

Counseling Programs for Men



analogous to alcoholism.

"The men will slip," he said. "Most men who enter the program stop their violence for the period of counseling and for between six months to a year after the counseling ends. Then the battering tends to start up again."

Garmatz said that the program's success is in disrupting the cycle of violence. The violence does not occur as frequently as it would without the program.

Garmatz said that what the program does provide is hope for women who are battered. The women in most cases love these men and only want the violence to end.

"Because they don't get beat up as often, the women are able to say how they feel, they are not

as afraid, and not as controlled (by the abuser)," he said.

Garmatz said that he views violence in all its forms — physical, verbal, psychological, emotional, property damage, and sexual — "as nothing less than tools used to control women."

"The analogy often used for battered women is that of a prisoner of war," Garmatz said.

Abuse has immediate effects

These women are often told when to sleep, eat, when to prepare meals and what to prepare, who they can visit and when, and have their money controlled by the men who beat them.

Garmatz said that this has two immediate effects on the women. They are in constant fear for their physical safety and con-

stantly on edge, not knowing when an argument will escalate into physical violence.

"Most men who batter know they are doing something which is not healthy," Garmatz said. "What the program does is to try to get them to be honest about their problem."

Garmatz said that the program serves about 140 men each year in Lincoln and the Lancaster area. The majority of the men who enter the program do so because their partners have left them or threatened to leave them, he said.

Only about 10 to 20 percent of the men entering the program are on probation. Garmatz said that these men are more difficult to work with because they are angry at being involved in the

court process and not as willing to admit they have a problem.

For more serious cases, the attorney can request a presentence investigation to study the case more in depth, Thorson said. This gives the victim an opportunity to offer input on what types of sentencing may be best for the defendant.

Thorson said a pretrial diversion program is available in situations where the defendant doesn't have a background of assault, and admits to the charge. If the defendant passes screening for the program, they sign a contract to attend counseling for up to one year.

The charges are then dismissed unless the defendant discontinues counseling, then charges are refiled, Thorson said.