

Getting Help for Violence and Abuse

Violence uses force, power, or threats to cause physical or emotional harm on purpose.

Abuse is one form of violence. It can be emotional, physical, financial, and/or sexual.

It may not be easy to admit that you are the victim of abuse. You may be confused about what to do or how to find a way out.

It is time to get help if the person you love, live with, or work with does any of these things:

- Puts you down in public.
- Criticizes you for little things.
- Keeps you from seeing or talking to family, friends, or co-workers.
- Monitors what you are doing all of the time.
- Keeps accusing you of being unfaithful.
- Destroys things you own or care about.
- Gets angry when he or she drinks alcohol or uses drugs.
- Blames you for his or her angry outbursts.
- Threatens to hurt you, children, or animals. Beats, chokes, hits, kicks, pushes, shoves, or slaps you or them, or hurts you in any way.
- Says it is your fault if he or she hurts you, then promises that it will not happen again.
- Threatens to or uses weapons against you.
- Forces you to have sex against your will. {The Department of Veterans Affairs uses the term military sexual trauma (MST) for sexual assault or repeated, threatening sexual harassment that occurred while a Veteran was in the service.}

Causes

Violence and abuse are ways to gain and keep control over others. Persons who commit violence or abuse come from all ethnic groups and backgrounds. Often, they have these problems:

- Poor skills to communicate.
- Past family violence. They may have been abused in the past. They may have seen one parent beat the other.
- Alcohol or drug problems.

Regardless of the cause, no one deserves to be abused! Most often, persons who abuse others or commit violence, find it hard to change their behavior without expert help. If you are a victim of violence or abuse, get help and support.



Confide in someone you trust.

Getting Help for Violence and Abuse, continued

Getting Help

- If you are assaulted or threatened or need emergency help, **call 911!**
- If you are not in immediate danger, have a plan for times you feel unsafe or in danger or when you decide to leave the abusive setting.
 - Decide who you will call (e.g., police, neighbors, relatives, and a shelter). Make a list of these telephone numbers. Memorize the numbers, too.
 - Decide where you will go. If you have children, plan how you will take them with you. Have a plan for where they should go if you can't get away. Practice these safety plans with your children. Plan how you will take your pets, too, if you can.
- Be prepared to leave an abusive setting. Keep important items in a safe place (unknown to the person who is abusing you) until you are ready to leave or if you have to leave quickly. Get these items together ahead of time.
 - Extra keys to your car, house, and safety deposit box.
 - Cash. Credit cards and ATM card. Checkbook, bankbooks, and investment records or their account numbers.
 - Jewelry or other small objects that you can sell in case you need money.
 - Cell phone, a phone calling card, and phone numbers that you need.

- Personal papers for you and your children. These can be the original forms, copies of them, or information, such as numbers and dates written on paper. Items include:

- Birth certificates and social security numbers.
- Driver's license, state ID, and passports.
- Car registration, title, and insurance information.



- Medical ID cards and medical records for you and your children.
- Marriage license, divorce papers, legal papers for custody, restraining orders, etc.
- House deed or lease agreement.

- To help recover from sexual assault or trauma, contact your doctor or health care provider for proper counseling and treatment. **{Note:** Veterans can receive free treatment for military sexual trauma (MST) at all VA health care facilities.}

For Information, Contact:

National Domestic Violence Hotline
800.799.SAFE (799.7233)

Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network (RAINN)
www.rainn.org

- National Sexual Assault Hotline
800.656.HOPE (656.4673)
- National Sexual Assault Online Hotline
<https://ohl.rainn.org/online>