

# *The News Tribune* (Tacoma, Washington)

April 20, 2004, Tuesday

## **Domestic Violence Expert Says Men Must ‘Step Up’ to Prevent Abuse**

By Lisa Kremer, *The News Tribune*

Jackson Katz believes society looks at domestic violence backward.

Most domestic violence prevention programs, he believes, are aimed at helping individual women avoid getting hurt. That has no effect on the men who commit domestic violence.

“If a woman avoids being the target of a man, he’s just going to find another target,” said Katz, the founder of a domestic violence prevention program that’s used in the U.S. Marine Corps as well as in high schools and dozens of other settings throughout the country.

Katz, 43, will be the key speaker at the YWCA of Pierce County’s annual “Celebration Luncheon,” noon today at the Sheraton Tacoma Convention Center.

In Tacoma, Alisa Velonis at the Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department hopes to develop a marketing program that would be aimed at ending domestic violence before it starts.

“How do we change the norms and values in the community?” she asked in a recent interview.

That’s something Katz, who lives in Long Beach, Calif., has been working on for years. In 1993, he founded Mentors in Violence Prevention, a program at Northeastern University aimed at educating college athletes in how to fight gender violence. Now he travels nationally to speak on domestic violence prevention and has appeared on “Good Morning America,” “Oprah,” “20/20” and other news shows.

Katz said he was saddened to hear that Tacoma’s police chief had killed his own wife, but “this stuff happens all the time. ... Thousands of men murder women every year.”

Men need to get involved in the fight against domestic violence, Katz believes.

“Women have clearly been the leaders, and there’s no doubt about that,” he said. “Men need to step up. In our society there have been very few men in positions of leadership that have put a priority on men’s violence.”

That doesn’t mean a man should slug the next abuser he sees. Katz said that in the hundreds of speeches and workshops he’s given, he’s often run into men who think that when they see signs of domestic violence, “there are only two choices: Intervene physically, or do nothing.”

Those aren't the only options, he said.

If you're a high school boy and you know a classmate is being controlling or abusive to his girlfriend, you don't have to confront the classmate, Katz said. You can talk to your parents, a teacher, a coach. You can talk to a friend. You can talk to the girl, or one of her friends, and tell her what's going on is not right.

"That goes for virtually any man," he said. In the workplace, he said, men who know a colleague is acting inappropriately can talk to other colleagues about it.

"Men need to start confronting each other and interrupting the use of abusive language and abusive behavior."

Lisa Kremer: 253-597-8658 [lisa.kremer@mail.tribnet.com](mailto:lisa.kremer@mail.tribnet.com)

Copyright 2004 The News Tribune.