**INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE**

is a pattern of coercive, intimidating or violent behavior used to control an intimate partner.

*1 in 4 women* and *1 in 7 men* in the U.S. have experienced **severe physical violence** from an intimate partner.\(^1\)

In 2010, *534 U.S. soldiers* were killed by **hostile action** or **homicide**.\(^2\)

In the same year, *1,336 U.S. citizens* were killed by an **intimate partner**.\(^3\)

*1 in 5* teenage girls has experienced physical or sexual abuse by a dating partner.\(^4\)

Intimate partner violence **denies** the goodness of each human created in God’s image and **violates** the freedom and joy we have in Christ.

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**Psalm 55:12-14**

It is not enemies who taunt me – I could bear that; it is not adversaries who deal insolently with me – I could hide from them. But it is you, my equal, my companion, my familiar friend, with whom I kept pleasant company; we walked in the house of God with the throng.

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**WE ARE ALL CALLED ...**

...to recognize the image of God in every person and to love, serve, and care for our neighbors. We are called to:

- recognize, name and root out intimate partner violence and abuse in our church and communities;
- provide care and create safe communities for healing; and
- learn about intimate partner violence and abuse.

Adapted from the ELCA Social Message, “Gender-based Violence” adopted by the 2015 Church Council.

**TAKE ACTION**

- Post information for local and national crisis hotlines in church restrooms.
- Find out if your community has a domestic violence shelter, and ask how you can help.
- Review your congregation’s policies on prevention and safety.
- Learn more at faithtrustinstitute.org.
- Volunteer to lead an adult class in your congregation about the root causes of intimate partner violence. Find resources at ELCA.org/justiceforwomen.
- Start a conversation with a young person in your life about the difference between a healthy and unhealthy relationship.

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**IF YOU BELIEVE YOU MIGHT BE A VICTIM**

- Trust your instincts. Seek help.
- The abuse is NOT your fault.
- You are not alone. Help is available.
- Talk in confidence with someone you trust: a relative, a friend or your pastor.
- Set up a safety plan of action for yourself and your children (i.e. hide a car key or money in a safe place; locate somewhere to go in case of emergency).

**National Domestic Violence Hotline:**

thel hotline.org or 888-799-SAFE

(24/7, confidential, assistance available in English, Spanish, and 170 other languages)

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\(^2\) 2 www.dmdc.osd.mil/dcas/pages/report_by_year_manner.xhtml. Number includes all active-duty soldiers at home and abroad.


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