

# RIGHTS IN A RELATIONSHIP

## Both you and your partner have ...

### **The right to respect and goodwill from your partner, including:**

- The right to emotional support;
- The right to be heard by your partner;
- The right to be responded to with courtesy;
- The right to be respectfully asked, rather than “ordered;”
- The right to have your feelings and experiences acknowledged as real and valid;
- The right to encouragement.

### **The right to feel safe and to live free from abuse, including:**

- The right to live free from criticism and judgment;
- The right to live free from accusation and blame;
- The right to live free from verbal, emotional or physical threats;
- The right to live free from angry outbursts and rage.

### **The right to make decisions about your life and what affects you:**

- The right to clear and informative answers to questions that affect your life;
- The right to have access to financial resources and information, and to make financial decisions;
- The right to your privacy.

### **The right to be an individual person:**

- The right to say no;
- The right to make mistakes;
- The right to not be responsible for other adults' problems or behaviors;
- The right to control your own life;
- The right to make changes if you are not happy with your life.

INFORMATION IN PACKET COURTESY OF:

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*Getting Free* by Ginny McCarthy

*Why Does He Do That* by Lundy Bancroft

National Coalition Against Domestic Violence - [www.ncadv.org](http://www.ncadv.org)

Futures Without Violence - [www.futureswithoutviolence.org](http://www.futureswithoutviolence.org)

National Center on Domestic Violence, Trauma & Mental Health - [www.nationalcenterdvtraumamh.org](http://www.nationalcenterdvtraumamh.org)

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration - [www.samsha.gov](http://www.samsha.gov)

Domestic Abuse Intervention Project - [duluth-model.org](http://duluth-model.org)

# WHAT IS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE?

Domestic violence is about more than just battering or physical assaults. It is when one person in an intimate relationship believes that they have the right to control their partner's feelings, behavior and actions by exercising *power* over the victim thru *patterns* of behavior, forcing the victim to change their behavior in response to the abuse. It's is a pattern of power and control, and something that happens more than just once.

Not all of the behaviors below alone equal abuse. To fully understand if someone is the victim of domestic violence you have to understand the *context*, *intent* and *effect* of specific behaviors. One person hitting another person is *assault* but may not be *abusive* depending on what was happening in the moment, what the individual meant to have happen, and what happened as a result of that action. Was the intent to control, dominate or create fear? Or was the person trying to regain control over their own life? Does the action have meaning because of things that happened in the past? Whose life is getting bigger or smaller as a result of the behavior?

## EMOTIONAL ABUSE

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- Ignores your feelings.
- Withholds approval, appreciation or affection as punishments.
- Humiliates you in private or public.
- Threatens to leave or tells you to leave.
- Constantly accuses you of having affairs.
- Blames you for or tells you about affairs.
- Emotional blackmail.
- Ridicules or insults your gender or gender history.
- Ridicules or insults your most valued beliefs, your religion, race, heritage, sexual orientation, or class.

### Crazy Making:

- Manipulates you with lies and contradictions.
- Maintains a good public image so other won't believe you.
- Getting you to feel sorry for them, or playing the victim.
- Minimizing or denying the obvious about what they are doing or feeling.
- Changing the subject in a fight.
- Telling you that you are the one overreacting, are crazy and need counseling.
- Twisting words – insisting that you are saying, thinking or feeling things you are not.

## Verbal Abuse

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- Talks to you as if you were a child.
- Ridicules your appearance.
- Threatens to take children and leave.
- Tells you that you are stupid, ugly, crazy and dumb...
- Embarrasses you in public.
- Constant put-downs.
- Tells you that you are an unfit parent.
- Continually criticizes you, calls you names, shouts at you.
- Threatens to kill you, himself or others.
- Belittles important things you've accomplished
- Tells your children hurtful thing about you.

