

The Iceberg of Domestic Violence

One of the most dangerous and insidious truths about domestic violence is it's easy to ignore if it's not visible. Like an iceberg, there's a lot more than what is visible above the surface, and that's true for individuals, communities, and cultures. **In the depiction below, we've listed outward acts that society doesn't accept, where survivors are supported and the offenders are held accountable. Ask yourself: WHY don't we do the same with acts found below the water's surface?**

Socially Unacceptable Domestic Violence

Intimate Partner Homicide

Intimate Partner Rape and Sexual Violence

"Severe" Forms of Physical Violence
(e.g. beating, burning, strangulation)

Socially Acceptable or Tolerated Domestic Violence

Experienced by victim due to...
offender's actions

Financial abuse, emotional abuse, coercion, including reproductive

bystander's actions

Victim blaming/asking "Why don't they leave?"
"It's a private matter and it's not my place to intervene."
Turning a blind eye and/or pretending not to notice witnessed abuses

community's actions

Making and/or not challenging jokes about domestic violence
Supporting abusers in their career/work/art (e.g. artists, athletes, politicians) without accountability for their violence



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Other forms of Socially Acceptable or Tolerated Domestic Violence

Experienced by victim due to... community's actions *continued*:

- ♦ Assuming good intentions on the offender's part are enough
- ♦ News articles and headlines that sensationalize and/or minimize domestic violence

system's responses actions:

- ♦ "Marital exceptions" to rape laws
- ♦ Virtuous victim narrative / Myth of the "perfect victim"
- ♦ Arresting and/or incarcerating victims for self-defense against violence
- ♦ Holding victims solely responsible for children's exposure to the abuser's violence
- ♦ Asking victim to move or change their actions to avoid abuse
- ♦ Denying DV-based asylum requests

cultural references:

- ♦ Romanticizing intimate partner violence and/or stalking
- ♦ Patriarchy

**If you or someone you know is in an
unhealthy or abusive relationship...**

**Call Virginia's 24-hour Family Violence and Sexual
Assault hotline at 1-800-838-8238**



VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF
SOCIAL SERVICES



DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
Awareness
Month 
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For information and resources around Domestic Violence awareness and prevention in Virginia, visit www.dss.virginia.gov/family/domestic_violence