

# Everyone deserves a safe relationship.



## Domestic violence affects all

types of people, regardless of gender, ethnicity, race, sexual orientation, and religion. Every year in the U.S. one in four women, and one in 14 men are seriously hurt or killed by their spouse or partner. If your partner is controlling or abusive, don't ignore or try to excuse the behavior.

**Seek help now and take control of your life.**

## What is domestic violence?

Domestic violence is a pattern of abusive behavior directed at a former or current partner, spouse, boyfriend, or girlfriend. The abuser uses fear and intimidation to gain power and control over another person. The abuse can take many forms, including physical, emotional, economic, and sexual abuse, and it may involve using children, pets, threats, intimidation, and isolation. Although stress, anger, drugs, and alcohol may increase the risk of abuse, they are not the cause and there is no excuse for it.

## Why does someone stay in an abusive relationship?

Changing or ending any relationship is a difficult process, and it can be even harder when the relationship is abusive. Verbal and emotional abuse, which often go along with violence, chip away at self-esteem and leave a person more likely to believe someone who tells them they don't have value. This can lead to feelings of being trapped. Practical concerns such as custody, finances, or immigration can also make it difficult to leave.

## Domestic violence affects your health

Your health involves the whole you, from your body to your mind to your spirit. Domestic violence puts you at risk for serious physical injury. But did you know that the chronic stress of an abusive relationship can also cause physical damage? People experiencing domestic violence often have a wide range of physical and mental health problems, including depression, anxiety, headaches, abdominal pain, and chronic pain.

## What hurts you hurts your children

Children are hurt when they see someone yell, push, or hit a parent. They may feel scared and ashamed, or even think that they caused the problem.

These children can grow up learning that it's okay to hurt other people or that it's okay to let other people hurt them. Children who see one parent physically hurt or threatened by the other are more likely to be in abusive relationships when they grow up, either as victims or perpetrators.

Domestic violence affects all children - even infants and toddlers. Children who live in homes where domestic violence occurs are more likely to experience depression, anxiety, school and/or behavior problems, difficulty sleeping, or chronic health problems.

## Take action.

### Know the warning signs

If you're unsure whether you're in an abusive relationship, ask yourself the following:

#### Does your partner...

- hit, shove, slap, kick, punch, or choke you?
- threaten to hurt or kill you?
- call you names or tell you that you're crazy?
- criticize things you do and say, or criticize how you look?
- hurt your pets or destroy things special to you?
- blame you for the abuse he or she commits?
- limit where you can go, what you can do, and who you can talk to?
- unexpectedly check up on you at your workplace, home, school, or elsewhere?
- force you to have sex against your will?
- apologize and tell you it will never happen again (even though it already has)?

If you answered "yes" to any of these questions, you may be in an abusive relationship. There are people who can help you. See the "Where to get help" section of this flyer for resources.

**You are not alone.**



## Have a safety plan ready

If you're experiencing domestic violence, prepare a safety plan now in case you and your children need to leave in a hurry. Call **911** if you're in immediate danger, and teach your children how to call **911** in an emergency.

### If you are currently in the relationship:

1. Talk to someone you trust. Ask for help in case you need to leave. Plan where you will go.
2. Use the resources listed in this brochure. You can get help in planning ways to stay safe.
3. Pack a bag that won't be missed. Hide or keep it with someone you trust. Pack it with:
  - cash (including coins for phone calls) and checks
  - clothes and personal items for you and your children (such as a special toy or book)
  - medications
  - house and car keys
  - important phone numbers
  - driver's license or picture ID, birth certificates, passports, health insurance information, house and car titles, rent receipts, marriage license, and your children's immunization records
4. Protect yourself when you're researching resources online. Use a computer that the abuser can't access. Visit [nmedv.org](http://nmedv.org) for more internet safety tips.



### If you've left the relationship:

1. Change your phone number and screen calls.
2. Save and document all contacts, messages, injuries, or other incidents involving the abuser.
3. Change the locks if the abuser has a key.
4. Plan how to get away if confronted by the abuser.
5. If you have to meet your abuser, do it in public.
6. Notify school and work contacts.