## Isolation

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- Won't let you have or use phone or listens in on phone calls.
- Won't allow you to attend family functions or to invite people over.
- Gets others to turn against you.
- Moves you away from family and friends.
- Takes car keys or disables vehicles.
- Keeps you from working or going to school, or insists you come home immediately after.
- Expresses distrust, suspicion and dislike of family & friends.
- Creates conflict and drama with friends and family so you are embarrassed to be around them or avoid them so as to not cause trouble.
- Refuses to socialize with you.

## Financial Control

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- Doesn't provide enough money to buy groceries or pay other bills.
- Puts all bills solely in your name so you bear liability.
- Puts all bills in their name so you have no ability to prove residency or credit, have no access to accounts, or have no authority or ability to make changes.
- Makes you account for every penny spent.
- Refuses to work or share responsibilities.
- Takes your money.
- Manipulates you into spending money, then blames you for debt.
- Controls the checkbook and/or all knowledge of assets/finances
- Doesn't provide adequate clothing, food or housing.
- Spends family funds on drugs or alcohol
- Expects you to do things in exchange for money.

## Intimidation / Threats of Violence

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- Being physical without actually hurting you
  - o Raises fist at you.
  - o Punches walls or hits things near you.
  - o Kicks in doors, forces them open, or opens or breaks locks to access you.
  - o Destroys your personal things.
  - o Blocking your path.
  - o Towering over you.
  - o Throws things at you or near you.
- Keeps you awake all night.
- Punishes or deprives the children if you leave him.
- Bullying (threatening to do or not do something to make you do what they wants)
  - o Threatens to take the children and leave.
  - o Threatens to kill you, self or other loved ones.
- Being on the offensive so you are constantly fearful of setting partner off.
- Cruelty to animals and/or children
- Breaking into house or car.
- Displaying weapons.

## PHYSICAL ABUSE

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- Pushes or shoves you.
- Holds you to keep you from leaving.
- Slaps or bites you.
- Hits or punches you.
- Throws objects at you.
- Locks you out of the house.
- Abandons you in dangerous places.
- Refuses to help when you were sick, injured or pregnant.
- Threatens or hurts you with weapons
- Assaulting the children.

## STALKING & USE OF TECHNOLOGY

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- Follows you or shows up where you go (work, appointments, store, etc.).
- Leaves you gifts & messages.
- Get's others (including children) to report on what you do, where you go & who you see.
- Uses others to follow or harass you.
- Demands passwords to accounts.
- Goes through phones, e-mails or social network accounts to see who are your friends.
- Uses GPS or spyware to track you.
- Pretends to be someone else to harass or track you.
- Breaks into your accounts to see what you do & who you talk to.

## SEXUAL ASSUALT

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*\*Sex includes any form of penetration of the vagina, mouth or anus by another person's body part or object.*

- Sex by coercion or threats of harm.
- Forced sex with a weapon involved.
- Inflicting injury and forcing sex.

- Causing injury resulting in unconsciousness and forcing sex.
- Breaking into building or vehicle and forcing sex.
- Sex when victim is incapable of consent due to mental incapacity or physical helplessness.

## SEXUAL ABUSE

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- Criticizes you sexually.
- Insists on unwanted and uncomfortable touching.
- Withholds sex and affection.
- Demands you to strip or participate in sex acts that you are uncomfortable with.
- "Playful" use of force during sex.
- Non-consensual or unsafe use of force during sex
- Uses weapons during sex.

- Not respecting your safe word, or punishing you for using your safe word.
- Enjoys causing you pain during sex.
- Demands or pressures you to have sex after a beating or when you are sick.
- Prevents use from using or sabotages your birth-control method.
- Guilts or manipulates you into having sex.
- Gets you too drunk/high to resist sex.

