

# Talking Tazewell

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The Wellness Playbook

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October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month. Experiencing or even witnessing violence at home can leave deep emotional scars, shaping how a person sees themselves, their relationships, and their overall well-being. At the same time, mental health struggles can make it even harder to reach out for help or find safety. Before we explore how domestic violence affects mental health, we'll take a closer look at the warning signs of abuse and the unique challenges or barriers survivors may face.

Our goal is to shine a light on these intersecting issues with care and compassion. In this edition, you'll find information to better understand the impact of domestic violence, strategies for supporting survivors, and tools to strengthen mental wellness.

Together, we can continue to create communities where safety, healing, and hope are possible for everyone.

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## DID YOU KNOW...

In 2024, Illinois domestic violence agencies provided more than 600,000 hours of services to more than 50,000 men, women and children survivors of abuse.

But it is so much more than emergency shelter. It is also often medical and legal advocacy/education, safety planning, crisis intervention and emotional support, transportation assistance, pet boarding, parental support, employment and housing assistance.



Myth

Domestic violence is an isolated, rare occurrence.

Victims of domestic violence never leave their abusers. It must not be “that bad”

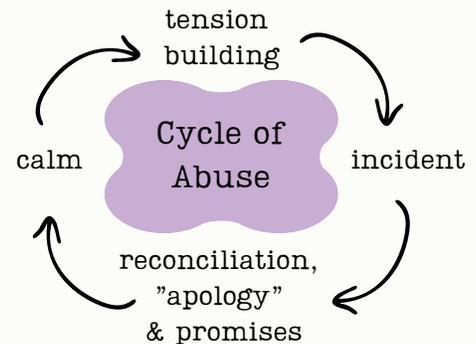
Domestic violence does not affect children if they are not the target of the abuse.

Fact

1 in 4 women and 1 in 9 men will experience domestic violence in their lifetime.

On average, victims will attempt to leave 7 times before succeeding. Leaving is often the most dangerous period of time for survivors of abuse.

Children who witness domestic violence have a much higher risk for adverse psychosocial outcomes.



### Warning Signs

Physical injuries that are in various stages of healing, inappropriate clothing for the season, uncharacteristically late or absent from work, wanting to work extra hours to avoid going home, change in job performance, sudden signs of anxiety or fear, generally acting isolated or quiet, emotional distress including sadness, depression or suicidal thoughts, minimizing or denying harassment or injuries, sensitivity if people ask about home life or trouble at home, disruptive visits in the workplace, using substances to cope.

\*reminder: these signs are intended direct your intuition and ask questions - never jump to conclusions or make assumptions.

### Barriers

When people hear the term “domestic abuse,” they often think only of physical violence. But abuse can take many forms—emotional or mental, spiritual, financial, sexual, and even technological, such as online harassment or controlling behavior through devices. Because abuse shows up in so many ways, there are also many reasons a survivor may remain in the relationship.

Fear is often the most immediate—fear for their own safety, the safety of their children, pets, or even friends and family who could be impacted. A survivor may also be financially dependent on their abuser, or they may have come to rationalize or normalize the abuse over time. Feelings of shame, low self-esteem, or judgment from others can make it even harder to reach out for help. Some survivors believe they are to blame for the abuse or that they don’t deserve support. Others may not recognize the situation as dangerous, may not know what options exist, or may face barriers such as a disability or cultural expectations.

Leaving a relationship for any reason can be difficult; doing so in an abusive or dangerous situation can feel impossible without the knowledge or access to support.

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HAVE AN IDEA OR TOPIC YOU WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT?

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