

Domestic Violence.....What is it?

Understanding domestic violence can help you support your patients.

Domestic violence...

- occurs in all age, racial, socioeconomic, educational, occupational and religious groups
- occurs within an intimate relationship
- typically involves repetitive behaviour including different types of abuse – physical assault, psychological, emotional and economic abuse, and use of children
- Is used to intimidate, humiliate or frighten victims as a systematic way of maintaining power and control over them
- is abusive behaviour that in most cases is learned (e.g., abusive behaviour modeled in family of origin; abusive behaviour rewarded—gets desired results for perpetrator)
- *is caused by the perpetrator* and not by the victim or the relationship
- is a criminal offense where actual or threatened physical or sexual force is used
- differentially affects men and women: women experience more violence over a lifetime, more severe forms of violence and more serious injuries than do male victims
- may present increased risk to the victim and children at the time of separation from the abuser
- results in victim behaviour that is focused on ensuring survival (e.g., minimizing or denying the violence, taking responsibility for the violence, protecting the perpetrator, using alcohol or drugs, self-defense, seeking help, remaining in the abusive relationship)