

# *Women Are Safe, Inc.*

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**HOTLINE : 1-800-470-1117** (Dickson, Humphreys, Perry Counties) **729-5730** (Hickman County)



## **The Ripple Effect**

Some people believe that domestic violence won't ever affect their lives. Many believe that the victims of domestic violence are at fault for the violence. Others believe that victims could prevent the violence that has occurred in their relationships. Many have learned the previous statements are NOT true.

Over 4 million women are victimized by their husbands or boyfriends each year in the United States. Domestic violence in a community is like throwing a stone in a pond. The ripples spread out to everyone. The ripple effects start with the victim as she tries to change in order to "fix" the relationship and stop the violence.

The ripple then moves to the victim's family and friends. Abusive partners will begin to find fault with anyone who supports the victim. Family and friends begin to be removed one by one.

The next ripple is the children who witness and learn the abuse. The children may have problems in school due to the violence at home. Abusers will use the children to keep the victim from leaving the relationship. A victim is often told to leave but the children are staying. Victims know by now what the abuser is capable of and won't leave without the children.

The next ripple reaches to employers. Victims may be forced to bounce from job to job due to the abuser's behavior. Injuries often cause victims to be absent from work. Employers lose 5 billion dollars a year due to domestic violence related absences. In some cases when a victim has left the abusive relationship, the abuser has gone to the place of employment to hunt the victim down. We see these cases on the news where the abuser becomes lethal.

The last ripple touches the frontline workers; police officers, doctors, court staff, social services, and domestic violence advocates. Victims try to cope with the abuse without seeking outside help. Abusers tell the victim the abuse is their fault. Victims are told by the abuser "no one will believe you". Victims often fear to reach out for help. Frontline workers often see a victim multiple times before the abusive relationship ends. When the abusive relationship ends then a victim becomes a survivor.

Everyone in our community experiences the effect of domestic violence. If you or someone you know is in a domestic violence relationship there is help available. Women Are Safe, Inc. has a 24 hour crisis hotline 1-800-470-1117 or 729-5730, safe shelter, support groups, court advocacy, and clothes closet. Our services are free and confidential. To volunteer please call our outreach office at 931-729-9885.

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