



Domestic Violence: Understanding the problem is the first step towards solving it.

What is Domestic Violence?

Domestic Violence is a pattern of abusive behavior. In an abusive relationship one partner tries to maintain control over the other by using physical, psychological, verbal, and/or sexual violence. Although factors such as drug and alcohol use, stress, or a family history of abuse may contribute to the problem, domestic violence is primarily an issue of power and control.

Abuse may include...

- ♦Hitting, kicking, pushing, slapping, choking, punching, biting
- ♦Constant jealousy and control
- ♦Threats
- ♦Forced sex
- ♦Isolation from family/friends
- ♦Economic control
- ♦Destruction of personal property
- ♦Excessive criticism
- ♦Extreme anger
- ♦Withholding medication
- ♦Using race, age, sexual identity, immigration status, class, appearance, religion, HIV status, etc. against you.

If you are being abused...

- ♦Call 911 if you are in danger.
- ♦Talk with a friend, relative, anyone you trust and think will be supportive.
- ♦Call a domestic violence hotline for assistance.
- ♦Talk to a health care provider about your injuries.
- ♦Call a shelter and find out about options available to you.
- ♦Create a personalized safety plan.
- ♦Pack an emergency bag containing an extra set of clothing, extra cash, identification (such as birth certificates, social security cards, immunization records), financial records, keys (house/car), address book, etc. **Keep the bag in a safe place, where the abuser will not find it.**

- ♦Keep a cell phone or change for phone calls with you at all times.

Increase your safety by...

- ♦Talking to a DV Advocate about your situation.
- ♦Obtaining a Protection From Abuse Order (PFA) and keeping it with you at all times. Giving copies to friends, neighbors, your work.
- ♦Doing whatever it takes to form your own support network (attend support groups, get counseling).
- ♦Changing the locks.
- ♦Installing as many security features as possible in your home (alarm system, smoke detectors, motion detector lights).
- ♦Making sure that childcare givers are clear about who has permission to pick up your children.
- ♦Using an answering machine at home to screen your calls and having calls at work screened.
- ♦Avoiding places that the abuser knows you will be (grocery stores, banks, businesses, etc).
- ♦Letting your neighbors, friends, family, co-workers know about the situation, ask them to warn you if they observe that the abuser is around.

If you know someone who is being abused...

- ♦Do not ignore it.
- ♦Talk to them, let them know that you are aware of the situation.
- ♦Be a good listener, let them express the hurt, anger, and fear.
- ♦Do not judge them.
- ♦If possible, offer them a safe place to stay, transportation, or childcare.
- ♦Encourage them to make their own decisions, even if you do not agree with them.
- ♦Hold the abuser accountable for his/her actions.

Plan for your safety...

POLICE: **911** or _____

Local Domestic Violence Hotline: _____

My attorney: _____

My doctor: _____

I can call these friends/relatives in an emergency:

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Name: _____

Phone: _____

I can go here, if I have to leave my home in a hurry:

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Address: _____

Some things I should take with me, if I leave:

- Identification
- Birth certificates - mine, my children
- Social Security cards
- School & medical records
- Money, bankbooks, credit cards, foodstamps
- Keys: house, car, office
- Driver's license/registration
- Medications
- Medicare cards
- Passports
- Green cards
- Work permits
- Address book
- Lease/Rental agreement
- Insurance papers