

Domestic violence increase is society's fault—speakers

By Betsy Miller

Domestic violence in America has increased sharply because of the increasing emphasis and publicity about acts of violence, according to a spokesperson for the Rape Spouse Abuse Crisis Center.

Denise Daup, along with crisis center worker JoAnn Dunn, spoke Thursday in the Nebraska Union on domestic violence. The presentation was part of the Women's Resource Center's "Women's Week."

Daup said no specific family member can be blamed for the increase in family violence.

"It really is a social issue. We don't try and blame anybody," she said.

The center started handling domestic violence problems such as child abuse, spouse abuse and incest, a year ago, Dunn said.

Daup quoted figures showing that the number of domestic violence crimes has doubled in four years.

According to Daup, pregnant women can be targets for abuse from their husbands because the expected child is a threat to the man's relationship with his wife.

Another circumstance contributing to domestic violence is the marriage of a couple that has lived together Daup said.

The man who may have never hit the woman while they lived together will begin beating her after they are married, she said.

"There is a social sanction that says now this man owns this woman," Daup said.

The common pattern for family disturbances is known as the "circle of violence," Daup said.

The circle begins with tension between the man and woman, followed by actual violence and then a recourting period when the aggressor tries to make up with his partner, according to Daup.

She said after the pair reconciles, the circle can begin again.

Daup and Dunn said they deal almost exclusively with abused women.

The women they work with usually have a very low opinion of themselves, Daup said.

If a wife is beaten, she may be embarrassed and avoid family and friends so she won't have to tell them what's wrong, Daup said.

Dunn said an abused woman in Lincoln can go to a shelter in the city, but shelters will only keep women a maximum of two weeks.

The crisis center does not offer shelter, but it does have a grant from the State Department of Public Welfare which provides money to pay legal fees for any abused person needing it.

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