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For Immediate Release: October 9, 2014

### **Domestic Violence Is Not Just The NFL's Problem**

Los Angeles, Calif.—Despite how it appears on the 24-hour news channels, domestic violence is not likely to be any more prevalent between professional athletes and their partners as in relationships in other segments of society, says Dr. Noelle Nelson, author of *Dangerous Relationships: How To Identify And Respond To The Seven Warning Signs Of A Troubled Relationship* (De Capo Press).

“Domestic violence can happen to anyone at any time and does not respect age, gender, financial circumstances or sexual preference,” she explains. “It also does not occur in a void. In fact, there are common characteristics and warning signs that may be preludes to violence. Knowing what to look for and how to uncover a potentially abusive relationship long before it ever gets to the hitting stage greatly diminishes the chances of one becoming a victim of domestic violence.”

According to Nelson, here are the most common behaviors leading up to physical violence.

The abuser initially showers the victim with attention and passion.

The abuser soon becomes possessive and seeks to control, dominate and isolate the victim from family and friends.

The abuser has sudden personality changes--from Mr./Ms. Wonderful to Mr./Ms. Hyde.

The victim is suddenly wrong about everything while the abuser is always right.

The abuser shows a cruel and insensitive attitude toward others.

The abuser becomes verbally abusive. The stage is set for physical violence.

“Partners of abusers often ignore these signs, and even when the hitting begins, believe it was either their own fault that they were attacked or the abuser will somehow change and not hit again. That’s not the case,” explains Nelson. “Most abusers have underlying issues that make it difficult for them to treat others with respect. They see violence as a way of dealing with what they perceive as a problem.

“Because stopping the violence is difficult, if not often impossible, once it starts, learning to identify the warning signs of a potentially violent relationship and how to deal with the situation appropriately and immediately is critical,” says Nelson. “If you see these warning signs in your partner’s behavior, get help from a mental health professional immediately.”

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Resources:

National Resource Center on Domestic Violence <http://www.nrcdv.org/>  
National Domestic Violence Hotline <http://www.thehotline.org/>  
Office of Women’s Health <http://www.womenshealth.gov/index.php>