



## AMHERST POLICE DEPARTMENT

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One billion women on the planet will be raped or beaten in their lifetime. This scary statistic will be brought to light during the One Billion Rising event at the Amherst Town Hall this week. The event will have both women and men joining together to “rise up” and help promote the end of violence against women. This week is also family violence prevention week and the Amherst Police Department is looking to raise awareness to the cycle of violence that happens behind closed doors in our community. Physical violence, uttering threats, controlling type behaviors, mischief, and financial abuse are all examples of family violence that can and does occur routinely in the Amherst area.

I see it day in and day out in my job and it is one of the most serious calls that police investigators have to respond to. It is one of the leading calls that result in personal injury to attending police officers.

APD members responded to 146 domestic related incidents in 2012 resulting in 32 arrests. Domestic related incidents are not only occurrences of spousal violence but may also include verbal arguments, damage to property or uttering of threats. It is my experience that the police are sometimes the last to know that spousal abuse is occurring at a particular household. Typically, it is our first call to that residence. Investigation into these incidents usually shows that neighbors, friends, and/or family members are aware or suspect that violent or controlling behavior is occurring. Members of the public are cautioned to use common sense when approaching a female who they suspect is in a domestic relationship. Urging her to leave without giving her the proper resources to do so may be more counter-productive than good. It is a known fact that a woman is the most vulnerable to serious injury or death when she is about to leave a violent relationship. It is our recommendation that if anyone is aware that a female is in a violent relationship, that she is given guidance to seek out a transition house. The transition house can then help create a safety plan which allows her to leave the relationship in a safe manner for her and any children.

If you or someone you know is a victim of domestic violence, please phone 1-855-225-0220. This number will put you in contact with a Nova Scotia transition house. You may also call a local family violence support centre such as Autumn House at 667-1344. If it is an emergency, please dial 911.