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**DMYTRO OLEKSANDROVYCH SERHIIENKO**

*Kharkiv National University of Internal Affairs*

## **THE ISSUE OF DOMESTIC ABUSE**

Domestic violence can be defined as a pattern of abusive behavior in any relationship that is used by one partner to gain or maintain power and control over an intimate partner. According to the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, women experience about 4.8 million intimate partner-related physical assaults and rapes every year. Less than 20 percent of battered women sought medical treatment following an injury.

Domestic abuse includes any attempt by one person in an intimate relationship or marriage to dominate and control the other. Domestic violence and abuse are used for one purpose only: to gain and maintain total control over victim. An abuser doesn't "play fair." An abuser uses fear, guilt, shame, and intimidation to wear victim down and keep under their thumb.

Domestic violence and abuse can happen to anyone; it does not discriminate. Abuse happens within heterosexual relationships and in same-sex partnerships. It occurs within all age ranges, ethnic backgrounds, and economic levels. And while women are more often victimized, men also experience abuse – especially verbal and emotional. The bottom line is that abusive behavior is never acceptable, whether from a man, woman, teenager, or an older adult. A person deserves to feel valued, respected, and safe. Domestic abuse often escalates from threats and verbal assault to violence. While physical injury may pose the most obvious danger, the emotional and psychological consequences of domestic abuse are also severe. Emotionally abusive relationships can destroy self-worth, lead to anxiety and depression, and make you feel helpless and alone. No one should have to endure this kind of pain – and first step to breaking free is recognizing that relationship is abusive.

*Language adviser T. M. Kalchenko*

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**VLADYSLAV OLEKSANDROVYCH SERHIIENKO**

*Kharkiv National University of Internal Affairs*

## **DOMESTIC VIOLENCE. FIGHTING AGAINST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

Domestic violence is violence or other abuse in a domestic setting, such as in marriage or cohabitation. Domestic violence may be used as a synonym for intimate partner violence, which is committed by a spouse or partner in an