

Economic Abuse: The Hidden Side Of Domestic Violence

(NAPSA)—A term commonly associated with Wall Street could apply on Main Street more often than you might expect. According to a new national poll released by The Allstate Foundation, 86 percent of Americans fail to see a connection between domestic violence and “economic abuse.” In fact, when given a choice of definitions, the survey revealed that nearly eight out of 10 Americans link economic abuse to Wall Street woes or irresponsible spending.

Economic abuse is a tactic commonly used by abusers to control their victims’ finances and prevent them from leaving a dangerous relationship. Many women stay in abusive relationships due to lack of resources to stand on their own two feet.

Ask Kalyn Risker to define economic abuse and you’ll hear of an abusive ex-boyfriend who caused her to lose her job, spent all her money and destroyed her personal property, including her clothing and car, to keep her from leaving him. This picture of abuse rarely comes into the American mind-set.

“Many people associate domestic violence with physical attacks, but damage to your credit score and being cut off from access to money create lasting scars that make it hard, if not impossible, for abuse victims to recover,” said Jennifer Kuhn, manager of the Economics Against Abuse program at the Foundation. “For victims of domestic violence, economic abuse is much more personal—and dangerous.”

The poll also found that more than 70 percent of Americans know someone who is or has been a victim of domestic violence. With millions of Americans touched by domestic violence in some way, The Allstate Foundation is educating Americans on economic abuse and its dangerous signs:



Purposely ruining a partner’s credit score is a sign of economic abuse.

- Taking money, credit card or property from a partner without permission;
- Racking up debt without a partner’s knowledge;
- Purposely ruining a partner’s credit score;
- Preventing a partner from earning money or attending school;
- Being forced by a partner to hand over paychecks;
- Canceling insurance or credit cards without the partner’s knowledge;
- Harassing a partner at work to negatively impact a job.

Building financial skills is an important key to overcoming economic abuse. Now more than ever, it is important that domestic violence survivors build economic skills to overcome financial instability—the leading barrier to exit and stay out of an abusive situation.

For more information on economic abuse or to access the Financial Empowerment Curriculum to help domestic violence survivors achieve financial independence, please visit www.clicktoempower.org.

Domestic violence survivors in need of immediate assistance are encouraged to call the National Domestic Violence Hotline, (800) 799-SAFE (800-799-7233).