



CRITICAL THINKING

If about one-sixth of all murders are committed by a member of the victim's family, what is your opinion about the safety of having a gun around the house?

Social Services

People who suspect child neglect should call the child welfare agency or social services department right away. It might save a child's life. Parents who neglect or abuse their children need help. Often, such parents know they are doing something wrong. By talking to them, they might be convinced to seek help on their own. Yet, they may be afraid they will be arrested and their children taken from them.

What happens after suspected child abuse has been reported? A social worker investigates, or carefully checks out, the case. Then the child welfare agency decides what to do. It may put the child in a foster home, which could be the home of a relative or a foster parent.

What are foster parents? Usually, they are good people who like caring for children. Often, their own children have already grown up and left home. Foster parents apply for a license from the state. But first, child-welfare workers visit them to make sure they are responsible. They check that the home is safe and clean.

Do parents who are guilty of abuse go to court? The child welfare agency helps the parents get help. Sometimes, they go to court. This happens if the injuries are serious or if the abuse has gone on for a long time.

Most cases are handled in family court. The courts may punish the parents by sending them to jail. The court will usually order help for the family in trying to keep it together. Its main goal is to do what is best for the child.

What if someone reports child abuse by mistake? Sometimes, abuse is reported when abuse has not taken place. Most states have computers to keep records of abuse cases. Even if a suspected child abuser is reported but never arrested or convicted, his or her name could be in the computer. This can be like an arrest record. For example, if someday the reported abuser wanted to work in a day-care center or as a foster parent, this name would be listed as a suspected child abuser. He or she would not get the job.

Can a name ever be taken out of the computer? If a suspect is not guilty of child abuse, the name can be cleared from the computer. Talking to the agency that handled the abuse case can help. Find out about the laws in your state.

What is sexual abuse of children? **Sexual abuse** happens when another person uses a child for sexual reasons. This is similar to rape and sexual harassment that you have already learned about. **Incest** is committed when members of a family have sex with each other. Both sexual abuse and incest are against the law and very, very wrong. Everyone in the family is hurt by them.

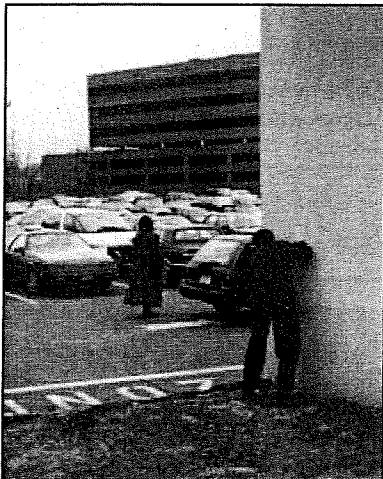
In most cases of sexual abuse of children, the abuser is someone close to the child. Most cases involve an adult and a child.

Sexual abuse happens more often than the reports show. Families try to keep quiet about it. The children become afraid and ashamed.

A sexually abused child should tell an adult whom he or she trusts.

DID YOU KNOW?

Stalking a person means following someone around and threatening them. Forty-eight states now have laws against this crime. One town in Colorado has convicted stalkers wear an alarm around their ankles. The alarm warns the police when a stalker nears a victim.



EYE OPENER

There are over one million reported cases of child abuse and neglect in the United States every year.

The adult should report the crime to the child welfare agency that handles such cases. It then might go to family court. Some serious cases are sent to criminal court. They might be treated as rape cases.



CRITICAL THINKING
Can a person both love and hate another person at the same time? Why do you think this way?

Spouse Abuse

What is spouse abuse? Spouse abuse means beating a husband or a wife. It also means beating your boyfriend or girlfriend. Most of the time, spouse abuse involves a man beating the woman with whom he lives or with whom he has a close relationship. An abused spouse is also called a battered spouse.

What can a battered spouse do? Battered, or beaten, spouses are frightened that their partners will do them further harm if they tell. They do not know where to go to be safe. They sometimes do not know how to get enough money to take care of their children if they should leave. Spouse-beating is not a private family matter. It is a crime.

It is also a crime that can turn into murder. Either the man can kill the woman, or the woman can kill the man because they cannot think of another way to help themselves. Yet, there are several ways to stop the abuse from building into a loss of life. Nobody ever needs to a life because of abuse.

A spouse can get help from a center or shelter. A shelter is a place where one can take one's children or just oneself for safety. A person can stay there while making plans to live far away from the abuser.

A woman can file charges against her husband or boyfriend. She can get an **injunction** or order of protection against him. This means that he would not be allowed to come near her. If he does, she could have him arrested. A man can protect himself against a wife or a girlfriend in the same way.

When should a spouse go to the police? A spouse should go to the police station to file charges as soon as possible after the first beating or threat of a beating. The victim must make sure that the police keep a record of any injuries received. This can be later be used as evidence in court.

Even after the abuse, some spouses still want to live with their partners. They might love them and keep hoping that the abuser will change behavior. The truth is that people who abuse people they love do not change unless they get help. The family court can make sure this happens.

What can a victim do during a beating? The victim can call the police. The police may not arrest the abuser if they do not actually see the attack. Yet, if the suspect has a weapon, the suspect can be arrested.

If the police do not arrest the abuser, the victim should ask the police to stay while getting some clothes and whatever else is needed to go somewhere else. She should then get out of the house.

What happens after an arrest or complaint? There are many different things that can happen. Some cases might go to family court. Some cases might go to criminal or district court. Some cases are

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DID YOU KNOW? Abuse can be passed on in families from generation to generation as "normal" behavior. But abuse is *never* normal.

EYE OPENER Between 1976 and 1987, one out of three murdered women was killed by her husband.

1. How can people save a child's life? _____
2. What keeps parents that abuse from seeking help on their own? _____

3. Who carefully checks out the case? _____
4. What can be a foster home? _____
5. What do foster parents get from the state? _____
6. What might cause a parent that abuses be sent to court? _____

7. What can be like an arrest record? _____
8. What would cause a name to be cleared from a computer? _____
9. What is incest? _____
10. Why does sexual abuse in families happen more often than reports show? _____

11. What is spouse abuse? _____
12. Spouse beating is what? _____
13. Spouse abuse is a crime that can turn in to what? _____
14. What is a shelter? _____
15. An injunction does what? _____
16. When should a spouse go to the police? _____

17. Why would an abused spouse still want to live with their partners? _____

18. What can a victim do during a beating? _____
19. What happens if the suspect has a weapon? _____
20. What happens after an arrest or complaint? _____

Critical Thinking

(pages: 78 & 79)

1. How do you feel about families having a gun in the home?

2. What should a person do to prevent someone from stalking them?

3. What do you think causes child abuse and neglect so much in the U. S. ?

4. Do you think foster parents can be helpful? When and why?

5. Why do some people think abuse is "normal" behavior in a family?

6. Why are so many murdered women killed by their husbands rather than someone else?

7. Is it justified for a man/woman to beat their spouse? If so, when?