Obstacles to Leaving a Violent Relationship

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Fear

Many victims fear that their partners will harm them if they attempt to leave. Victims also fear not knowing what kind of future lies ahead, and some fear being alone.

Threats

Most victims are threatened by their abusive partner and fear that leaving will increase the risk of violence.

Financial Constraints

Many victims, especially those with children, are financially dependent on their partners, sometimes because their partners have not allowed them to work.

Lack of Support

Not all victims have family and friends who support their decision to leave. Some victims are so isolated by their abusive partners that they have no support system whatsoever.

Lack of Knowledge about Rights and Options

Not all victims are aware that there are community agencies that can help them get to safety and rebuild their lives.

Family Pressure

Victims are often blamed by their family for the violence occurring, and are sometimes told to make the relationship work rather than separate from their partners.

Societal Pressure

Traditional notions of men’s and women’s roles, combined with the stigma of divorce and separation, can make the decision to leave that much harder for people in abusive relationships.

Children

Many women don’t leave their batterers because they want their children to have a father. Other women worry that they will not be able to provide for their children if they leave.

Love

Many women feel an emotional attachment to their batterers and cling to the hope that things will get better. They may also feel like they have failed to keep the family together.

*Domestic Violence: Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, Boston*