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Bad Medicine: A Panel

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The Power of Silence

Sarah Zaidi, Emma Erskine, Page Lemont, Alex Do, Alanah Williams

Collin College Health Sciences Academy at Plano East Senior High School

Authors' Note

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Abstract

Abuse needs to be spoken about. People need to take action against it, if someone does not, who will? Who will be there to protect the victims of these demeaning situations? This essay focuses on the types of abuse, what abuse is, the reason they do it, how it affects the victim's life, and what things can be done to stop it. Awareness and resources are the main focuses of this research project. The video focuses on statistics regarding the mistreatment of different genders, races, and age groups that are affected. The interview provides an insight of a real experience, to represent the truth of the issue.

The Power of Silence

Abuse is like the elephant in the room, it happens, people know it happens, but no one wants to talk about it. Physical, emotional, and sexual abuse is spreading rapidly in the communities that people live in. It is taking over the minds of the victims, affecting their everyday lives, and creating a gender stereotype around the nation.

Physical abuse, the way someone touches another person without their consent. There are many forms of this abuse, from a gentle scratch to using a weapon with excessive force (Loveisrespect, 2013). This type of abuse may not be drastic at first but it subtly changes to something more extreme. As seen below on the graphs from Huffington Post eighty-percent of women experience a domestic crime with a intimate partner, and when cases are not solved and women don't get the help they need, thirty-four percent of women killed by an intimate partner (Scheller, 2014).

More Women Experience Intimate Partner Violence
Victims of domestic violence, by gender, 2010



Women Are More Likely Than Men To Be Killed By Intimate Partners
Percent of total female and total male homicide victims killed by an intimate partner of the opposite sex, 2003-2012



When someone yells and screams derogatory words to another, in the intentions of hurting the victim, it is emotional abuse. This type of abuse could lead to different things such as self harm,

psychological diseases like Anorexia, Depression, and cutting; abuse doesn't necessarily cause those problems, but simply makes it more likely to happen (Kathryn Patricelli, 2016).

Controlling someone else's body during an intercourse by hurting them intentionally without their approval, forcing the other to do something and not letting them have a say in it, or refusing to use a condom during the intercourse, is sexual abuse. Why do these things happen to the innocent child, the loving wife, the perfect husband, the sweet girlfriend, the amazing boyfriend, the unguarded stranger?

Control freaks, some people lust for control, and want to be in control at all times, when they are not in control they seek for solutions to put them back at the top (Loveisrespect, 2013). Then there are times when people grow up with it and it has become a 'social norm' for them, whether it is from their parents, friends, or relatives. The fact that they may have been abused as a child they now have the choice to have authority over someone else, they may take it and go overboard with it. They may be the abuser to prevent the horrific things that happened to them as a child (Patricelli, n/a). Though, that is not an excuse. Everyone has a choice over something, and the abuser's choice is to inflict harm upon the victim.

Now, the victims. They should just leave, right? But when the abuser feels like they are losing that control, they go to extreme measures to keep them. The victim may be scared of what the abuser may do and could do. The pain in the past may cause their hesitation to leave, due to the fear of the possible outcomes, and the possibility of a painful future (Loveisrespect, 2013). What if the victim has become 'immune' to the abuse, meaning they think it may be normal. They could have grown up in an environment where there was no healthy relationships. Guilt,

can be an emotion that the partner installs into the victim, or blackmail them with their secrets. The partner could use their past against them, and that itself can cause someone to stay, just for the fact that they are scared of the judgment that goes along with their hidden secrets (Loveisrespect, 2013). Embarrassment, the victim may feel that people will judge, because they 'did something wrong' when in reality, they did nothing. The feeling of getting rejected and shunned upon by the people that the victim has given trust to, could be hurtful, and hard to cope with (loveisrespect, 2013). The abuser may say hurtful things and make the person think that no one will love or accept them as a person because of their broken past, or the fear of the previous partner hunting him or her down, which could possibly put the people that they are close to in danger. Blaming the abuse on them self can be just as harmful as the abuser saying it is their fault, because the damage it does to the mind makes the victim have no confidence, which in the future can lead to more abuse by someone else (loveisrespect, 2013). Love is a powerful thing, and it is possible that he or she may still be in love with the abuser. The love that is portrayed may confuse the victim and give them hope of a better situation (Loveisrespect, 2013).

They become dependent, the victim. They seek for approval amongst their partner, because that is the only thing they know, and if they do not get approved, it could lead to bad consequences for the victim. Abusive relationships can get so out of hand to the point where the victim does not know how to make decisions by themselves. They may go to the store once alone and not know if they should buy the apples or the oranges. It seems simple to someone who is not in their situation, but it is not to them, they are constantly thinking whether their partner is going to like the decision, and if they do not, what will happen. The abuser may order them

around to do everything so they may be tired, and if they have work the next day how is that going to affect their interaction on the job. The victim may not get much social interaction because the abuser keeps them locked up, figuratively and literally. There is so many ways on how abuse can affect someone's day to day life. Even after some victims are free they may end up going back because their minds are programmed to follow, be inferior, and submissive to the partner, and can't survive by themselves. As shown in a study eighty-percent of twenty-one year olds that have reported child abuse has encountered at least one psychological disorder (Childhelp, 2012).

Awareness, this is the possible way to prevent situations like this from happening. People can start looking for the early detections of abuse amongst a partner, and catch it before it is too late. People can be sweet and nice on the outside but what happens behind closed doors? The abuser won't abuse you on the first date, they will gradually introduce it until it gets out of hand and they are in full control over you. Friends, family members, co-workers, teachers, peers, can start looking for the signs of abuse in others and can help the victim get to safety. Even if someone is in a relationship they can start looking for the red flags at the beginning, and save themselves from heartache and pain in the future. There are also ways of showing women that they are not inferior to men, but rather they are equal; in general everyone is equal.

Working in a non-profit Domestic Violence organization that provided emergency housing for victims that run away, legal support, counseling, and financial advisors, was a life changing opportunity said by Alanah Williams January 27, 2017. Experiencing the life in the shelter for two weeks was something no one could forget, the atmosphere was full of

encouragement and love. Though, there were a couple of rough patches there from the housing of multiple women with different backgrounds and different cultures, at the end of the day, they had each other backs as they all came from similar situations. The office setting presented how much people are willing to work and sacrifice to get these women and men to a better position in their life.

Based on the interview done by Alex Do, Emma Erskine, Page Lemont, and Sarah Zaidi on a high school student who attends Plano East was an opportunity to express the reality of how abuse can happen to anyone. The female, who shall not be named due to a non-disclosure agreement, tells her story of how she was not prepared for that particular relationship as she thought never occurred to her that it could happen to her. As she may not have know that women between the ages of 16-24 in dating relationships experience the highest rate of domestic violence and sexual assault (Stopdv, 2016). As the young lady from Plano East could have left her relationship sooner if she have had education of what an abusive partner may act like as well as information on legal and financial help, she could have had a brighter outlook on relationships in the future.

There are endless ways that we can help people through situations such as these. Do not let it continue to be the elephant, that no one talks about. Make it the elephant in the room that people gasp at, take pictures of it, call the police for. We need to stop the 1.5 million high school students, the 1 in 3 adults, the 43% college student that get abused (Loveisrespect, 2013). The five kids that die a day due to abuse, need our help (Childhelp, 2012). The 5.8 million victims there are every year, need an escape (Stopdv, 2016). There are so many resources out there to

help them, we just need it to be made more available and open, so people won't be afraid to tell someone and get help.

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