Domestic Violence and the Holidays

We find ourselves in the midst of the winter holiday season and domestic violence advocates often hear the question, “Does domestic violence increase during this time?”

This idea may sound plausible to many, as often the holidays are associated with family tension, crowded homes, financial stress and increased use of alcohol. While these may exacerbate the situation, they are not the causes and are often used as excuses by an abuser to justify their actions. It is important to remember that abuse is a choice that someone makes and never the fault or responsibility of the victim.

The persistence of this myth lacks an understanding about the dynamics of abuse. Domestic violence is not isolated acts of physical violence, but rather a pattern of behavior. Abusers use a number of tactics ― including emotional, verbal, economic and sexual abuse ― to control and intimidate their partners. While acts of physical violence may change in frequency over the course of a relationship, the power and control that supports the abuse remains constant.

Victims and survivors of domestic violence may experience additional stress and unique challenges over the holiday season and may reach out to resources in the community for necessary support, such as with safety planning specific to the holidays, food, gifts for their children, etc.

Voices of Hope’s 24-hour crisis line: 402-475-7273; email: [info@voicesofhopelincoln.org](mailto:info@voicesofhopelincoln.org); website: [www.voicesofhopelincoln.org](http://www.voicesofhopelincoln.org).