

He doesn't hit me...

"I didn't know that I was abused. I never had a black eye, a broken bone or an injury. He never hit me. I had no idea that it was still domestic violence. I didn't even think of going to a domestic violence agency for help. I wasn't 'battered'."

Verbal abuse is a type of "battering" that doesn't leave evidence that can be compared to bruises or physical injuries. The long-term effects, however, are just as detrimental as physical abuse and often take longer to heal. Victims of abuse often feel confused, hurt, devalued, and have an anxiety or fear of being crazy. Victims often feel that something is wrong with them and experience a significant loss in self-confidence and self-esteem. People experiencing verbal abuse have often tried every approach of improving their relationship such as explaining, overlooking, begging, asking, seeking relationship counseling, not asking "too much", and avoiding situations and topics that might upset their partner. Unfortunately, victims find that they have "tried everything" but to no avail.

A verbal abuser may show many or a few of the following characteristics:

Irritable	Easily angered
Intense	Likely to blame mate for problems
Unpredictable	Unaccepting of mate's feelings and views
Lacks empathy	Controlling
Jealous	Manipulative
Hostile	Overly critical and judgmental

Everyone has the right to be in a loving, caring and emotionally supportive relationship; the right to have your own view and feelings; the right to live without accusation and blame; a life free from criticism, judgment and name calling; and a life free from angry outbursts and rage. Living with verbal abuse can be traumatic and can remove the joy and happiness from life.

If you or someone you know who has experienced or is currently in a verbally abusive relationship, please call Advocates of Ozaukee at 877-375-4034 for assistance.

Kristen Jordon Wheeler
Associate Director

associatedir@advocates-oz.org

Reference - The Verbally Abusive Relationship, Evans 1996

Coaching Boys Into Men

Like clockwork, the start of the new school year brings the beginning of various sports seasons for student athletes in Wisconsin. From middle school through college, student athletes have become a highly respected and sometimes idolized group from their peers. What the athletes may not know, however, is there is a responsibility that comes with such a drastic change in social status.

This year, Advocates will be introducing the Coaching Boys into Men program, which looks to promote male respect towards women and fellow students alike. Each step of the program takes about 10 minutes, and is easily incorporated into practices and team meetings. Ricky Spenner will work closely with Athletic Directors, Coaches and group leaders to ensure we are not only developing extraordinary athletes, but extraordinary *men*.

The program is open to any sports teams and youth groups from middle school through college freshmen level.

Ricky Spenner
Client & Child Advocate

(262) 284-3577 or

clientchildadv@advocates-oz.org

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BACK TO SCHOOL!!!

Getting ready to go back to school can be very expensive for families, especially when there is more than one child in school. Much thanks to Bridget Bretl and the GALS group that donated a tremendous amount of school supplies plus diapers and other needs of the shelter.

We want to recognize Rachael Hughes for the excellent job she did in coordinating our School Supply Drive this year for her Girl Scout Gold Award. Rachael involved the community and collected school supplies and had gifts donated for the Moms. We appreciate all the hard work Rachael did to make this drive a success.



Also a big thanks to Jayne and the *You Are Special* cake bakers who provided cupcakes to be decorated by our families at our School Supply Event.



Ricky Spenner with two happy kids that just received new backpacks filled with new school supplies.

Please contact us!

Support lines:

(262) 284-6902

(877) 375-4034

TTY/TDD (262) 284-8828

www.advocates-oz.org

JOIN A SUPPORT GROUP

Groups are open to all women and their children experiencing domestic and/or sexual violence.

Domestic Violence

**Tuesdays
6:30—8:00 p.m.**

Children's Domestic Violence Support Group meets at the same time. It is open to children of all ages.

Sexual Violence

**Thursdays
6:30—8:00 p.m.**

Childcare provided.

**Call for more
information.**

**262.284.6902 or
1.877.375.4034**

Save the Date

Saturday, January 28, 2012

7:00 p.m.

at the Cedarburg Performing Arts Center

Watch for our Fall newsletter or online at www.advocates-oz.org for more information

the mealies
Willy Porter & Carpe Diem String Quartet



Don't Keep "Family Secrets"

If you don't see a bruise, is she a victim of domestic violence? If a caller to our hotline says, "Well I didn't know if I should call you because he never hits me", is she a victim of domestic violence?

I ask these questions because to some the answer is obvious. You don't need bruises or horror stories of violent physical acts to be a victim of domestic violence. To many, including many victims, it is not that clear.

