



*Domestic
Abuse can
Happen to
Anyone, but
There is Hope*

isolation
emotional pain
BLAME
hitting *humiliation*
control JEALOUSY
Abuse
NAME CALLING
NEGLECT *forced sex*

Domestic Abuse is Not Your Fault

“I never thought it would happen to me.” This is what thousands of people say who are being hurt physically, sexually, or with words.

Domestic abuse happens in rich and poor families, between all kinds of couples, with people of all ages, and in all communities.

Everyone deserves to be treated with respect. Physically or sexually hurting someone is against the law.

Abuse can be:

- slapping, punching or hitting
- threats, insults or put-downs
- control of another person’s money or of all decisions within a relationship
- forced sexual activity.

The person doing the hurting may say things like “I’m sorry.

I’ll never do it again.” Over time the abuse often becomes more frequent and more severe. There is no excuse for hurting another person. The person chooses to hurt you. Alcohol and stress may make it worse, but they don’t cause abuse. And neither do you.

The abuse is not your fault.

Healthy Versus Hurtful Relationships

Characteristics of a safe and healthy relationship

Each person does the following:

■ Partnership

- makes decisions together
- shares responsibility
- takes different roles easily

■ Economic equality

- freely decides about work, school and money

■ Physical safety

- respects each other's personal space
- talks about issues nonviolently

■ Emotional honesty

- feels safe to share fears and doubts

■ Sexual respect

- accepts that "no" means "no"
- cares about each other's needs and wants

■ Support and trust

- listens and understands
- values the other person's opinion

■ Respect

- feels comfortable in the relationship
- is sensitive to each other's needs
- honors each other's relationships with family and friends.

Characteristics of an unhealthy relationship

One person does the following:

- **One person has power over the other person**
 - ❑ makes all decisions
 - ❑ defines the roles
 - ❑ makes the rules
- **Economic control**
 - ❑ denies you freedom to get a job
 - ❑ keeps you from having money
- **Physical or sexual abuse**
 - ❑ hits, strangles, kicks, pinches, pulls hair, twists arms, bites, trips, restrains or uses weapons
 - ❑ forces you to perform sexual acts
- **Emotional control**
 - ❑ uses jealousy, passion, stress and frustration as excuses
 - ❑ calls you names, plays mind games
 - ❑ limits what you can do
 - ❑ keeps you from seeing family and friends
- **Bullying behavior**
 - ❑ charms others in public, threatens in private
 - ❑ destroys things
 - ❑ denies that actions are hurtful by saying, "You're too sensitive."
 - ❑ hurts children or pets to hurt you.

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse may take many forms. It does not always result in bruises or broken bones. Physical abuse is used to exercise power and control over another person.

Examples include:

- strangles you
- pushes, shoves or drags you
- hits, slaps or kicks you
- pulls your hair
- bites or spits
- stabs you
- rips your clothes
- burns you (such as with a cigarette)
- uses a weapon to hurt you
- holds you down and keeps you from getting up.

Sexual Abuse

This type of abuse includes forcing or coercing you to have sex or using sexual remarks to hurt you. Examples include:

- accuses you of being sexual with others
- makes you have sex after emotional or physical abuse
- threatens or forces you to perform sexual acts
- says you are inviting sex by the way you dress
- puts down your feelings about sex
- makes you beg for sexual affection
- makes you strip when you don't want to
- makes you have sex with animals

- makes you pose for sexual photographs or videotaping
- criticizes your sexual past
- insists on touching you sexually
- calls you a “whore,” “slut” or other names
- openly shows sexual interest in other people
- forces or threatens to force you into prostitution
- makes you have sex when you are sick
- hurts you with objects or weapons during sex.

Emotional Abuse

These actions can be described as playing “mind games” in order to get control over another person. The scars they leave are not physical, but can be very painful and can affect the way you feel about yourself. Examples include:

- threatens to leave or tells you to leave
- threatens to kill or hurt you
- makes all of the decisions
- takes away or controls all the money
- keeps you from seeing friends and family
- says you asked to be abused
- denies the behavior is abusive
- puts you down in front of others
- punishes you by not giving praise or affection
- constantly insults you, your friends or family
- uses your religious or spiritual beliefs to control you
- makes fun of you

- ignores you or does not talk directly to you
- refuses to work or does not allow you to work
- takes away the keys to the car
- uses the children to punish you
- blames you for any problems with the children
- brags to you about affairs
- accuses you of having affairs
- tries to control you with lies or by denying responsibility for his or her behavior
- threatens to “out” you to friends or family (in same-sex relationships)
- calls you names such as “stupid,” “ugly,” “fat” or “crazy”
- threatens to hurt your pet, a friend or your family
- hides, destroys or threatens to keep important documents from you
- threatens to turn you into the INS, welfare system or other authorities
- says “I’m sorry and I’ll never do it again” but does it again
- threatens to commit suicide.

Domestic Violence Safety Plan

Because abuse almost always happens again, it is helpful to plan actions that will protect you and your children.

Use this emergency safety list to help you plan to leave an abusive situation.

While all of these suggestions are helpful, **any** time you fear for your safety, you should seek ways of getting out of harm's way right away.

