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Abuse can mar holidays

Season is worst time for domestic violence

By RICH BREAUULT
 Valley Press Senior Writer

PALMDALE — Kenn Hicks knows that holidays are the worst time of year for domestic violence. And the winter holiday season is the worst of all.

"This time of the year there is high stress and high expectations," said Hicks, a licensed clinical social worker who developed a presentation about the 11 building blocks of domestic violence prevention.

"Many batterers have a history of expectations they couldn't fill. The battered may expect a good Christmas, but in the back of their minds they know that Christmas is a time of alcohol, battery and abuse."

Hicks said for children in families affected by domestic violence, Christmas is a time of love, hope and fear.

"They believe in the love of Christmas and the hope everything is going to be nice," Hicks said. "But in the back of their minds they know something is going to happen."

As a parole agent, Hicks developed and implemented a successful parolee domestic violence prevention program. He is an approved facilitator certified by the Los Angeles County Probation Department Monitoring Unit.

Hicks' holistic approach to do-



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FIGHTING ABUSE

Above is a photo illustration for an 11-step domestic violence prevention program. Left, Kenn Hicks, a licensed clinical social worker for the California Department of Corrections, has developed the program. His holistic approach to domestic violence prevention has been successful with batterers who have extensive criminal histories.

JENNIFER X. HERNANDEZ
 Valley Press photos

estic violence prevention has been successful with batterers who have extensive criminal histories.

"I wanted to take a program to a more generic level, and that's the 'Eleven Building Blocks of Domestic Violence Prevention.' I want to educate people about what is, and isn't, domestic violence," Hicks said. "There are many forms of domestic violence, not just physical abuse. There's emotional abuse — isolation from family and friends, controlling

the money, where one can go. Property abuse — destruction of property in order to gain control, pet abuse, spiritual abuse ..."

Hicks said the intention of his program is to keep batterers from battering and abusing again.

"Batterers have to take full responsibility for their actions, no matter what the victim may or may not have done to 'trigger' them. Agitation can go back and forth between the batterer and the victim

before the battery occurs. At no time is the battering justified," Hicks said.

"Some people who are 'in love,' don't know they are being battered. Unfortunately, affection camouflages some of the abuse. There is a need to raise the self-esteem of both the victim and the batterer."

Hicks said he worked on the 11 building blocks for a year and he hopes to have a book on the subject published within six months.

"Right now I'm going around the Antelope Valley looking for victims groups, batterers groups or other organizations to talk to about domestic violence prevention," Hicks said. "I also want to talk to groups of high school students and young adults because date abuse and battery is increasing."

Anyone interested in lectures on the Eleven Building Blocks of Domestic Violence Prevention should phone Hicks at (661) 267-7110.