

# It's Time to Tell the *Truth* About Partner Abuse

## **What is the Truth about Partner Violence?**

For years the domestic violence field has been filled with half-truths and false claims. So what is the *truth* about partner aggression?

Nearly 200 studies consistently point to this simple conclusion: **Women are as likely, or even more likely, than men to engage in partner aggression.** This is what leading researchers say:

*"Research indicates that women can be just as violent as their partners."* – Irene Hanson Frieze, *Psychology of Women's Quarterly*, 2005

*"Recent evidence from the best designed studies indicates that intimate partner violence is committed by both genders with often equal consequences."* – Donald Dutton, *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, 2006

*"Differences were observed in the rates of male and female partner violence, with female violence occurring more frequently."* – Renee McDonald, *Journal of Family Psychology*, 2006

## **What Does the Latest Research Say About Domestic Violence?**

- A national survey of married and co-habiting partners found that 8% of women engaged in severe partner violence, while only 4% of men were involved in severe violence. Renee McDonald, *Journal of Family Psychology*, March 2006.

- An international study of over 13,000 university students in dating relationships reported that 11% of couples had experienced severe violence in the past year. Among those couples, 29% had female-only violence, 16% had male-only violence, and in 55% of couples both persons were violent. Murray Straus, presented at New York University, May 23, 2006. <http://pubpages.unh.edu/~mas2/ID41E2.pdf>

Furthermore, men are often injured by their wives or girlfriends. According to a meta-analysis by John Archer, PhD, **men suffer 38% of all injuries arising from partner aggression.** But men often don't report the incident, so they endure their pain in silence.

As a result the media often presents a one-sided and biased view of domestic violence.

## **So What's Wrong with Using False Statistics?**

Advocates for the domestic violence industry sometimes make one-sided or wildly-exaggerated claims such as "95% of DV victims are women." Such statements only make the problem worse:

- Abusive women find there is no place for them to get help.
- Abused men find they are ridiculed and DV service providers refuse to help them.
- False allegations of DV lead to escalations of conflict and family break-up.
- Domestic violence laws encourage overly-aggressive prosecution efforts:

*Warren Moon was the first Black quarterback to be elected to the Pro Football Hall of Fame. One evening Warren Moon got into a fight with his wife. The police were called and Mr. Moon was arrested. Against Mrs. Moon's wishes, the case went to trial.*

*Placed on the witness stand, Mrs. Moon admitted that she was the one who had started the fight by throwing a candlestick, and that her husband had only acted in self-defense. Warren Moon was acquitted.*

## **Whether it's a man or woman, there's no excuse for domestic violence.**



### **Respecting Accuracy in Domestic Abuse Reporting**

A coalition of over 50 organizations around the country has come together to educate the public about domestic violence: [www.mediaradar.org/docs/VAWA-Resolution.pdf](http://www.mediaradar.org/docs/VAWA-Resolution.pdf)

For more information, contact:

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Courtesy of the California Men's Center San Diego

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