

What is Domestic Violence?

Abuse is a pattern of physically and emotionally violent and coercive behaviors that one person uses to exercise power and control over another.



Physical Abuse is behavior that intentionally causes a person physical pain or injury. Examples include hitting, pushing, biting, choking, hair pulling, forced confinement, withholding of necessities, etc.



Sexual Abuse is behavior in which one person touches another in a sexual manner without their permission. Examples can include kissing, grabbing, intercourse, forcing a person to perform sexual acts in which they do not wish to participate, pressuring a person to not use safe sex methods, etc. Marital status does not permit the use of force in sexual situations.



Emotional Abuse is behavior that undermines another person's sense of self and emotional well-being. This can be more damaging than physical because it involves breaking the victim's spirit. Examples include put-downs, name calling, mind games, humiliation, guilt trips, etc.



Mental Abuse is behavior that undermines a person's independent thought by using intimidation. Examples include isolating a person from family and friends, making threats, hurting pets, destroying property, manipulation, displaying weapons, etc.



Financial/Resource Abuse is behavior in which money is used to control another person. Examples may include preventing a person from getting or keeping a job, taking their money, not letting them know about or have access to the family income, giving them an allowance, making them ask for it, etc.



Spiritual Abuse is behavior in which a person uses another person's spirituality in order to control them. Examples can include using scriptures to justify the abuse, stopping their partner from engaging in religious practices, ridiculing their beliefs, disrespecting their spiritual belongings, etc.



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Early Warning Signs of Domestic Violence

The abuser may start out small but will eventually develop into more violent acts.

Here are some early warning signs for you to watch for in a relationship.



Intimidation

Threatening gestures
Shouting to gain control
Driving recklessly
Use of size to overpower victim

Destruction

Destroying personal property
Taking or hiding things

Weapons

Abuser has an unusual fascination with weapons
Use of weapons to scare or intimidate victim
Use of weapons to assault or hurt the victim in any way

Strategies for Dealing with Domestic Violence – Documenting the Abuse

Keep a Journal – Keep a journal or log where you record incidents and any witnesses or other evidence. Go back and write down things that have happened in the past with as many specifics as you can remember.

Take Pictures – Show someone you trust or contact law enforcement, Turning Point or the emergency room to take a picture of any visible injury you have from abuse.

Talk to Witnesses – If there were witnesses to the abuse, who saw or directly heard what occurred, you may want to find out how they can be reached.

Get Medical Treatment – Sometimes injuries sustained in abuse are not obvious but may be serious and may need medical attention.

File a Police Report – When an incident occurs you can decide to call law enforcement and ask them to file a report.



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