Recently I was again reminded how important it is that we continue to share the message that domestic violence is verbal, emotional, financial, and physical. My reminder was a trip to a Milwaukee bookstore. I was looking for a good vacation book and the bookseller steered me to *Tomorrow River*, the newest book by Milwaukee author, Lesley Kagen. I remembered talking with Ms. Kagen at a luncheon; she told me she was writing a book with a story line about domestic violence. I asked the bookseller if this was the book. She wrinkled up her face and said something to the effect of, "Oh no, I enjoyed this book immensely and I don't go in for all the grisly stuff." To her, domestic violence was gruesome and while she's not wrong, it is so much more. Having loved Kagen's previous two books I purchased the book, got on the plane, and within a couple of chapters I knew it was indeed about domestic violence.

The truth is that domestic violence is never just one thing. It is never just physical, emotional, or verbal and it relies on one thing that Kagen's story tells so very well. All domestic violence relies on the hidden culture of keeping "family secrets". This culture is deeply embedded and often runs generation after generation and is participated in by both victims and perpetrators.

This "family secret" role also expands to include friends and people surrounding the perpetrator and the victim. They, too, join the complicit silence. Hearing nothing, many victims fall deeper into the abuse and it grows stronger as time goes on. However, in *Tomorrow River*, the "new" victim in the family decides she is not going to stand for the abuse and from there an intriguing story flows.

It is vital that as a community we realize that ALL forms of abuse are harmful to our entire community and do create long-term consequences. Here are several truths about domestic violence we all need to remember so we can be of assistance to family and friends who might be silent victims.

It is about power.

It is about control.

It is the systematic undercurrent and actions corrupting the victims belief in their worth, abilities, appearances, and value as a person.

You don't have to have bruises to be a domestic violence victim.

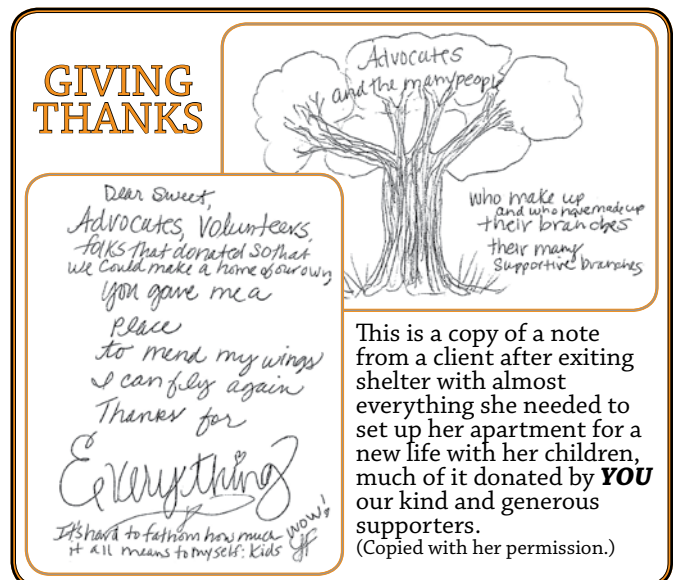
Just like we teach our kids – words are powerful and can cripple a victim and keep them from taking actions.

Emotional abuse includes threatening with weapons, threatening to hurt someone you love, controlling your every move, checking on you at intervals during the day, not allowing you choices (in clothing, hair style, etc.), isolating you, not allowing you to visit or contact family, telling others that you have mental health problems and not to listen to you, and threatening to take away your children, your pets, and your money.

Domestic violence is no different than any other disease that affects a community and we need to mobilize the community to eradicate it just as we did with polio and many other disease. If you want to help eliminate domestic violence get involved in one of the many initiatives or volunteer jobs here at Advocates. Or call me to discuss an idea you might have for your community and see how Advocates might be able to support your efforts.

A special thanks to Lesley Kagen for writing a book that reminded me, who works with domestic violence every day, that we need to stay ever vigilant or we too can become complicit in the "family secret".

Barbara Fischer
Executive Director





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if you would like our newsletters emailed to you.

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Restraining Orders

An important part of the safety planning process for victims of both domestic and sexual violence can be filing a restraining order against the perpetrator.

A restraining order or injunction is a court order that prohibits certain types of contact between individuals. The order cannot prevent contact, since it is only a piece of paper, but the law does provide penalties if the order is not obeyed.

If you are thinking of filing a restraining order or would like to know more about how they work contact Advocates at 262-284-3577.

Advocates' staff have all been trained and have assisted in filing many restraining orders and can assist you also.

Thanks to all who donated their used cell phones, sent in Sanfillippo Sentry receipts, and signed up for Charitable Checking at Cornerstone Community Bank. These programs are all continuing to help the agency earn funds for programs.

