

DO YOU KNOW THE FACTS ABOUT FAMILY VIOLENCE?

Decide whether you think each statement below is **TRUE** or **FALSE**, then look on the other side for the **FACTS**.

1. **T or F** It is not against the law to slap your own spouse.

2. **T or F** “Battering” means beating someone to the point of bleeding or broken bones.

3. **T or F** Alcohol and drug abuse cause family violence.

4. **T or F** Battering is passed from generation to generation.

5. **T or F** Men being injured by women is just as big a problem as women being injured by men.

6. **T or F** Rarely are victims of family violence seriously injured.

7. **T or F** If a battered woman were to leave her abuser, she would be safe.

8. **T or F** The police can't do much about family violence.

9. **T or F** Arresting batterers and putting them in jail will end family violence.

T or F Violence in someone else's family is not my business.

THE FACTS

1. **False.** A slap is a form of assault. Texas law specifies that assault of another person, including one's spouse, is illegal.

2. **False.** Battering (which is the same as assault) means causing or threatening bodily injury. Under Texas law, that includes causing pain or offensive contact. Visible injury does not have to occur.

3. **False.** Many people who are violent toward family members never drink or use drugs. Others drink or use drugs but never batter. So we cannot say that alcohol or drugs cause family violence. However, over half of men in battering intervention report abusing drugs or alcohol. Furthermore, the severity of abuse is likely to increase when the abuser is on drugs or alcohol.

Gondolf, E.W. (1999). Characteristics of court mandated batterers in four cities: Diversity and dichotomies. *Violence Against Women*, 5(11), 1277-1293.

4. **True.** Children learn from their experiences- including violence. In one study of men court mandated to attend battering intervention, 33 percent reported seeing their mother abused by their father and 26 percent of the men were abused as children. However not all child witnesses to family violence become abusers.

Gondolf, E.W. (1999). Characteristics of court mandated batterers in four cities: Diversity and dichotomies. *Violence Against Women*, 5(11), 1277-1293.

5. **False.** Though it is true that both men and women are the victims of domestic violence, women are the victims in 85 percent of domestic violence cases.

Bureau of Justice Statistics Crime Data Brief, Intimate Partner Violence, 1993-2001, February 2003

6. **False.** In 2008, 39 percent of women murdered in Texas were killed by a current or former intimate partner. Also, up to 30 percent of women seen in emergency rooms are there for an injury attributed to family violence.

Texas Department of Public Safety. Data from Supplemental Homicide Report. (2008.)
McLeer SV, Anwar R. A study of battered women presenting in an emergency department. *Am J Public Health*. 1989; 79:65-66.

7. **False.** Threats, harassment, and assaults often escalate just after a battered woman leaves her abuser. This can be the most dangerous time in the relationship. That is why it's important for the victim to go to a safe, secure place such as a shelter for family violence survivors.

8. **False.** Texas law permits immediate arrest for suspected family violence and many police departments now make such arrests. Family violence related calls are the largest category of calls made to the police. Seventy-seven percent of police departments have operational procedures on how to respond to these calls such as asking if there are any weapons involved or if there is a protective order.

Klein, Andrew. (April 2008). "Practical Implications of Current Domestic Violence Research Part 1: Law Enforcement" NIJ Sponsored.

9. **False.** Arrest and jail time alone are not usually enough to make a batterer permanently stop being violent. Battering Intervention and Prevention Programs are essential. However, arresting and jailing batterers is important because it temporarily stops their violence and lets them know that our society does not tolerate battering.

Gondolf, E.W. (2004). Evaluating batterer counseling programs: A difficult task showing some effects and implications. *Aggression and Violent Behavior* 9; 605-631

10. **False.** Seventy-three percent of all Texans believe that domestic violence is a serious problem in Texas. In fact, one in four American females experience family violence at some time in their lives; your daughter, sister or neighbor could be next. That makes it your business. Family violence also touches your pocketbook. As a taxpayer, you are affected every time police answer a family violence call or a woman visits an emergency room because of battering.

Texas Council on Family Violence 2002 statewide poll on prevalence and attitudes on domestic violence. Tjaden, P. & Thoennes, N. (2000). *Extent, Nature and Consequences of Intimate Partner Violence*. National Institute of Justice and Centers for Disease Control.

