



October marks the start of National Substance Abuse Prevention month, highlighting the vital role of prevention nationally and locally. Also in October is National Domestic Violence Awareness month. Unfortunately, often times substance abuse and domestic violence go hand in hand.

Domestic Violence, also known as intimate partner violence, occurs when an individual causes physical or psychological harm to a current or former partner, often characterized by coercive behavior, such as intimidation, humiliation, threats and physical assault. Even though drugs or alcohol cannot be named as the cause for domestic violence, the link between the two is one that is undeniable, with about half of the domestic violence cases reported in the United States involving some sort of substance use. While we tend to picture substances as being used only by the offender, alcohol and drugs can play many roles in the cycle of domestic violence. Drugs and alcohol can be used as a means to incapacitate a victim, as well as become a coping mechanism for the victims.

#### Facts:

- Domestic Violence can take place in the form of emotional, financial, physical, psychological and sexual abuse.
- Domestic violence can happen to anyone regardless of race, age, sexual orientation, religion, or gender.
- Substance abuse and domestic abuse, each carry stigma which may prevent someone suffering from either or both from seeking help.
- Women who have experienced abuse, are 15 times more likely to abuse alcohol, and 9 times more likely to abuse drugs, compared to women who have never experienced abuse.
- 80% of offenders abuse drugs or alcohol.
- Two-thirds of victims suffering violence by a current or former spouse or partner, report that the perpetrator had been drinking.

#### What To Do?

- If you suspect a case of domestic violence or abuse, speak up. Expressing your concern let's your loved one know that you care. Be prepared to listen, and offer support in finding help.
- Prevention, is the most effective way to ensure a healthy future, safe from the consequences of drug and alcohol abuse.
- Recognizing the abuse is the first step to getting help. There are local resources you can access to seek help and ask questions.
  - [The Family Justice Center](#) 24 hour hotline 716-862-HELP ( 7387)
  - [Crisis Services](#) 716-834-3131 or 1-800-942-6906
- If you or a loved one is struggling with substance abuse, call the [Addiction Hotline of Buffalo and Erie County](#) 716-831-7007, or 24 hour hotline 1-800-942-6906.

Sources: National NCADD (<https://www.ncadd.org/about-addiction/alcohol-drugs-and-crime>), The Department of Justice (<https://www.justice.gov/ovw/domestic-violence>), The National Domestic Violence Hotline (<http://www.thehotline.org/>)

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The Erie County Council for the Prevention of Alcohol and Substance Abuse, Inc., publishes Did You Know, a regular update about alcohol & other drugs - - America's #1 public health problem. ECCPASA • 1625 Hertel Ave., Buffalo, NY 14216 • 716-831-2298 • [www.eccpasa.org](http://www.eccpasa.org)