

UNDERSTANDING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE



What is Domestic Violence?

Domestic violence, also called intimate partner violence (IPV), is a pattern of behaviors used by one person in a relationship to gain or maintain power and control over another person in a romantic, dating, or intimate relationship. Domestic violence can occur in current or former relationships and affects people of all ages, genders, races, cultures, sexual orientations, and socioeconomic backgrounds.

Domestic violence is not simply a disagreement, a bad day, or an isolated incident. It is a pattern of abusive, manipulative, and controlling behaviors that may happen regularly or occasionally and can increase in frequency or severity over time. The common thread is the use of power and control.

While physical violence is often what people think of first, domestic violence can take many forms, many of which may be difficult to recognize.

TYPES OF ABUSE

Physical Abuse

Any intentional use of physical force to hurt, intimidate, or control another person.

Examples may include:

- Hitting, punching, slapping, kicking, or choking
- Pushing, restraining, or grabbing
- Throwing objects
- Damaging property
- Preventing someone from leaving or getting help

Emotional Abuse

Behaviors that undermine a person's confidence, self-worth, or sense of safety.

Examples may include:

- Constant criticism or humiliation
- Name-calling or insults
- Gaslighting or manipulation
- Intimidation
- Threats of harm
- Making someone feel responsible for the abuse

TYPES OF ABUSE

Verbal Abuse

The use of words to frighten, degrade, or control.

Examples may include:

- Yelling or screaming
- Threatening language
- Public humiliation
- Constant blame or criticism

Sexual Abuse

Any sexual activity or contact that occurs without consent.

Examples may include:

- Sexual coercion
- Forcing sexual acts
- Ignoring boundaries
- Pressuring a partner into sexual activity

Financial or Economic Abuse

Controlling a person's ability to earn, access, or use money.

Examples may include:

- Taking someone's paycheck
- Monitoring spending
- Preventing a partner from working
- Creating financial dependence

TYPES OF ABUSE

Digital or Technology-Facilitated Abuse

Limiting a person's connection to friends, family, or support systems.

Examples may include:

- Discouraging or preventing contact with loved ones
- Monitoring where someone goes
- Controlling activities and relationships
- Making a person increasingly dependent on the abusive partner

Stalking

A pattern of unwanted attention, monitoring, or contact that causes fear or concern for safety.

Examples may include:

- Following someone
- Showing up uninvited
- Repeated unwanted communication
- Monitoring online activity or location information