

Does alcohol cause domestic violence?

If you think that alcohol or drugs cause domestic violence, you're not alone. According to a recent public opinion poll, 46 percent of Americans feel that men sometimes physically abuse women because they are stressed out or drunk.

But the truth is domestic violence occurs when an abusive person makes a choice to act violently. Domestic violence is not caused by alcohol, drugs, stress, or the victim's failure to be a better partner. Many people who have alcohol and/or drug abuse problems are not violent, and many batterers are not substance abusers. Often a batterer will give up drinking, yet continue to be abusive. Using violence to express oneself is a learned behavior. Alcohol may lower an abuser's self-control and the abuser may tend to be more violent when drunk, but the alcohol is not the cause of the violent acts.

There's no excuse for domestic violence -- not alcohol, not stress, not anger. It is the sole responsibility of the perpetrator to learn new, safe and non-violent ways to express himself and relate to his partner.