

Recognizing Emotional Abuse

Penn State News Release

Witnessing Repeated Abuse Can Affect Bystanders

Watching abuse is not a 'neutral' event

Children and adult bystanders who witness repeated abuse inflicted on others may experience both a psychological and physiological stress level that, over time, can equal that of the victim, according to a Penn State researcher. "Watching others being assaulted, bullied or sexually harassed is not a neutral event for bystanders", says Dr. Richard J. Hazler, Associate Professor of Counselor Education.

"Of course, the victim, who stands in the most immediate psychological and physical danger, suffers a greater level of distress than any bystander. However, our findings show that bystanders also experience moderate to severe psychological and physiological repercussions," Hazler notes. "After a time, based on the severity of the ordeal, the impact on victims and bystanders is no longer significantly different."

Emotional abuse is considered by many as the most traumatic of all abuses. This is because when someone hits you---BOOOOOM! It's over, and you can feel however you want to feel about it. You can get angry and think he's a monster, but it has nothing to do with you, *par se*, except that someone got mad at you and decided to whack you. Mind you, the reason so many women stay in physically violent relationships is because the honeymoon period comes so quickly after he beats you. The women feel that she undoubtedly his main squeeze and lover because he is on his knees with apologies. Not so with emotional abuse. Rarely does he (or she) try to "make up" for it once he tells you that you're a fat loser. If anything, he'll tell you that he loves you anyway, but the emotional abuse is his (or her way) to keep you under control. And you WILL be controlled because your low self-esteem makes it extra easy for you to take his crap. When a man (or woman) makes you feel like you are nothing, you are a worthless piece of horse manure--unlovable and ugly, it hurts so much!

Emotional Abuse and Husband Rape

When a man that you are married to rapes you because "you belong to him," it can be worse than being smacked across the face. Oh, and the rape is not "brutal" because your self-esteem is so low because of the emotional abuse that you do not fight him--you lie there and let him do "his business" and hopes he hurries and gets away from you...

Most women who are raped repeatedly in their marriages or live-in relationships keep quiet. They wouldn't DARE mention to their friends that their so-called loving husband is an impotent jerk who gets off by groping ferociously a lifeless wife's neglected body. Remember why men (and women) are motivated to rape, in the first place. It DOES have a lot to do with anger. Well, in relationships, think of how frustrated some men can be. Laid off from work, gets treated harshly by female bosses (or simply have problems with a lady boss, and wish he could knock the bitch down, but knows he can't, so he develops some sick fantasies that he can never carry out, so when night time hits, he sexually abuses his wife), children don't respect him, wife is no longer attractive to him but he has to sleep with her anyway--all of these things and more can trigger something in men to make them sexual abusers. You may ask, "Is my HUSBAND a

rapist? I mean, he has no violent record, and...it must be me because I'm SURE that this didn't go on in any of his other relationships..."

Be advised that according to the characteristics of rapists, men who do this don't stop at just one time because the sense of control and sexual power can be so magnificent! Think of how pedophiles feel--that strong power over such a weak young girl! They love it! So, a husband who can do whatever he pleases to his wife whenever he wants and doesn't have to worry about the law coming after him--some of them graduate to raping their children, as well if the wife becomes a worn out fantasy. This goes on for years, and the whole family keeps quiet. There is only one satisfied person: The rapist.

This is not to say that in these instances there are never any consenting acts. In many cases this is why the rape episodes are so confusing. Men often say (on television court shows) "A man cannot rape his wife!" and then hearty laughter follows. It's sort of like a code with men who do this or who think very little of women---but the belittling translation is "You are my cattle. How can I rape my horse?"