

When helping domestic violence victims find housing away from an abuser, their safety should always be the number one priority, not the victim's mental illness or what medication she's taking or not taking.

When mentally ill domestic violence victims leave an abuser, they should never be denied admittance to a domestic violence shelter.

Shelter intake telephone calls with mentally ill victims should be short, sensitive, supportive, and resourceful.

Encourage and support a mentally ill victim's decision to leave the abuser.

When a mentally ill domestic violence victim is placed in a shelter, a mental health assessment team should be available.



With help, women who are mentally ill and victims of domestic violence can live a happy, joyful, and peaceful life.



## *Helping Mentally Ill Women Who Are Victims of Domestic Violence*



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Mental illness has never been a very popular topic. Most people don't understand it, and as a result fear those who suffer from mental illness. These individuals are often cast in a dark light and are seen as dangerous, and threatening. Although there are now many services and programs for this population to live a meaningful and productive life, mentally ill individuals may still be ostracized by some people whether they pose a threat or not. Research indicates that a large percentage of mentally ill women are now victims of domestic violence.

## **1,800 Women Die of Domestic Violence Each Year**

**A woman is battered every 9 seconds**

**Every 26 seconds a woman gets raped**

Research indicates there is a link between mental illness and domestic violence.

Mentally ill women are 4 times more likely to be victims of domestic violence.

Research studies conclude that mentally ill women are far more likely to be victims of domestic violence than perpetrators.



Mentally ill women may stay with an abusive partner because they are afraid they will not find another partner who will want them.

Relationships with mentally ill women are said to be emotional and continuous hard work without end. This can create a situation where abuse is justified by some people who never personally experienced domestic abuse and may be less sympathetic.

- Women with psychiatric disorders are more likely to be victims of domestic violence if they are using and abusing drugs and/or alcohol.



- Police officers are hesitant to take claims of domestic violence seriously when they come from mentally ill women.
- Services for mentally ill women who are victims of domestic violence should be increased and exposure about this serious problem must continue.
- **Domestic Violence Help Lines for Mentally Ill Victims**
- Domestic Violence Hotline 800-799-SAFE (7233)
- Shelter Hotline 818-877-6589 / 800-978-3600
- Domestic Violence Advocate 800-524-4765