

# Healthy People

Domestic violence is the willful intimidation, physical assault, battery, sexual assault, and/or other abusive behavior as part of a systematic pattern of power and control perpetrated by one intimate partner against another. It includes physical violence, sexual violence, psychological violence, and emotional abuse. The frequency and severity of domestic violence can vary dramatically; however, the one constant component of domestic violence is one partner's consistent efforts to maintain power and control over the other.

Domestic violence is an epidemic affecting individuals in every community, regardless of age, economic status, sexual orientation, gender, race, religion, or nationality. It is often accompanied by emotionally abusive and controlling behavior that is only a fraction of a systematic pattern of dominance and control. Domestic violence can result in physical injury, psychological trauma, and in severe cases, even death. The devastating physical, emotional, and psychological consequences of domestic violence can cross generations and last a lifetime.

Some examples of abusive tendencies include but are not limited to:

- Telling the victim that they can never do anything right
- Showing jealousy of the victim's family and friends and time spent away
- Accusing the victim of cheating
- Keeping or discouraging the victim from seeing friends or family members
- Embarrassing or shaming the victim with put-downs
- Controlling every penny spent in the household
- Taking the victim's money or refusing to give them money for expenses
- Looking at or acting in ways that scare the person they are abusing
- Controlling who the victim sees, where they go, or what they do
- Dictating how the victim dresses, wears their hair, etc.
- Stalking the victim or monitoring their victim's every move (in person or also via the internet and/or other devices such as GPS tracking or the victim's phone)
- Preventing the victim from making their own decisions
- Telling the victim that they are a bad parent or threatening to hurt, kill, or take away their children
- Threatening to hurt or kill the victim's friends, loved ones, or pets
- Intimidating the victim with guns, knives, or other weapons
- Pressuring the victim to have sex when they don't want to or to do things sexually they are not comfortable with
- Forcing sex with others
- Refusing to use protection when having sex or sabotaging birth control
- Pressuring or forcing the victim to use drugs or alcohol
- Preventing the victim from working or attending school, harassing the victim at either, keeping their victim up all night so they perform badly at their job or in school
- Destroying the victim's property

It is important to note that domestic violence does not always manifest as physical abuse. Emotional and psychological abuse can



often be just as extreme as physical violence. Lack of physical violence does not mean the abuser is any less dangerous to the victim, nor does it mean the victim is any less trapped by the abuse.

## Get Help

**If you are in immediate danger, please call 9-1-1.  
Search [www.domesticshelters.org](http://www.domesticshelters.org) to find domestic  
violence programs in your area or call the  
National Domestic Violence Hotline at  
1-800-799-7233 (SAFE).**

*If you are being abused by your partner, know there is nothing you have done or are doing to cause the abuse. It is solely the choice of the abuser to abuse. It may seem impossible to escape your abuser, change your circumstances, or find the help you need, but it is possible. However, you know your abuser best, so think carefully through your situation and circumstances and do what is the best for you.*

Plan ahead where you can go if the abuser shows signs of escalating. Make a list of safe people to contact (DV program, friends, relatives, attorney, and important persons/services). Have numbers for local domestic violence programs. Pack and have ready a bag or suitcase of essentials, including medications.

When leaving an abusive relationship, it is important to take with you the documents that you will need to get the resources and help you will require. You will need your driver's license, passport, and birth certificate to verify your identity. Other important documents you will need include: social security cards (for yourself and any children), leases and deeds (that have your name attached), credit and debit cards, pay stubs, w-2s, insurance policies, bank statements, and check books. Also, take any documentation that you might have about the abuse including pictures, recordings, medical records, and police reports. Never take the risk of being alone with the abuser when retrieving your things; ask for a police escort or bring friends with you.