

During the month of October being Domestic Violence Awareness Month. The Gardner Domestic Violence Task Force is presenting weekly articles on this topic. I would like to start off by “What is Love?”.

It's not always easy.....

It's not always easy to tell at the beginning of a relationship if it will become abusive.

In fact, many abusive partners may seem absolutely perfect in the early stages of a relationship. Possessive and controlling behaviors don't always appear overnight, but rather emerge and intensify as the relationship grows.

Domestic violence doesn't look the same in every relationship because every relationship is different. But one thing most abusive relationships have in common is that the abusive partner does many different kinds of things to have more power and control over their partners.

According to the United States Department of Justice Office on Violence Against Women, the definition of domestic violence is a pattern of abusive behavior in any relationship that is used by one partner to gain or maintain control over another intimate partner.

If you're beginning to feel as if your partner or a loved one's partner is becoming abusive, there are a few behaviors that you can look out for. Watch out for these red flags and if you're experiencing one or more of them in your relationship, call the hotline to talk about what's going on.

- Telling you that you can never do anything right
- Showing jealousy of your friends and time spent away
- Keeping you or discouraging you from seeing friends or family members
- Embarrassing or shaming you with put-downs
- Controlling every penny spent in the household
- Taking your money or refusing to give you money for expenses
- Looking at you or acting in ways that scare you
- Controlling who you see, where you go, or what you do
- Preventing you from making your own decisions
- Telling you that you are a bad parent or threatening to harm or take away your children
- Preventing you from working or attending school
- Destroying your property or threatening to hurt or kill your pets
- Intimidating you with guns, knives or other weapons
- Pressuring you to have sex when you don't want to or do things sexually you're not comfortable with
- Pressuring you to use drugs or alcohol

*Love Does Not Hurt*

**Call 24 HOUR HOTLINE 1-508-755-9030**