

Everyone has a right to feel safe in a relationship

When you are being hurt or threatened in a relationship it can cause medical problems such as headaches, stomach aches, ulcers, panic



attacks or depression. It can also make existing health problems, such as high blood pressure or asthma, worse.

Domestic violence hurts all family members and our community. Breaking out of an abusive relationship is often difficult. You may still care for this person and hope for change; or feel overwhelmed with questions and not know where to turn for help. Domestic violence does not go away on its own. It tends to get worse and more frequent with time, and the effects on children can be devastating. Without intervention, people who are abusive rarely change their behavior and learn to be non-violent.

You are not alone

Remember, you are not alone. While every relationship is different, nobody deserves to live in fear or to be hurt. Begin by talking with someone you trust about the problem. Tell your doctor or call the Washington State Domestic Violence Hotline listed on this brochure for a program near you, including support groups, confidential shelters and children's programs.

If you are in an abusive relationship, help is available through the

**Washington State Domestic
Violence Hotline
(800) 562-6025**

**If you are in immediate
danger, call 911**

Washington **WSMA**
State Medical
Association
Physician Driven
Patient Focused

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There is no excuse for abuse.

Excuses, Excuses



WSMA

The danger is real

If your partner is violent, threatening or controlling, you are, unfortunately, probably in an abusive relationship. Domestic violence happens when a partner believes that he or she has the right to control his or her partner's feelings and actions through manipulation, intimidation and fear. Every year, thousands of victims are seriously threatened, hurt or killed by their partners.

Domestic violence takes many forms—physical, sexual and emotional—and happens to all kinds of people, from all walks of life. In most cases, abusive behavior will continue unless there is help from other people or services in the community.

Children are also hurt

Children are seriously hurt when they witness people they love being



yelled at, pushed, frightened or hit. Children may feel terror and shame; they may try to stop the violence or think they caused the problem. As a result, a third of all children who see their mothers beaten develop emotional problems. Boys who see their fathers beat their mothers are 10 times more likely to be abusive in their adult intimate relationships.

Does this sound familiar?

Disagreements develop from time to time in relationships.

Domestic violence is not a disagreement. It is a pattern of behavior used by one partner to establish and maintain power and control over the other. This behavior can become more frequent and intense over time.

The abusive person is responsible for these behaviors. That person is the only one who can change them.

Does your partner:

- Insult you in public and/or in private?
- Check up on where you've been and who you've talked to?
- Put down your friends and family?
- Tell you jealousy is a sign of love?
- Blame you for the abuse?
- Limit where you can go and what you can do?
- Try to control your money?
- Destroy your belongings?
- Threaten to hurt you, your family members or pets?
- Make you have sex in ways or at times that are uncomfortable for you?
- Touch you in a way that hurts or frightens you?
- Tell you your fears about the relationship are not important?

If any of these behaviors sound familiar, you may be feeling alone, frightened, angry or ashamed. Abuse may result in serious physical injury and even death.



Safety plan

If your partner is abusive, it is important to have a safety plan for you and your children.

Try to do the following:

- Hide money
- Hide extra set of house and car keys
- Carefully select the friends or family who know about your safety plan
- Ask neighbors to call police if violence begins
- Remove weapons
- Have available: social security numbers (spouse, children, yours); rent and utility receipts; birth certificates (yours and children); driver's license; bank account numbers; insurance policies; marriage license; small valuables; important phone numbers.
- Hide bag with extra clothing
- Teach children to call 911

Seek the support of caring people. They may be your friends, family members and neighbors. Talk to them in a private, safe place.

Talk to your doctor. Let him/her know what is happening to you so that she/he can better help you. **What you say during your medical visit is confidential as provided by state law.**