

Podcast: Episode 3

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Hello,

I am Dr. Charles David Tauber the CEO of the Coalition for Work with Psychotrauma and Peace (CWWPP). You can see more about what we do on our website that is: www.cwwpp.org

We welcome your comments on this podcast and your suggestions for future podcasts. Please, do let us know what you think.

This podcast will deal with domestic violence. Although certainly there has been an increase in domestic violence through the COVID crisis. Domestic violence is a huge problem, in any event, it existed before COVID and exists at every economic and educational level, and in every part of the world.

We must define domestic violence a little bit and we can say that it comes either from an abuser or a person within a family who abuses other people within the family or can be a general situation within the family that the family is violent. Domestic violence affects both men and women. Men are not only abusers although they certainly can be man also can be victims. Similarly, while women very frequently are victims, they also can be abusers and we must remember that because unfortunately frequently men are forgotten.

There are several types of domestic violence. The one that most people can think of most frequently is physical violence and that certainly exists, and it can be often. There is also sexual abuse. That can include rape which can, unfortunately, affect children as well as adults. There is a great deal of psychological violence. That is probably the greatest amount of domestic violence and it can be awful for the victims' concern and the entire family.

There are many causes of domestic violence there is the frustration of the abuser. The abuser gets frustrated puts all his or her energy inside his/her body holds it in and in one moment it explodes, and it turns into violence of whatever form. That frustration can be caused by the internal psychological state of the person and it can be also caused by external events. We think of financial problems, the problems with a colleague or at work, and obviously in a situation that many people who would be listening to this podcast are dealing with it can be war, it can be all kinds of things.

Also, the abuser may have been abused and is transmitting his or her abuse to the next generation. We see that very frequently. We also see that for various reasons, general relationships within the family very strain and very tense. Also, there are some families in which violence is the way that that family works. It sounds a bit strange, but we've seen that on several occasions. There also may be cultural factors. In some cultures, family violence is "normal".

We must know here that always the abused person is the weakest link. The abuser sees a person on whom he or she can come down, and on whom he/she can get his/her frustration out. Now, that person who is abused may have various characteristics: they may have a weak personality, they may be a child or an old person, a sick person it can be anything and we must always look to the victim.

We must stress that there is never a real excuse for violence of any sort, and it always must be dealt with.

One large problem with victims is guilt and shame. The victim almost paradoxically may feel guilty for what has happened to him or her that can come from the victim himself/herself. The abuser can also shame the victim and make the victim feel guilty and sometimes blackmail is used. Also, in some cultures, the victim is considered to be a shameful and be guilty person. A victim never should have shame and never should have guilt it is always the abuser that should feel these things. Victims very frequently feel completely inadequate and their self-image goes down. That is wrong and needs to be corrected.

There are other issues involved. Very frequently victims stay within an abusive situation. Why sometimes it's better to deal with the devil you know than the devil you don't. So, victims feel very unsafe leaving the situation and if that sounds paradoxical it certainly is. There also may be financial reasons that the victim stays within the family and with the abuser. The victim may not have a place to go and maybe nobody will accept the victim or who will house the victim. There also may be issues where the family or friends take the side of the abuser rather than the side of the victim. We've seen that unfortunately in too many cases.

The point is what to do about this. We say that in any case the person who is abused must get out of the situation and get safe. That is the first principle and that is the first thing that must happen. The second point is dealing with this psychologically. We urge people to write and to get their feelings out in whatever way. We have a different podcast on getting your feelings out and we refer to that. But please write out what has happened in great detail including your feelings. Do art, do music, do sports but get your feelings out. Another very important point is to talk to somebody, talk to individuals, talk to your friends, talk to your family members. There are also many organizations probably in your area that deal with abused families. Seek them up. See if you need to get professional help and no not if you need it any victim always needs it. That's very important. If you still see the possibility of saving the relationship try and get counseling with the other person. If you cannot get the other person to go to the counseling, get the counselor yourself this is very important. If you feel that the abuse has been very excessive if you can't stand it any more our advice is to go to a lawyer and figure out how to deal with the legal situation. That also can be very important.

We also appeal here for perpetrators to get the help they need. We have seen a few perpetrators in our practice and perpetrators can be helped. Frequently, they realize what they are doing but they don't know where to go or what to do. We urge perpetrators to contact someone.

In summary, domestic violence is an issue with or without a COVID situation. Always get help there is no shame and you should not feel guilty for being a victim. Again, get help!

We look forward to seeing you in the following podcast.