



# Getting help for violence & abuse

It may not be easy to admit that you are the victim of abuse. This can be especially true if the abuser is your intimate partner. You may be confused about what to do or how to find a way out.



Violence and abuse are also referred to as domestic violence, intimate partner violence, dating abuse or relationship abuse. It is more than physical violence. It includes behaviors used by one person or partner to maintain power and control over another person or partner. In addition to physical abuse, there may also be behaviors that intimidate, manipulate or control the person or partner through threats, emotional abuse or financial control.

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

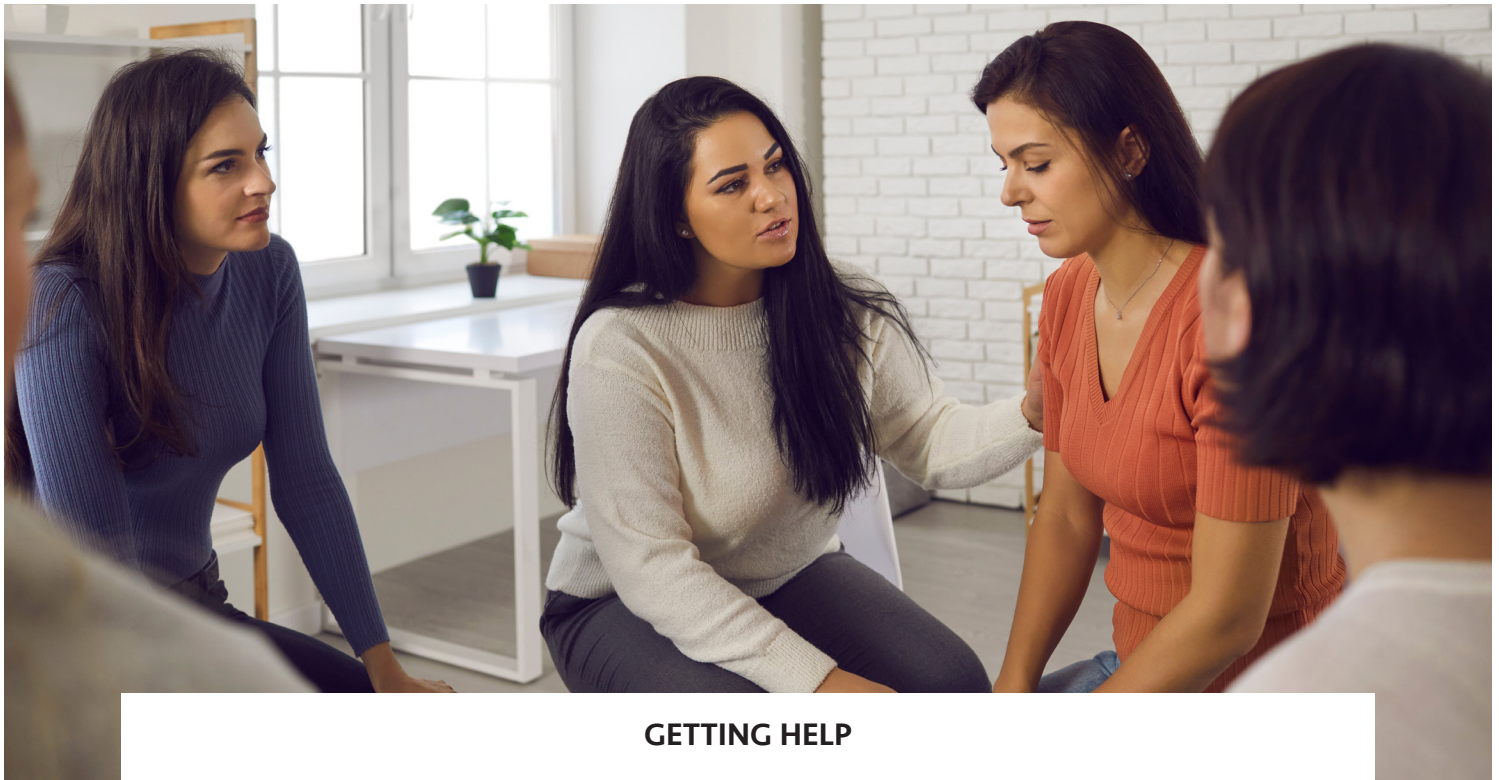
- Insults and puts you down in public.
- Pressures you to have sex you're not comfortable with.
- Keeps you from seeing or talking to family, friends or co-workers.
- Monitors what you are doing all of the time.
- Keeps accusing you of being unfaithful.
- Destroys things you own or care about.
- Gets 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. Those who commit violence or abuse come from all backgrounds, including any race, age, gender, religion, education level or economic status. 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 abuse 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.



## GETTING HELP

If you are assaulted or threatened or need emergency help, **call 911!**

Take safety precautions when using the internet, your cell phone and social media. Learn more at [thehotline.org/plan-for-safety/internet-safety](https://thehotline.org/plan-for-safety/internet-safety).

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.}

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.
- Let trusted friends and neighbors know about your situation. Give them instructions on who to contact, or not contact, in moments of crisis.

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, 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.