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Sociology of the Family  
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Domestic violence has historically been viewed as a male problem, with females always as the victim. As times have changed and some amount of equality has been established between genders this has changed. Now in abusive relationships it is very possible that the female is the abuser. Many differences exist between the genders in regard to how violence affects them. Each gender abuses differently and each gender psychologically deals with the abuse differently. Domestic violence is widespread, but it isn't something that escalates to a serious level in most relationships. Each gender, race and social class is affected by domestic violence, but like most other issues there is a wide variety of things which affect its impact on the group. Domestic violence is a social problem, and as a social problem someone has to take responsibility for it, but where does that responsibility reside for domestic violence?

Genders are different in many aspects, but ability to do harm is not one of them. Psychologically there is a difference between males and females who are victims of violence. The biggest difference for the victims is probably the mental reaction to the situation. Males in our society are trained from birth to be strong and not ever need to seek protection, especially not from women. The typical male who is abused by his wife is likely to think of himself as not upholding his gender identity and feeling as though he has somehow become a disgrace to his gender. These feelings lead men to not take action against their abusers, including not reporting the abuse as the cause for a hospital visit. On the physical side of things men are more likely to use their fists than women and women are more likely to seek another weapon for the attack. In domestic violence it is likely that men will be targeted as the aggressors, and women who begin physical violence are "just defending themselves". I personally don't believe this assumption because of the research of Strauss and Gelles as well as my own personal experience with my family. The research of Strauss and Gelles shows that 41% of the homicides between intimate partners were caused by women. This places men and women fairly equal in that category. Women are capable of great amounts of damage. The "Female Domestic Violence Against Men" link provides several examples of how violence women can be. The site describes an incident where a man was beaten with a

baseball bat by his wife, resulting in broken ribs. There could be many reasons for this increase in violence by women. They may feel that they need to be violent to maintain any type of control in a relationship, or it may be self defense as some studies claim. The site states that women are more likely to use a weapon that is not a knife or gun, and are also likely to bite, kick or throw something. My family is not very violent overall, but when an argument does erupt the female will typically take control of the situation and be the one who is yelling and instigating the violent activity. The facts from all of the research are not very clear. Some of it takes the feminist position and states that if women hurt men it is the man's fault, other research places blame upon the person who does the hitting (male or female). Regardless of what the research shows, it is clear that in general in abusive relationships both genders are being abused.

Domestic violence affects about 30% of the adult population each year, according to most studies. Domestic violence comes in various forms and affects more people than the studies report. There are almost no relationships that are free of violent confrontations. The violence may be non-physical in the form of verbal abuse, but it is still domestic violence. There are some differences between races in the statistical information known about domestic violence. Twelve out of each thousand African American females have been victims of domestic violence, whereas only eight out of each thousand white females have been. In the information collected by the CDC there is a larger gap genders, with 25% of women being involved in intimate partner violence (IPV), but only 8% of men reported being involved in IPV. The change in statistics for each social class is the most dramatic of all, for women. The statistics cited in the text book show an inverse relationship between incidents of violence (per 1000) and the economic bracket in which they reside. For men there is no direct correlation between social or economic class and the number of incidents of violence they were a victim in. This could be due to various factors, including simple statistical problems resulting from too few samples for comparison. Another possible factor is the housewife position. If housewives are left in a position where they don't have to worry about economic matters, then only non-economic factors would be the cause of most violence. According to the CDC information there is also a possible link between the amount of violence against African American women and their social class. The difference in the numbers for violence between men and women is most likely attributable to the fact that our society is patriarchal and women

often are placed into a position of submission to their husbands and allow themselves to view themselves as the weaker sex.

Domestic violence is an issue on many levels. For the men and women that have to endure the abuse on a daily basis it is a very personal problem that is difficult to avoid due to various factors. On the national level it is the responsibility of the country to protect its citizens, this includes from each other. Primarily domestic violence is an issue that individuals and families must deal with, there isn't a lot that the nation can do about the problem. On the personal level each individual is responsible for his/her own actions and as such should be trained in self control. There is no valid reason for people in an intimate relationship to hurt each other. With domestic violence all the nation can do is create stronger laws and implement other actions of policy to encourage a decline in violence. The process alone takes many years, and even when fully implemented may be completely ineffective. The most logical action to be taken in a situation where violence is occurring is for the person being abused to leave the situation and seek assistance from an outside agency. In that action, the solution requires efforts on a personal and on a national level. There are many organizations and individuals in this country who take efforts to help people in abusive situations. Some cell phone companies provide phones and emergency service to domestic violence shelters for distribution to victims, this provides the victims with a way to get help if they are in danger and need assistance. On the personal level for abusers, there are several steps that can be taken for them to become non-abusive. Through psychological counseling it is possible to suppress the need for a violent outlet to problematic situations. It is the responsibility of the individual to take care of themselves and correct activities that are occurring in their lives, but without the support of government programs that could be very difficult.

Domestic violence is a very serious problem for families. A simple slap can escalate to much more damaging forms of violence. Men and women both are in danger of being abused (possibly even killed) by an intimate partner. The numbers vary greatly for violence between genders, races and classes. Domestic violence is an issue that must be handled by both individuals and the nation as a whole. In our modern society we hardly ever think of things like this existing, but we must in order to maintain the well-being of each individual.