

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE FAQs



DOMESTIC VIOLENCE FACTS

- It can happen to anyone regardless of age, race, religion, sexual orientation, gender, education level, or socioeconomic status.
- 1.3 million women and 835,000 men are victims of domestic violence yearly.
- It impacts children in all areas of life including health, education, and development of social relationships.
- It occurs at roughly the same rate in heterosexual as same sex relationships.

WHAT IS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE?

1 Domestic violence is any patterns or behaviors used to gain power and control over another person. It is not just physical — it can be verbal, psychological, financial, sexual, and emotional. By using these strategies, abusers aim to isolate survivors from resources and chip away at their self-esteem. Abusers typically use manipulation, intimidation, denial, and failure to take responsibility for their actions.

WHAT CAUSES DOMESTIC VIOLENCE?

2 Domestic violence is deeply rooted in power and control. Many myths and realities surround the causes of domestic violence, including alcohol or drug misuse, mental illness, or earlier experiences of violence. However, the abuse of power over another person is the real cause of domestic violence. Behavior is a choice, and those who perpetrate domestic violence do so to get what they want and gain control.

WHAT IS THE CYCLE OF ABUSE?

It is repeated patterns of tactics the abuser uses to dominate the victim.

- Tension building – increased tension, breakdown of communication, or victim becomes fearful and feels the need to placate the abuser.
- Incident – verbal, emotional, sexual, and physical abuse. Anger, blaming, arguing, threats, intimidation, or violence.
- Reconciliation – Abuser apologizes, gives excuses, blames the victim, denies the abuse occurred, or says it wasn't as bad as the victim claims.
- Calm – the honeymoon phase where the incident is forgotten and no abuse is taking place.



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DOMESTIC VIOLENCE WARNING SIGNS

- You are being abused emotionally, physically, or sexually.
- Your abuser is possessive constantly checking up on where or who you are with.
- Your abuser is jealous accusing you of being unfaithful or isolating you from family and friends.
- You or your family are being threatened.
- Your partner attacks your intelligence, looks, mental health, or capabilities.

WHY DO VICTIMS STAY WITH THE ABUSER?

Leaving an abusive relationship is a long and challenging process for various reasons. Abusers work hard to keep survivors trapped in the relationship, using tactics such as isolation from friends and family to reduce social support. The survivor may be at greater risk when leaving the abusive relationship rather than staying. Unfortunately, leaving does not always stop the violence. Many survivors are still exposed to abuse after they leave.

HOW CAN YOU HELP SOMEONE?

When supporting survivors, it's crucial to meet them where they are. Some may be ready to leave the relationship, while others may not. You must help them through whatever decisions they choose to make for themselves. You can provide referrals to community resources for legal counseling, public benefits advocacy, safe spaces, or housing assistance. Remember, don't judge, just listen. Survivors of domestic violence need to be believed, supported, and encouraged to take positive steps for their safety and well-being.

WHAT RESOURCES ARE AVAILABLE FOR SURVIVORS?

- 24 Hour National Hotline, 800-799-7233, where advocates will listen without judgment and help address what's going on in the relationship.
- Emergency crisis shelters offer temporary housing to survivors who are actively fleeing a domestic violence situation.
- Transitional housing programs provide long-term housing to give survivors the tools needed to build financial stability and a healthier lifestyle.
- Support groups enable survivors to connect with others who have similar experiences.

