

What is Domestic Violence?

Domestic violence can be defined as a pattern of behavior in any relationship that is used to gain or maintain power and control over an intimate partner.

Abuse is physical, sexual, emotional, economic or psychological actions or threats of actions that influence another person. This includes any behaviors that frighten, intimidate, terrorize, manipulate, hurt, humiliate, blame, injure or wound someone.

Domestic violence can happen to anyone of any race, age, sexual orientation, religion or gender. It can happen to couples who are married, living together or who are dating. Domestic violence affects people of all socioeconomic backgrounds and education levels.

You may be in an emotionally abusive relationship if your partner:

- **Calls you names, insults you or continually criticizes you.**
- **Does not trust you and acts jealous or possessive.**
- **Tries to isolate you from family or friends.**
- **Monitors where you go, who you call and who you spend time with.**
- **Does not want you to work.**
- **Controls finances or refuses to share money.**
- **Punishes you by withholding affection.**
- **Expects you to ask permission.**
- **Threatens to hurt you, the children, your family or your pets.**
- **Humiliates you in any way.**

You may be in a physically abusive relationship if your partner has ever:

- **Damaged property when angry (thrown objects, punched walls, kicked doors, etc.).**
- **Pushed, slapped, bitten, kicked or choked you.**
- **Abandoned you in a dangerous or unfamiliar place.**
- **Scared you by driving recklessly.**
- **Used a weapon to threaten or hurt you.**
- **Forced you to leave your home.**
- **Trapped you in your home or kept you from leaving.**
- **Prevented you from calling police or seeking medical attention.**
- **Hurt your children.**
- **Used physical force in sexual situations.**

You may be in a sexually abusive relationship if your partner:

- **Views women as objects and believes in rigid gender roles.**
- **Accuses you of cheating or is often jealous of your outside relationships.**
- **Wants you to dress in a sexual way.**
- **Insults you in sexual ways or calls you sexual names.**
- **Has ever forced or manipulated you into to having sex or performing sexual acts.**
- **Held you down during sex.**
- **Demanded sex when you were sick, tired or after beating you.**
- **Hurt you with weapons or objects during sex.**
- **Involved other people in sexual activities with you.**
- **Ignored your feelings regarding sex.**

If you answered 'yes' to these questions you may be in an abusive relationship. Please contact your local domestic violence center to talk with someone about it.