

Victims of domestic violence need more attention

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Do you know that over 1.2 million women and almost 835,000 men are abused by their partner yearly in America? Many of these victims will never tell anyone about the abuse they receive, for a number of different reasons. These reasons can include fear that their abuser won't be punished and embarrassment. Because of this, many victims never tell anyone about their abuse and remain unprotected.

The number of domestic violence victims is so high because they are not receiving enough attention. Domestic violence has become an epidemic. In fact, domestic violence victims make up at least one third of people in the shelter system in New York City. A majority of these victims are women, but some of them are part of the nearly three million men who are victims of domestic violence per year. But, domestic violence doesn't only affect adults. In the U.

S., over three million children witness domestic violence every year, which makes the child more likely to be a future domestic violence victim. This also makes them more prone to having sleep disorders and anxiety, along with mental health and behavioral issues. Often times children don't even have to leave their house to witness domestic violence, since more than 60% of incidents happen at home. One reason that domestic violence victims need more attention is because many victims don't feel protected by the police, so more than 50% of them never speak up about their abuse.

How can victims trust that police will protect them from their abuser when one in two women who are married to a police officer are victims of domestic violence? This can certainly cause police officers to be biased when it comes

to domestic violence cases. In Illinois, the landlord was sent a notice by police to evict one of his tenants. Why was she being kicked out? Because she suffered from domestic violence, and called the police on her abuser. There was a “crime-free ordinance” in her city, so contacting law enforcement led to her eviction. But homelessness isn’t the only thing victims have endured because of police: Rachael Thomson, a pregnant woman, was killed by her former boyfriend just a week after police labeled a domestic violence incident where he beat her “low risk”.

If police would have taken her initial attack more seriously, Thomson could still be alive today. There’s a certain group of domestic abuse victims that especially need our attention: Men. Society’s idea that men must be “tough” and “fearless” has caused many male victims to keep quiet about the abuse they receive. Byron Velvick, fiancée of former NFL cheerleader Mary Delgado, didn’t want to press charges when she hit him in the chest and face, splitting his lip. Velvick isn’t alone. Surprisingly, two in five men are victims of domestic violence.

Many of these victims never report their abuse. Despite the high number of male victims, there aren’t as many places for strictly men to seek help as there are for women. For example, in Wales, there are 7,500 refugee places for female victims but only 60 for male victims. In the world of professional sports, many cases of domestic violence are put on the backburner. Jerry Angelo, a former NFL executive, said that players were not disciplined in “hundreds and hundreds” of domestic abuse incidents during the 30 years that he was involved in the league.

“ They are more worried about protecting a team’s name or a player than a wife,” says Brandie Underwood, ex-wife of Brandon Underwood, a Green Bay Packers player. It has also been said that as an NFL wife, it’s better to endure abuse than to speak out and hurt a team. In foreign countries, many domestic violence victims go unprotected and are forced to tolerate the different forms of abuse they receive. As of 2012, only eight countries in Asia and the Pacific have laws against marital rape. Perhaps this is why almost 70% of women in India face some form of domestic violence, and nearly 1 in 4 women in China has experienced domestic violence.

Dong Shanshan, a Chinese woman, was a part of that statistic. Although she reported her partner’s abuse to police eight times, her complaints were dismissed as “ family problems” and her abuser was not punished. He later beat her to death, but was only sentenced to six year in prison for “ maltreatment”. Some people argue that a victim’s abuser needs more attention and therapy than the victim. However, being a victim of domestic violence can heavily affect someone.

Victims are at risk for mental health problems such as anxiety, depression and compared to the average person, they are 15 times more likely to abuse alcohol and drugs. Also, in India, three out of four victims of domestic abuse have attempted suicide at some point. But, the effects of domestic violence on a victim aren’t just psychological; domestic violence victims are at a higher risk of suffering from long-term health issues. “ ...

If you experience domestic violence, you’re at a higher risk for some of the largest health problems that our country is facing today — including heart

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disease, chronic pain, asthma, and arthritis,” says Lisa James, director of health issues at Futures Without Violence, a program that strives to end violence against women and children worldwide. The number of domestic violence victims is so high because they aren’t receiving enough attention. Many victims are afraid or embarrassed to speak up about their abuse, and go unprotected. Over 50% of the two million domestic violence victims each year will never tell anyone about their abuse. Together we can help give victims the voice they need to speak out and out abusers where they belong: behind bars.