



# One Is Too Many

BY JEFF FORSTER

In 2012, the White House released a public service announcement, part of a series titled “1 is 2 Many.” The one-minute video spot featured President Obama, Vice President Biden, and a number of professional athletes, including David Beckham (soccer), Jeremy Lin (basketball), Jimmy Rollins (baseball), and Eli Manning (football), among others.

The piece opens with, “Hey guys, listen up. No one should ever hit a woman. Not their wife, not their girlfriend, not their date.”

“No woman should ever have to fear violence, especially not from someone they know and trust.”

“But that’s the reality, for too many women. We have to change it. It’s up to each of us. Because 1 is 2 many.”

Does anyone remember that PSA? Especially the young males who were the intended audience? Not likely.

But who doesn’t remember, at this point, the one-minute video captured in and out of an elevator over Valentine’s Day weekend in an Atlantic City casino?

It’s sad to think that “TMZ” could be a more potent set of letters than “PSA” when it comes to raising awareness and jump-starting a national discussion on domestic violence. But the elevator video serves as a sort of perverse, reverse public service announcement that no amount of celebrity or even Presidential star power could summon.

## HELP FOR INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

The positive news that needs to come out of this sudden surge of media interest is that help is available for people who suffer violence at the hands of an intimate partner. That’s what the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention calls it – intimate partner violence. The statistics are sobering – one in four women and one in seven men will experience intimate partner violence at some point in their lifetime.

In your community, there is most likely a program where people can find help. In my community of Bergen County, New Jersey (population: one million), the core agency is the Center for Hope and Safety (formerly Shelter Our Sisters), founded 38 years ago. Domestic violence is not new and is not confined to any particular age, religious, ethnic, or socioeconomic group. Yes, it happens here, even in one of the most affluent and self-assured counties in the nation. It happens in our own communities, our own neighborhoods, our own families.

## THE CENTER FOR HOPE AND SAFETY

I am privileged to serve on the board of trustees of this organization. My involvement started back in the late

1990s, when I was editor of *Medical Economics* magazine. I made a donation to the agency in honor of one of our writers, who had written a story about the physician’s vital role in recognizing and reporting domestic violence. A couple of days later I got a phone call from their Development Director, who asked, “How would you like to help us with our newsletter?” I’ve been helping with the newsletter ever since, but eventually wanted to get more involved. So at a volunteer event a couple of years ago I asked Elaine Meyerson, Executive Director, what I could do and she said,

“Why not apply for a position on the board?” I did, and ended up joining the board in February 2012. My respect and admiration for the staff and volunteers who fulfill the organization’s mission have only grown since then.

Our programs and services start with providing emergency shelter in the moment of crisis (emergency hotline: 201-944-9600; [www.hopeand-safetynj.org](http://www.hopeand-safetynj.org)). But our ultimate goal is to help people return to the community where they can live independent lives, free of violence and the fear of violence. To that end, we offer everything from legal advocacy and housing assistance

to counseling and mentoring, job readiness training, and help with education. We also have programs for children, including creative arts therapy for kids who are living with violence at home.

## “VIOLENCE AT HOME” – WORDS THAT SHOULD NEVER HAVE TO BE SPOKEN TOGETHER

The focus of the resurgent DV debate has been on punishing the perps. We need to talk more about helping the victims of this crime. It is a criminal act, and not just a “social problem.” Find a domestic violence intervention program in your community and support it, however you wish – with your time, your talents, your financial contributions. You *will* make a difference.

Even more important, if you or someone you know is living in peril, reach out for help, or help them get the help they need. You could save a life. It could be your own.

*Jeff Forster is Vice President, Clinical Content & Strategy, PRI Healthcare Solutions, based in New York City and Paramus, NJ. He can be reached at 201-799-4850 or [Jeff.forster@prihcs.com](mailto:Jeff.forster@prihcs.com). He is a member of the Board of Trustees of the Center for Hope and Safety.*

*Note: The PSA referenced in this article can be found here: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/photos-and-video/video/2012/06/21/1-2-many-psa>.*



A T-Shirt made by a victim of domestic violence that says it all.