■ Safety during a crisis or violent argument

- Set up a code word with your children, family, friends or neighbors when you need the police.
- Have a bag packed — and hidden — so you can be ready to leave at any time.
- Alert a neighbor to call 911 if he or she hears disturbance coming from your home.
- Go to a room that has an exit or telephone. Avoid the kitchen, bathroom or any other room that has weapons or objects that may be used to hurt you.
- Call 911 and yell to alert your neighbors about what is happening.
- If you are in a dangerous or life-threatening situation, listen to the abuser. You may want to give him or her what he or she wants to calm the situation. Use your best judgment. Protect yourself until you are out of danger.
- Teach your child(ren) to dial 911 during a crisis or violent behavior.

■ Safety when planning to leave

- ❑ Open your own bank account to help start your financial independence. Think about other ways to gain financial freedom, such as paying off credit cards or other debts.
- ❑ Do not tell anyone of your bank account. Ask the bank not to send you monthly statements or other mailings. Ask that your name not be sold with any mailing lists.
- ❑ Give someone you trust the following:
 - money
 - extra set of keys
 - copies of important documents (see below)
 - medicine (prescriptions, if possible)
 - clothes
 - whatever your children need.
- ❑ Photocopy important documents and keep them in a safe place you can get to quickly. These documents include:
 - driver's license
 - Social Security cards
 - birth certificates
 - bank book
 - health insurance cards
 - restraining order
 - mortgage, lease or deed
 - divorce papers
 - custody orders
 - passports or visas
 - car registrations or any loans in your name.

- ❑ Keep telephone numbers of emergency shelters or other resources handy at all times.
- ❑ If you have children, be sure to pack a bag for them. Include favorite stuffed animals or toys, a comfort item (such as a blanket), or a book.
- ❑ Make arrangements with a friend or family member you can go to before you decide to leave.
- ❑ Have a telephone calling card or change with you for emergency phone calls. Either memorize or write down emergency numbers. Remember, you can call 911 free of charge and shelters collect.
- ❑ Make a safety plan for leaving and review it often.
- ❑ Explain to young children — in terms they can understand — what is happening. Reassure them you love them and want them to be safe.
- **Safety when you're on your own**
- ❑ Change the locks on your doors and secure your windows.
- ❑ Teach your children how and when to call 911. Also teach them a safety plan for when you are not with them.
- ❑ Tell your children's school or daycare about who has permission to pick up or visit your children. Make a plan for if the abuser shows up and tries to see or take the children.
- ❑ Tell your neighbors or landlord that your partner no longer lives with you. Tell your neighbors or landlord to call the police if they see your partner at or near your home.

- ❑ If you can, get an unlisted telephone number, caller ID or an answering machine to screen calls. You may want to have a cell phone or portable phone from which you can call 911 at any time. Some shelters give out cell phones for using 911 only.
- ❑ If you can, rent a post office box to pick up your mail.
- ❑ If you are outside doing yardwork or playing with your children, have a phone handy.
- **Safety when you have a restraining order**
- ❑ Keep a copy of your restraining order with you at all times. Make extra copies to keep at work, with family, schools, day care providers, friends, in your car and in your purse or briefcase.
- ❑ Call 911 if your (ex) partner violates the restraining order.
- ❑ Think of ways to stay safe until the police arrive.
Call a shelter or the toll-free Minnesota crisis number (1-866-223-1111) if you need ideas.
- ❑ Tell friends, family, co-workers and medical professionals (your doctor and dentist) that you have a restraining order in effect.
- ❑ Have friends, family, a landlord or neighbors call the police if your (ex) partner is near your home. Make sure they give an accurate description of the abuser and his or her car (including the license plate number).

■ Safety on the job and in public

- ❑ Tell the appropriate people at work of your situation (such as building security, office manager or direct supervisor). You may also want to provide these people with a photo of your (ex) partner.
- ❑ Screen your phone calls. Be sure to save any voice mail, e-mail or written messages from your (ex) partner.
- ❑ Have a plan to leave work safely. Have someone go with you to your car or the bus.
- ❑ If you can, carry a cell phone from which you can make an emergency phone call.
- ❑ If you are in public and your (ex) partner confronts you, yell and scream for help.
- ❑ Have a plan for what to do if something happens while you are going home.

Your Legal Rights and Protection Options

You have the right to be safe. Physically or sexually hurting someone is against the law. A restraining order (also called an order for protection) or harassment order can help you be safer.

This order can be used to require the abusive person to:

- leave your home
- stay away from where you live, go to school or work
- stop having contact with you, your children or your family.

Services for help in dealing with domestic abuse including shelters and advocacy services are free and confidential. (If abuse involves children or vulnerable adults, some people you tell will need to report it. To be careful, ask if what you say will be confidential.)

For more information about an order for protection, call the local programs listed next.

Whom to Call for Help

You know your situation better than anyone, so trust your instincts about taking any action. Choose the option that best fits your needs.

You have to decide how and when to act, but there are many people and agencies, such as women's shelter and family violence advocates, who want to help you.

- If you are in danger, call 911.
- Talk with your health care provider. He or she can help you make a call to an advocate while you're in the office. An advocate can talk with you about your situation and help you decide what to do.
- Call the 24-hour toll-free national hotline at 1-800-799-SAFE.
- Call the 24-hour toll-free state hotline at 1-866-223-1111.
- Call a local crisis line or shelter.
- Talk to a friend, family member or neighbor about your situation and ask for his or her help.
- There are support groups where you can meet other people who have survived similar situations.











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