resources organization.*



# DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

## KNOW THE FACTS END THE SILENCE

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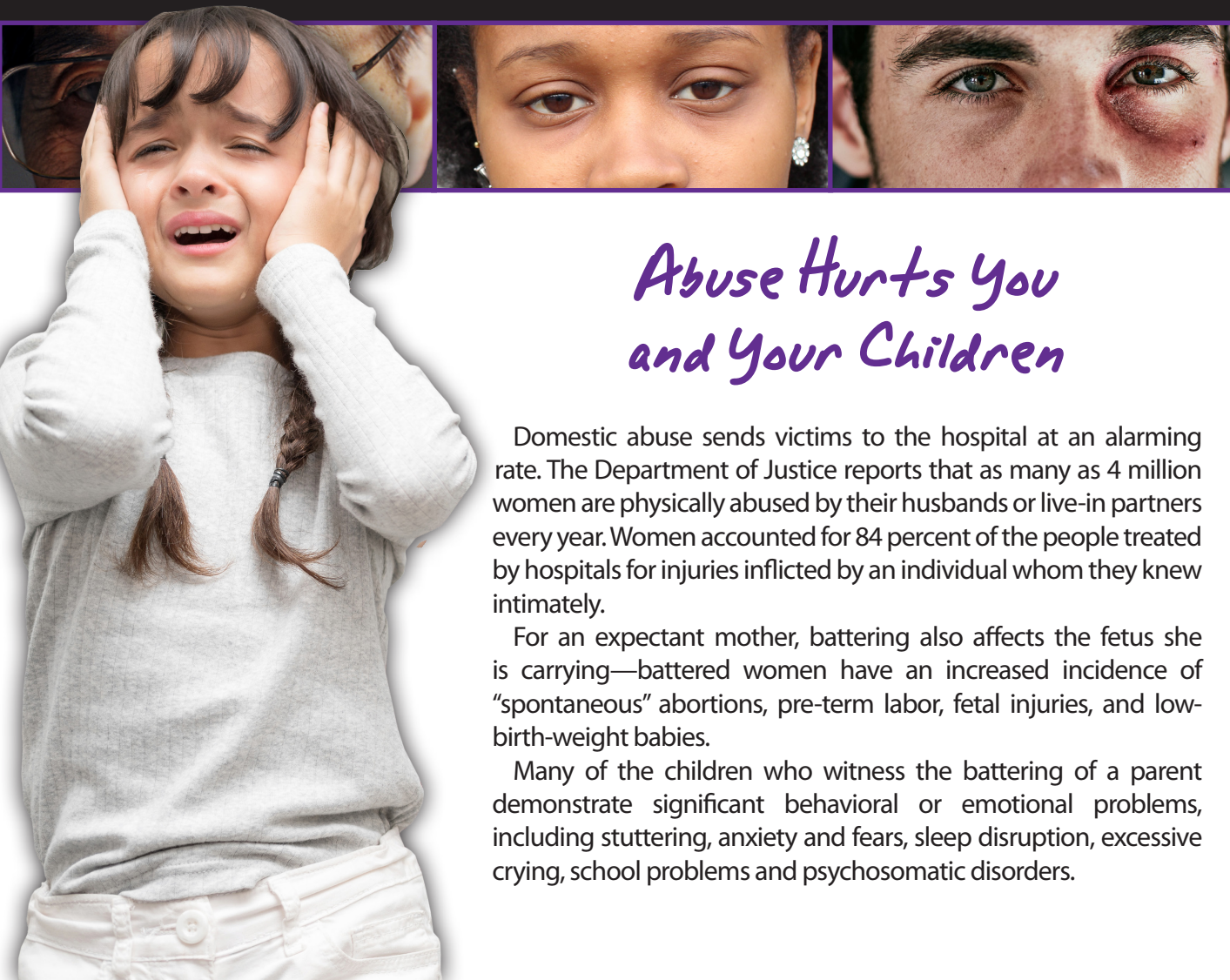
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# Domestic Violence and Abuse

Domestic abuse involves a pattern of behavior that includes the use or threat of use of violence for the purpose of gaining power and control over the victim. Abuse can be physical, psychological and/or sexual violence inflicted upon another person.

Abuse can happen to anyone at any time anywhere. Abusers do not see the harm created by their actions. Abuse is an issue of power and control and cannot go away by itself.

Domestic abuse often scares a victim into staying in a dangerous situation, leaving the individual financially dependent and subject to future physical assaults



## *Abuse Hurts You and Your Children*

Domestic abuse sends victims to the hospital at an alarming rate. The Department of Justice reports that as many as 4 million women are physically abused by their husbands or live-in partners every year. Women accounted for 84 percent of the people treated by hospitals for injuries inflicted by an individual whom they knew intimately.

For an expectant mother, battering also affects the fetus she is carrying—battered women have an increased incidence of “spontaneous” abortions, pre-term labor, fetal injuries, and low-birth-weight babies.

Many of the children who witness the battering of a parent demonstrate significant behavioral or emotional problems, including stuttering, anxiety and fears, sleep disruption, excessive crying, school problems and psychosomatic disorders.

## *Are You In An Abusive Relationship?*

People stay in abusive relations for many reasons, including fear of retaliation, lack of money, societal pressures, perceived obligations or a lack of knowledge about resources that are available in the community to assist them.

The first step to seeking help is to know if you are in an abusive relationship. Here are some of the signs to look for:

- Temper and Moods - You worry about your partner's temper or moods and change your behavior accordingly.
- Control - Your partner wants to control where you go, what you do or who you see, including family and friends.
- Jealousy - Your partner accuses you of having an affair.
- Ridicule - You are constantly ridiculed, put down, or humiliated.
- Blame - You are the one taking the blame for all the failures in the relationship or for your partner's problems.
- Threats and Violence - Your partner screams at you, throws things, or breaks or steals your possessions. You are hurt in anger or in “play,” or are slapped, hit, restrained or threatened with a weapon.
- Sexual Abuse- Your partner pressures you about having sex, hurts you during sex or forces you to do sexual things against your will.