



***“serving those who serve us”***

**May 2007 - Newsletter**

***Are You Caught in the Invisible Trap?***

The American Bar Association’s Commission on Domestic Violence defines domestic abuse as “a pattern of behavior in which one intimate partner uses physical violence, coercion, threats, intimidation, isolation or emotional, sexual or economic abuse to control the other partner in the relationship.” The Commission further indicates that *both* women and men may be exposed to an abusive relationship at some point in their lives and suggests that this type of abuse often masquerades as “love.” The following behaviors are benchmarks which define an abusive relationship:

- Has your intimate partner pushed for quick involvement, pressuring you for an exclusive relationship before you were really ready to commit?
- Is your partner excessively controlling, questioning you about your relationship with friends, co-workers or checking the odometer on your car?
- Does your partner interrogate you intensely, especially about whom you talk with, where you go or insist on granting “permission” for you to engage in normal, day to day activities?
- Has your partner ever stalked you at work or while you were with other acquaintances?
- Does your partner isolate you from family, friends or co-workers who support you, indicating that they are “interfering” in your relationship?
- Does your partner blame others for his/her difficulties or personal mistakes?
- Does your partner make others responsible for his/her feelings or anger?
- Is your partner hypersensitive to perceived slights or injustices?
- Does your partner use words to degrade, frighten or control you?
- Does your partner exhibit sudden mood swings, switching from sweet to violent in mere minutes?
- Does your partner follow ugly encounters with sweet apologies, gifts or promises of better behavior?
- Has your partner admitted to past abuse in prior relationships, indicating that the former partner “made” them do it?

No one should live their life in fear of an intimate partner. If you have concerns about a relationship, your Employee Assistance Program is available 24/7 to help you decide an appropriate course of action. And if you find your behavior becoming abusive and controlling toward your significant other, please call as well to discuss strategies for breaking out of this dangerous, destructive cycle.