

## WARNING SIGNS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

- The victim is easily startled or distressed around their partner or spouse.
- There is a constant sense of fear and not wanting to upset their partner.
- The victim withdraws from family and friends and makes excuses to break social engagements.
- There may be physical signs of the assault including bruising, cuts, or other marks.
- The victim often has “accidents” which require frequent visits to the hospital.

## FIGHTING BACK

### Annie's story

Annie and Steve had been married for fifteen years. Steve started hitting her just after their one year anniversary. They both came from good families, so she was afraid to tell anyone, thinking that people would look down on her if they knew and maybe not even believe her. She thought that maybe it was her fault, that she had said something or done something to upset him. Maybe if she watched what she said and did, then maybe it would stop. But it didn't stop; it just got worse year after year.

One day, during an argument, Steve hit Annie so hard that she fell over and landed awkwardly. Her arm snapped in two. When she got to the hospital, she told the doctor that she tripped and fell. But for Annie, that was the last straw. She let her parents know what was happening and they assisted her in finding the help she needed.

Soon after the incident, Steve was arrested for domestic abuse and was ordered not to contact Annie. Annie was able to get the help she needed. Others are not so lucky.

## WHERE TO FIND HELP?

If you or someone you know has been a victim of domestic violence, there is help out there for you. Please, remember it is never your fault and you can survive.

The National Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-799-SAFE  
Emergency Assistance: 911

## TEST YOURSELF!

Test your knowledge about domestic violence by answering the following questions:

1. Domestic violence only occurs in bad parts of town.  
a. True                      b. False
2. Domestic abuse can adversely affect children in the household.  
a. True                      b. False
3. Partners only become violent when their significant other has done something to deserve it.  
a. True                      b. False
4. Domestic violence victims often make excuses when they have to go to the hospital due to the violence.  
a. True                      b. False
5. A man cannot be a victim of domestic violence.  
a. True                      b. False

Answers: 1. b; 2. a; 3. b; 4. a; 5. b

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# DOMESTIC VIOLENCE



## INNOCENT VICTIMS



## WHAT IS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE?

Domestic Violence is the abuse by force of an intimate partner such as a spouse, partner, or boyfriend/girlfriend. Domestic violence can include physical abuse, sexual assault and other abusive behaviors, such as psychological belittlement, to gain power over the other person.



Many times the perpetrator will convince the victim that it is the victim's fault they are being abused. The perpetrator will then try to apologize and do nice things to regain the victim's trust before they act out again. It is a vicious cycle that happens in every race, religion, gender, or sexual orientation. In many instances, children are also threatened from the domestic violence situations.

## THE TRUTH WILL SET YOU FREE! Myths and misconceptions

There are so many misconceptions and stigmas involving domestic violence. Here are a few:

**Myth:** Only people from the bad part of town, in the poorer neighborhoods, experience domestic violence in their lives.

**Truth:** Regardless of a person's race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, class, or social status, domestic violence can occur. Domestic violence happens in good neighborhoods and bad ones. It affects thousands of lives each year.

**Myth:** It is not possible for a partner to sexually assault their significant other.

**Truth:** Sexual assault is about power and is always a crime. Often people disregard it when it happens with two people in a committed relationship. The fact is that "no" always means "no" and sexual assault can be used as an act of domestic violence to instill fear to keep the victim from leaving a bad situation.

**Myth:** If a person is being abused by their partner, then they probably did something to make the perpetrator angry and probably deserved what they got.

**Truth:** It is never okay to be abusive to a spouse or significant other no matter what their behavior. Domestic violence is a crime and punishable by law.

## FEELING TRAPPED?

### What Can You Do?

While domestic violence occurs between both men and women, women are most often the victim and women between the ages of 18 and 24 account for the largest number of domestic violence victims. 70% of all murder-suicides involve intimate partners. Many times it is a woman who has been abused and sees no other way out of a terrible situation.

### How to get out of a bad situation

It is important that you have a plan in place to exit an abusive situation.

- Make a list of four safe places you could go if you had to leave immediately.
- Compile an inventory of things you need to take with you should you have to leave such as important documents and any medications for you or your children.
- Set aside enough money for transportation and such for at least a month.
- Compile a list of local emergency numbers and addresses.
- If you have nowhere else to go, don't use that as an excuse for not leaving. Many emergency response teams can help you find shelter until you get back on your feet.
- Never try to confront the problem by yourself. It could be dangerous, and the safety of you and your children should always come first.

**Remember it is never your fault and there is help out there for you.**



## EMOTIONAL SCARS

Being in an abusive relationship can have some lasting negative effects on the victim. The longer the abuse occurs, the more likely the victim will experience long-term effects like:

- Anxiety
- Depression
- Intimacy issues
- Self-hatred
- Destructive behavior, such as abuse of alcohol or drugs
- Suicidal thoughts



## EFFECT ON KIDS

### Children in Domestic Violence Households

You may think you can handle what is happening and that it just affects you, but in many cases it affects the children as well. Did you know that...

- In five out of ten homes where one partner was being abused by the other partner, children were also being abused in that home.
- In three out of ten homes where one partner was sexually abusing the other partner, a child was also being sexually abused in that home.
- Boys who grow up in an environment of domestic violence where their mother is being abused in some way by their father are twice as likely to perpetrate domestic violence themselves with their intimate partner when they grow up.
- Children who grow up in homes of domestic violence are twice as likely to have problems at school and drop out before their high school graduations.