

September 23, 2015

The following statement regarding domestic violence victim's use of self-defense may be attributed to Shannon Barry, Executive Director for Domestic Abuse Intervention Services:

“As domestic violence advocates, DAIS knows that victims are often put in extremely vulnerable and dangerous situations. When placed in situations where their lives are threatened they may resort to self-defense tactics to protect themselves and the lives of their children. Defense tactics could include defending themselves and their children, resisting attack, or using force to prevent or retreat from an attack.

Studies have shown that women may resort to violence in direct response to an attack directed at them or at their children. In contrast, the majority of the time men use violence is to establish and maintain control over their partner. Research has shown that 71% of abused women arrested for domestic violence had used violence in self-defense.¹

Domestic violence is the intentional use of power and control by one intimate partner over the other in order to create and maintain an environment of fear and intimidation. Because of the complex dynamics of intimidation, fear, and control tactics DAIS encourages the consideration of the history of abuse and the effects of chronic trauma, when victims of abuse are arrested or charged in cases of self-defense. It is important to note that trauma reactions often occur following the feelings of terror, helplessness or an overwhelming threat. Additional considerations should include the difference in physical size between the victim and abuser, threats to children, and the victim's feelings of fear, desperation, and hopelessness for protection from her abuser. ”

For more information about barriers that domestic violence victims face and the implications on our community, please visit: <http://abuseintervention.org/about/publications-and-materials/>

1. Madison, Linda & Vatland, Rose (Spring 2001), Women as Perpetrators, *Wisconsin Coalition Against Domestic Violence*, 20 (1), 16

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DAIS' (Domestic Abuse Intervention Services, Inc.) mission is to empower those affected by domestic violence and advocate for social change through support, education and outreach. DAIS operates the County's **only** domestic violence shelter, a 24-hour crisis line, legal advocacy, emergency safety planning, support groups, children's programming and primary prevention and education programs. www.abuseintervention.org

One. And for all.