



Domestic Violence and its effects on Health

Health issues arise for many reasons, such as eating habits, life-style, genetics, physical injuries, work environments, and such.

Did you know that domestic violence often has a huge impact on the health and well-being of family members living in an abusive household? Studies show that even unborn children are affected when expectant mothers live in an abusive household.

These studies show that the health impacts of domestic violence are both short term and long term, even to children and adults who were 'normal' healthy individuals prior to the abuse. These impacts can affect their physical or emotional health, or both.

The Award Winning Documentary – “The Secret Crimes: A Silent Epidemic of Generation” describes the various health issues suffered by adults and children living in an abusive household. These include anxiety, paranoia, lack of sleep, eating disorders, depression, and emotional effects that limit one’s ability to deal with social situations. To make matters worse, symptoms can vary from individual to individual, and according to social settings leading to confusion and misdiagnosis. Let’s not forget that in many cases, the physical injuries caused by violent behavior require medical care. Sometimes the injuries caused by intimate partners or family members are permanent, as in an acid attack.

Health problems caused by stress and anxiety alone can lead to many other physical symptoms. In many cases, the co-relation between these symptoms and their root cause of domestic abuse remains hidden, and is not diagnosed by medical professionals. Often, victims will not speak about the abuse to anyone due to fear of being punished by their abusers, and shame because they think it is their fault.

“Secret Crimes” connects the dots between domestic violence and its legacy in human suffering as expressed in poor health outcomes for many survivors. The experts interviewed in the film show how abusive experiences leave deep scars in the physical and emotional lives of the people exposed to domestic abuse. The information presented in the film shows the lasting negative effects and costs to families, individuals and society from this hidden, secret behavior. Only through understanding and exposure to the light of day can we overcome these harmful patterns and move forward to better health and happiness. The first step is to acknowledge what is happening and to know that it is never the survivor’s fault.

Ritu Chopra is the Producer-Director of two award-winning documentary films, “The Secret Crimes: A Silent Epidemic of a Generation,” and “Lead My Way: A Global Perspective of Domestic Violence.” She, a management consultant by profession, is also an author, TV show host, and the founder of LeadMyWay.org, an educational 501c-3 non-profit based in NJ focused on domestic violence. Contact LeadMyWay-USA.org for screenings and presentations.