



Domestic Violence – FAQs

What is domestic violence?

Domestic violence can take many forms. It can be emotional, physical, verbal, sexual, economic, spiritual and psychological abuse. It takes away choice, self-esteem and control. Often it limits an individual's access to their family and friends, as well as to money and other resources. It is also a criminal offence.

Domestic violence is usually a pattern of behavior, where one person in a relationship uses abuse or threats to gain control or power over the other. It typically occurs between individuals who have some type of intimate relationship, whether that is marriage, living together or dating.

Domestic violence can happen to anyone regardless of their age, gender, ethnicity, education or income.

Why don't victims of domestic violence just leave their abusers?

There are lots of reasons. Leaving an abuser can be dangerous. Victims are often isolated, without access to their family and friends or money and transport. Also not knowing where to get help can be a real barrier to leaving. They may also be concerned about losing their children. It is incredibly difficult to leave an abuser in the face of these challenges.

Is domestic violence related to substance abuse?

Around 60% of family violence cases also involve substance abuse. Where both are present in a home, both are harder to stop.

What are the warning signs that someone is experiencing domestic violence?

If you recognize any of the behaviors listed below you, a friend or a relative may be in an abusive relationship:

- Excessive jealousy
- Possessiveness
- Unrealistic expectations of self and others
- Doesn't want you to go out with friends or won't let you come and go as you please
- Calls on the phone all the time and spies on you
- Constantly questions you about where you are and who are you with
- Excessive anger over minor things
- Breaks objects or intentionally damages your personal property
- Verbal abuse, attacks, or accusations
- Belittles or humiliates you
- Makes all decisions; won't share in planning activities
- Dictates what you can and cannot do
- Doesn't respect your values; pressures you to do things you don't feel are right
- Cruelty to animals, children or elderly
- Blames others for problems or actions

- Sudden mood swings
- Has hit or threatened someone in the past
- Uses force during an argument
- Threats of violence or suicide
- Evidence of physical abuse

How can I help someone who is experiencing domestic violence?

Do:

- Let your friend know you believe them.
- Encourage them to call us, in confidence and for free, on 281-342-HELP (4357).
- Listen to what your friend is saying. Interrupting and saying things like, “I would never put up with that!” is unhelpful and may actually do harm.
- Tell your friend they don’t deserve to be hurt and that they are not to blame. No one deserves to be mistreated and there is no excuse for abuse.
- Point out the unfairness of how your friend is being treated and what your fears for them are.
- Allow your friend to feel the way they do.
- Find out what your friend wants to do about their relationship and support them no matter what they decide.
- Let your friend know abuse usually gets worse over time.
- Tell your friend you’ll be there if they ever need you.
- Expect your friend to be confused, about their feelings and about what to do. Expect them to change their mind, maybe even a few times.
- Watch your body language and respect your friend’s right to personal space. If your friend has been hurt, they may not want to be hugged.
- Help your friend become informed. Tell them help is available. Remember: your friend may feel guilty after sharing the story of their abuse for ‘telling’ on their partner.

Don’t:

- Make judgments. Your values and beliefs may be different, and there is a big difference between helping figure out solutions and telling someone what they should or should not do.
- Give advice. Instead, talk about your friend’s choices, help them find out who may be able to help, and offer to go with them.
- Ask unnecessary questions. Your questions must be helpful, not nosy.
- Overreact. If you do, your friend may feel stupid or embarrassed. If you let your feelings get in the way, it won’t help theirs.
- Confront your friend’s abusive partner about the abuse. If the partner is violent, it may be dangerous for you and your friend.

Source: [Domestic Violence Resource Center](#)

What impact does domestic violence have on children?

Children who grow up in violent homes are:

- Four times more likely to be arrested by police
- Six times more likely to commit suicide
- 24 times more likely to commit sexual assault

- 50 times more likely to abuse drugs or alcohol
- 70% of men who batter their wives also batter their children
- Boys who witness domestic violence are more likely to batter their female partners as adults. And thus, the generational cycle continues.
- 62% of sons older than 14 were injured when they attempted to protect their mothers from attacks by abusive male partners.

In addition:

- Domestic violence creates a home environment where children live in constant fear.
- Domestic violence in the home causes children to show more anxiety, low self-esteem, depression, anger, and various temperament problems
- Male children who witness the abuse of mothers by fathers are more likely to become men who batter in adulthood than those male children from homes free of violence

How big an issue is domestic violence in Texas?

In 2012, there were 188,992 family violence incidents reported in Texas, an increase of 11.5% on the previous year. 114 women were killed in family violence incidents during 2012. More than 79,000 adults and children were served by family violence program services across the state during 2012.

Does domestic violence only affect women?

While women do hit men, 95% of those presenting with visible injuries are female. It is more common in heterosexual relationships for men to abuse women but female abuse of male partners does happen. Equally, either partner can be an abuser in a same-sex relationship.