### If someone you know is being abused

If you think your friend is in an abusive relationship, don't downplay the danger or judge your friend's choices. Your friend may feel that he or she has nowhere to go or that it's his or her fault. You can help by giving emotional support and expressing concern for your friend's safety. Help your friend find the local organizations that can provide help. If you think an assault is occurring, call **911**

### If someone you know is doing the abusing

Here are some of the things you can do if you think your friend is abusing his or her partner:

- Say something. Silence is the same as saying the abuse is OK.
- Tell them their actions bother you, and that you feel bad when they insult their spouse or partner.
- Tell them you care about them and urge them to contact a support group that can help.
- Don't agree with any excuses they make for the abuse.

### Know your rights and legal options.

**Domestic abuse is against the law. You have the right to be safe. There are many legal options available to help you.**

**Police report:** The police must write a report for every domestic violence call, even if the abusive person has already left. You can make the police report during or after an incident.

**Civil standby:** Anyone can call the police and ask them to be present for a limited time to keep the peace. You can ask for a "civil standby" when you need to collect clothing or property from your home after a domestic violence incident.

**Emergency protective orders (EPOs):** Police officers can get EPOs for victims of domestic violence 24 hours a day. Tell the police officer what happened and why you're afraid.

**Restraining orders:** Issued by the courts, restraining orders can order someone to not contact or go near you or your children, not have a gun, move out of your house, follow child custody and visitation orders, or pay child support. A temporary restraining order lasts until your next court date. At that time, the judge will decide to continue or cancel the order. The order could last for up to three years.

### We're part of the solution.

**At Kaiser Permanente, we're committed to ending domestic violence. Helping you with your emotional health and physical safety is part of our philosophy of caring for the whole you.**

Your personal physician or another member of your health care team can talk to you about your situation at home and provide you with resources to help you.

By helping you take the next step, whether that means reading a pamphlet, calling a crisis line, or leaving an unhealthy relationship, we can help you to lead a life that is healthy and safe.

### Where to get help.

If you think you're being abused or may be abusing someone else, you can get help by talking to your personal physician or by connecting with one of the following resources:

**National Domestic Violence Hotline**  
**1-800-799-7233**  
**1-800-787-3224** (TTY for the hearing/speech impaired)  
[ndvh.org](http://ndvh.org)

**Kaiser Permanente resources**  
**Domestic violence Web site**  
 Go online to [kp.org/domesticviolence](http://kp.org/domesticviolence)

**Kaiser Permanente Health Encyclopedia**  
 Visit our Web site at [kp.org](http://kp.org) to learn about a variety of health topics, including domestic violence.

#### Local area resources - 24-hour hotlines

**Alameda County**  
 A Safe Place (510) 536-7233  
 SAVE (510) 794-6055  
 Tri-Valley Haven for Women 1-800-884-8119

**Contra Costa County**  
 STAND! Against Domestic Violence 1-888-215-5555

**Fresno County**  
 Marjaree Mason Center 1-800-640-0333

**Marin County**  
 Marin Abused Women's Services (415) 924-6616

**Napa County**  
 Napa Emergency Women's Services (707) 255-6397

**Placer County**  
 Placer Women's Crisis Line 1-800-575-5352

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**Sacramento County**  
 Women Escaping a Violent Environment (WEAVE) 1-866-920-2952

**San Francisco County**  
 WOMAN, Inc. 1-877-384-3578  
 Community United Against Violence (415) 333-4357  
 (for the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender community)

**San Joaquin County**  
 Women's Center of San Joaquin County (209) 465-4878

**San Mateo County**  
 Community Overcoming Relationship Abuse (CORA) 1-800-300-1080

**Santa Clara County**  
 Next Door Support Network for Battered Women (408) 279-2962  
 La Isla Pacifica 1-800-572-2782 (408) 842-7138

**Solano County**  
 SafeQuest Solano (707) 557-6600

**Sonoma County**  
 YWCA Women's Emergency Shelter (707) 546-1234

**Stanislaus County**  
 Haven Women's Center (209) 524-4331

**Yolo County**  
 Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence Center (530) 662-1133



Family Violence Prevention Program