

Domestic Violence

By Healthwise

What is Domestic Violence?

Domestic violence is abuse that happens in a personal relationship. When domestic violence occurs between a former or current partner or spouse, it is called intimate partner violence. Most relationships have difficult times, and almost every couple argues now and then. But intimate partner violence is different from common marital or relationship problems.

Domestic violence is a controlling pattern of abuse that a partner may use (physically or emotionally) to make the other person feel bad or weak.

Domestic violence is a pattern of abuse that a partner may use to control the behavior of another including:

- Hitting
- Kicking
- Shoving
- Choking
- Sexual abuse, such as forcing a person to have sex against their will.

Not all signs of domestic violence are physical.

Emotional abuse is used to make the person feel bad or weak. The abuser may:

- Prevent you from working or going to school
- Make all of the decisions
- Tell you that you're a bad parent or threaten to take away or hurt your children
- Control or withhold money
- Control what you do, who you see or talk to, or where you go
- Embarrass you with put-downs
- Act like the abuse is no big deal or is your fault, or even deny doing it
- Make violent threats against your children, other family members, or pets
- Threaten to kill themselves

(Continued on the following page.)





You can help an abuse victim by offering support by listening, contacting resources, or offering money, transportation, childcare, etc.



Resources

- Idaho Council on Domestic Violence (icdv.idaho.gov/directories/) provides a list of statewide shelters and programs for victims of crimes. There are also resources (icdv.idaho.gov/victims/filing-protection-orders/) for filing a protection order.
- Idaho Coalition Against Sexual and Domestic Violence (idahocoalition.org)
- National Domestic Violence Hotline (thehotline.org) at **1-800-799-SAFE (1-800-799-7233)** for the nearest program. The hotline is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, in English, Spanish, and other languages.
- National Coalition Against Domestic Violence at ncadv.org/resources to find programs that offer shelter and legal support.

Concerned that someone you know is being abused?

Do you have a family member, friend, coworker or neighbor who you think may be in an abusive relationship? Signs to watch for:

- Bruises or injuries that look like they came from choking, punching or being thrown down.
- Black eyes, red or purple marks at the neck and sprained wrists
- Attempting to hide bruises with makeup or clothing
- Making excuses like tripping or being accident-prone or clumsy
- Being isolated from relatives/coworkers and kept from making friends
- Having to ask permission to meet, talk with or do things with other people
- Having little money available or not having access to credit cards or a car

Other warning signs

- Having low self-esteem or being extremely apologetic and meek
- Referring to the partner's temper but not talking about the extent of the abuse
- Having substance use disorder
- Having symptoms of depression, such as sadness or hopelessness, or loss of interest in daily activities
- Talking about suicide, attempting suicide or showing other warning signs of suicide



Ways You Can Help

- Be supportive and let them know you will listen whenever they are ready.
Do not confront the person if they are not ready to talk.
- Be careful giving written information. It may not be safe for them to take it home. See if you can keep it for them.
- Online activity may be seen by others. They shouldn't use their personal computer or device to search for these programs. Offer to let them use your computer or device. Or they could use a safe computer at work or a library.
- Be willing to help in any way you can with transportation, money, or childcare.
- Encourage them to talk with a health professional.
- Encourage them to get advice from an advocacy agency with experience in domestic violence or help them contact a local domestic violence group.