



HUMBOLDT COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

RE: Domestic Violence Red Flags

Date: October 5, 2011

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October is Domestic Violence Awareness month and every week the Humboldt County District Attorney's Office will be issuing a press release focused on an important aspect of domestic violence in our community. "It is crucial to bring attention to this very important issue," noted District Attorney Paul Gallegos. "Every day there are victims suffering and they need to know we care. Victims are not alone."

Domestic violence consists of forceful or unwanted behavior used by one person in a relationship to control the other. Domestic violence includes any physical, sexual, or psychological attack intended to frighten, manipulate, humiliate, blame, or injure a romantic partner.

Unfortunately, notes Marybeth Bian, an advocate with the Humboldt County District Attorney's Office Victim/Witness program, domestic violence is sometimes difficult to identify. "There is no stereotypical situation involving domestic violence," she said. "This sometimes makes it difficult for even victims to recognize abuse. But there are some common threads." According to Bian, a batterer's systematic approach typically results in the victim feeling powerless, afraid and dependent. Often, Bian explained, there are also 'red flags', or indicators, early in a relationship that people can be aware of.

"You may find that your partner wants to spend all of his/her time with you and you alone. He/she may isolate you from friends under guise of romance or love or be extremely jealous of other people, even family and friends." Bian warns that this focused attention could be very flattering and perceived as romantic, but could indicate a dominating partner.

"Many abusers also have trouble accepting responsibility for their own actions. Be cautious if your partner blames others for their trouble with relationships or jobs. If he/she has had trouble with the law or a history of fights or destruction of property," she added.

Bian said that dominating behaviors commonly escalate over time and can become violent. "This can be especially challenging because abusers are effective in getting their victims to think that the violence is the victim's fault," Bian said. "They are adept at circular logic and keeping their victim off balance and full of self doubt and insecurity."

Once in an abusive relationship, many people stay because they fear for their own or family members' safety or mistakenly believe they deserve the abuse. "But there is no excuse for abuse," Bian said.

"It takes incredible courage to leave most relationships," Gallegos added. "And even more so when domestic violence exists. Our fervent hope, though, is that victims muster that courage and seek the help they need to leave a dangerous situation."

Incidents of domestic violence should be reported to local law enforcement.

Other local resources (Could include in table)

Humboldt Domestic Violence Services

24 hour Crisis/Support Line to access support, information and referrals.

(707) 443-6042

(866) 668-6543

North Coast Rape Crisis

24 Hr Hotlines (collect calls accepted) providing free and confidential services to survivors of sexual assault and their loved ones in Humboldt and Del Norte counties.

* Humboldt (707) 445-2881

* Del Norte (707) 465-2851

Victim Witness/DA's office

Supports victims and witnesses through the criminal justice process.

(707) 445-7417

Each week in October the District Attorney's Office will be issuing a press release addressing an aspect of domestic violence.

The topic schedule is as follows:

- Week of October 3: Red flags in relationships
- Week of October 10: Law enforcement response and the criminal justice process as it relates to domestic violence.
- Week of Oct. 17: Student/teen dating violence as well as special risks faced by international students in dating relationships
- Week of Oct. 24: Less familiar incidences of domestic violence including male victims and violence in same sex or transgender relationships.