

Domestic Violence

Domestic violence is patterns of abusive behavior in relationships. The abuse is used by one person to gain power and control over another person.

Domestic violence is sometimes called intimate partner violence (IPV), dating violence and relationship violence.

About 10 million people in the United States experience domestic violence from an intimate partner each year. About 25 percent of women and 14 percent of men have experienced physical violence by an intimate partner.

Forms of Domestic Violence

Domestic violence can take many forms including:

- **Physical:** Hurting someone with physical force
- **Sexual:** Forcing someone to do sexual acts
- **Financial:** Controlling or keeping watch over money
- **Stalking:** Pattern of unwanted contact causing someone to feel unsafe
- **Emotional:** Insulting and degrading someone
- **Verbal:** Manipulating how someone thinks or feels with words
- **Technology:** Using phones and social media to control someone (unwanted image sharing or revenge porn, deleting phone contacts, stalking online)

Substance Use and Domestic Violence

Substance use is often involved when there is domestic violence.

- Domestic violence is 11 times more likely to happen when substance use is involved.
- People with a history of domestic violence are at a higher risk of substance use after their traumatic experience.
- People who experience domestic violence are 70 percent more likely to drink and misuse alcohol than people who do not experience domestic violence.

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Signs you may be at risk for domestic violence:

- Physical or emotional pain to you that is done on purpose
- Feeling blame for the partner's behavior
- Being threatened
- Being forced to do things you do not want to
- Not allowed to see friends and family
- Always being watched (where you go what you do, who you are with)

Signs that a loved one may be experiencing domestic violence:

- Always trying to please their partner
- Acting nervous when people are talking about their partner
- Showing signs of depression or anxiety (feeling very worried and concerned)
- Making excuses for their partner's behavior
- Always getting harassing texts or calls from their partner
- Missing work or school with no explanation or reason why
- Often telling stories about accidents to explain scratches and bruises
- Describing their partner as jealous or possessive

The Cycle of Violence

The cycle of violence is a repeating pattern of behaviors within domestic violence. There are three main stages to this cycle:

1. Tension

- Always worrying or in fear of what their partner might say or do
- Feeling tension building and worrying that something is going to happen

2. Incident of Abuse

- Verbal, emotional or physical violence occurs
- This can include physical violence, threats, emotional manipulation, or insults

3. Calm (Honeymoon)

- Their partner apologizes and promises that it will not happen again
- Their partner may try to be overly kind and loving or offer gifts
- Their partner may deny that the incident occurred or say that it wasn't that bad
- Feels like things are good and back to normal

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How to Find Help

There are resources to help people who are experiencing domestic violence. You are not alone. The following steps may help people escape domestic violence.

1. Acknowledge the Domestic Violence

- Denial is common (saying that it is not happening)
- Know that domestic violence is happening and that it is wrong
- Know that it is not your fault, and you deserve better

2. Have a Safety Plan:

Take steps to protect yourself from your partner as you plan to get away

- Know what triggers your partner and try to avoid them if you can
- Keep away from your partner if you can
- Hide household items that may be used against you
- Know safe areas in your home away from stairs or rooms with sharp objects
- Have secret phrases or code words to let people know you need help

3. Make an Escape Plan

- Leave basic and important belongings with a friend (bag of clothes, important documents and records)
- Plan an escape route (where to exit the house, where to go)
- Make sure you will be able to leave quickly

4. Reach Out For Help: There are many support services

- Many employers have domestic violence leave
- Call a domestic violence hotline to find more resources
- Get a restraining order if you think it will help

Adapted from Addictions.com (<https://www.addictions.com/domestic-violence-resources/>)

**See the PC-BHIP Domestic Violence
Resources Document for More Support Services**