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*Listening, learning,
and living together:
it's the science of life.*

Dealing with Domestic Violence¹

Jennifer Stevens and Suzanna Smith²

Your partner says it will never happen again, brings you roses, and cooks your favorite dinner that night. Then why are you afraid? The Centers for Disease Control estimate that every year over 5 million women in the U.S. suffer abuse from their husbands, ex-husbands, or intimate partners. Thousands of men are also victims of violence, although women are 2 to 3 times more likely to report violence and are much more likely to be seriously injured or killed. Domestic violence is common, and it is serious (Centers for Disease Control, 2006).

Domestic violence, also called intimate partner violence, domestic abuse, or battering, takes place when one person intentionally harms his or her intimate partner. This may be physical abuse, sexual assault, or psychological or emotional abuse. Experts believe that one main reason for domestic violence is the batterer's need for power and control in the relationship. This comes not only from the use of physical force but also from threats, intimidation, even isolating the partner from friends and family. In fact, women often find the emotional trauma of the violence more painful than the physical abuse (Centers for Disease Control, 2006).

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Women in violent relationships are often asked, "Why don't you leave?" Leaving is often a dangerous time when women are more vulnerable to violence. When a victim is planning to leave a dangerous situation, it is important to make a safety plan first, including a list of important things to bring, people to call, and places available to safely stay.

For further information about making a personalized safety plan, call the national hotline at 1-800-799-7233 to speak to an advocate in your area.

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To listen to the radio broadcast:

http://www.radiosource.net/radio_stories/dealing.mp3

http://www.radiosource.net/radio_stories/dealing.wav

References

Centers for Disease Control. (2006). *Intimate partner violence: Overview*. Retrieved June 7, 2007, from <http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/factsheets/ipvfacts.htm>