



## THE **MEND** PROJECT'S DEFINITION OF **DOMESTIC VIOLENCE** IS:

A pattern of abusive behavior in any relationship by one person to gain power and control over another person. Domestic Violence is any physical, sexual, emotional, economic, or psychological action or threats of actions that exploit another person.

Phrases used by the Alleged Perpetrator, such as, "You're the last person in the world I would ever hurt," or "I just want you to be happy," or "No one could ever love you as much as I do," or "I only did it for your own good," contribute substantially to the victim's prolonged state of confusion, and reticence to seek help. Domestic Violence takes place in our homes, schools, workplaces, therapeutic settings, religious communities, and institutional environments. Any and all of the above qualify as Domestic Violence.

Sexual abuse violates the victim's voice of saying "NO". This violence ignores the victim's safety, preferences, and choices "in the most sacred of spaces" (Baker, 2015). "No!" always means No! Sexual violence in any form at any time includes a spectrum of intrusions from ignoring a partner's stated preferences to violating non-consent, from demanding service instead of

mutually satisfying engagement to powering over, from physically intruding to putting the other at risk of severe physical harm and sexually transmitted disease, unwanted pregnancies, and PTSD. Even marriage does not allow for ignoring or violating preferences, forcing demands that power over the other's wishes, and marital rape. A clearly communicated "NO" holds the same meaning and weight in marriage as it does in any other circumstance.

Economic abuse is violent pressure or force upon an individual to become financially dependent and controlled by one person who maintains total manipulation of financial resources, stalling or withholding financial information, access to money, and/or intervening with the other's participation, covertly or overtly, in independent activities, such as school or employment.

Here is a brief micro look at some of the forms of Domestic Violence.

### **Deprivation**

An act of preventing provision of known basic necessities of life: physical deprivation of food, clothing, clean and safe shelter, transportation, emotional deprivation of safety, comfort, and affection, and mental/psychological deprivation of information, education, variety of life experiences, relationships, and enrichment.

### **Neglect**

The willful ignoring of fundamental needs, whether physical, emotional, or mental and psychological. The difference between deprivation and neglect is that in deprivation there is a prevention or withholding of provision, whereas in neglect there is a distorted denial that such provision is necessary.

### **Abuse**

Physical abuse in its many variations is any purposeful use of one's body to intimidate or harm another's body, no matter how slight or grave that harm may be.