

# Family Shelter Service

605 EAST ROOSEVELT ROAD • WHEATON, ILLINOIS 60187 • HOTLINE: (630) 469-5650



If you are unsure about staying with an abusive partner, you may want to:

- Identify your dream.
- Compare your dream with the current reality in your relationship.
- Examine the likelihood of various scenarios:
  - The situation will stay the same as it is now;
  - Your partner will change;
  - Your partner will get even worse and end up with one or both of you getting killed, or with your children being seriously harmed.
- To evaluate the likelihood of these various scenarios, there are questions you can ask yourself:
  - Does your partner minimize, deny and distort the abuse?
  - Is your partner interested in treatment focusing on stopping the abuse, not just saying so, but following through and seeking treatment for abusers?
  - Has your partner been held accountable for the violence by the criminal justice system?
  - Is your partner an alcohol or drug user who refuses treatment for substance abuse, or worse yet, denies that there is a problem with drugs or alcohol?
  - Has the severity of the violence escalated over time?
  - How severe is the emotional abuse, based on your responses to the Power & Control Wheel and the Equality Wheel?

*Is your dream with your current partner an illusion?*

*Can Your Dream Come True?*

The following information should help you evaluate the likelihood that your dream will eventually come true:

- In the absence of punishment or completion of a Batterer's Intervention Program, violence is highly unlikely to stop.
- Batterers who are unwilling to enter a Batterer's Intervention Program, who insist upon couple's therapy when they finally agree to treatment, or drop out of a program before the counselor believes that the program has been successfully completed, are unlikely to stop battering.
- Batterers who minimize, deny, and distort the violence (by blaming the victim, alcohol, drugs, lack of money, stress, etc.) are unlikely to stop.
- Batterers who have problems with drugs or alcohol are unlikely to stop, at least until the drug or alcohol problem has been resolved.
- Batterers who express the belief that they should be the head of the household and that the victim should "obey" or "submit" are unlikely to stop.

- Batterers who are not punished by the court system, though fines or imprisonment, are unlikely to stop. Arrest is not enough; being held accountable means prosecuted and punished for a *crime*.
- Batterers who are extremely emotionally abusive, especially when the emotional abuse includes insulting and humiliating the victim or attempting to isolate the victim from the rest of the world, are unlikely to stop.

Once you examine your dream in light of these sobering facts, you may let go of it. If you recognize that you are holding onto a dream, you may realize that the dream is unrealistic. The first step in leaving a batterer is realizing that the dream is a deadly illusion.