

Family Shelter Service

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THE CHOICE TO BATTER

Many people believe that a batterer's use of violence and other abusive tactics comes from an inability to handle anger or is the result of drugs or alcohol use. The following is a list of the reasons we know that abuse is the result of the batterer's choice to use abusive tactics to obtain and maintain power and control over their partner.

- ◆ **IDENTITY OF THE VICTIM:** Most batterers direct their abuse and violence toward those they feel entitled to hurt: their partners, children and animals. They do not abuse their bosses, their best friends or strangers on the street.

- ◆ **DESTRUCTION OF PROPERTY:** Batterers don't tend to destroy their own property in order to intimidate their victim. Instead, they go after possessions of the victim – especially those items with sentimental value.

- ◆ **PATTERN OF INJURY:** Batterers tend to direct physical injuries to places on the body that can easily be concealed (torso, arms, legs, head). If they are trying to isolate the victim, the violence may include the face.

- ◆ **SUBSTANCE USE AND ABUSE:** Many people believe that the use of drugs and alcohol cause violence and abuse in intimate relationships. Studies reveal an interesting twist to this belief: many batterers abuse while they are *not* under the influence of drugs or alcohol. In addition, many batterers who stop using substances all together continue to abuse their partners, a good number even escalate the abuse. In addition, if drugs or alcohol caused abuse half of the domestic violence shelters would be for men.