## REPRODUCTIVE COERSION

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- Destroying or getting rid of birth control
- Messing with birth control
- Intentionally using condom or birth control wrong
- Refusing to use condom or birth control
- Poking holes in condom
- Pulling out too late

- Pressure to get pregnant or have a child
- Threatening to hurt you if you use birth control.
- Threats of acts of violence if you do/don't get pregnant
- Threats of acts of violence if you do/don't get an abortion

## OTHER FORMS OF ABUSE

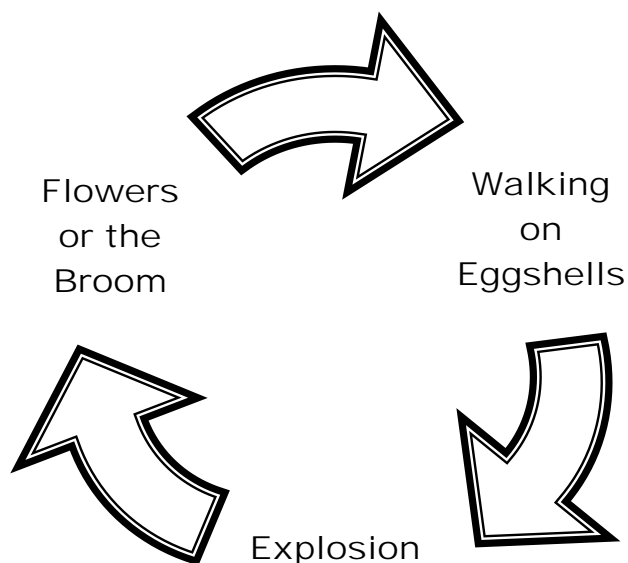
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- Using your addiction or their addiction to manipulate you:
  - o Takes risks while intoxicated endangering you and/or the children.
  - o Tricks or forces you to assist in illegal behaviors.
  - o Threatens to return to alcohol or drug use if you do not met demands.
  - o Blames you for problems caused by their addiction.
  - o Pressures and manipulates you into becoming substance involved.
  - o Threatens to tell others about your addictions. (Especially to police, courts or CPS)

- Uses other systems to manipulate and intimidate you:
  - o Threatens to or takes you into court repeatedly.
  - o Threatens to call or repeatedly reports you to 911, ICE or CPS
  - o Threatens to report you to other authorities such as Housing.
  - o Harasses you at work.
  - o Sabotages your efforts in school.
  - o Accuses you of having addiction when you don't.



## CYCLE OF VIOLENCE



In abusive relationships there is a pattern of behavior. The abuse is rarely a one-time-only event – usually the attacks will increase in number and seriousness.

No matter what you do – the abuser will always find new reasons to explode. The violence isn't about your behavior – it is about the abuser wanting power and control and manipulating you to achieve it.

**Flowers or the Broom:** Following an explosion the abuser may apologize; say "I'm sorry. It will never happen again. I love you;" and make promises, cry or buy of gifts. Or they may just sweep it under the rug, pretending like nothing happened. Either way, the problem is minimized or even entirely denied, and the hope is that this time will be different.

Things are often very good or at least better during this phase – this is the person you love and want to be with – you just want the other phases (the tension building and the abuse) to stop and everything will be ok!

However, this good period can't last because nothing has changed – the same values, thoughts and habits are all still there. Being kind and loving just becomes a different way to control or manipulate you:

- ♦ Their spurts of kindness and generosity help them feel good about their self.
- ♦ They hook you back into the relationship by being warm and trusting – then uses that against you in the future.
- ♦ They use the good periods to shape their public image – making it harder for people to believe you.

**Remorse:** The remorse is often genuine, but what they mostly feel bad about is:

- ♦ They damaged their image in other people's eyes.
- ♦ They feel they should be able to control you without resorting to abuse.
- ♦ They feel entitled to blame their outburst on you, thereby ridding their self of any guilty feelings.

**Tension Building:** Eventually the cycle begins again with tension building, where you feel like you are “walking on eggshells.” No matter what you do, it isn't right. Because it isn't about your behavior – it is about their need for power and control.

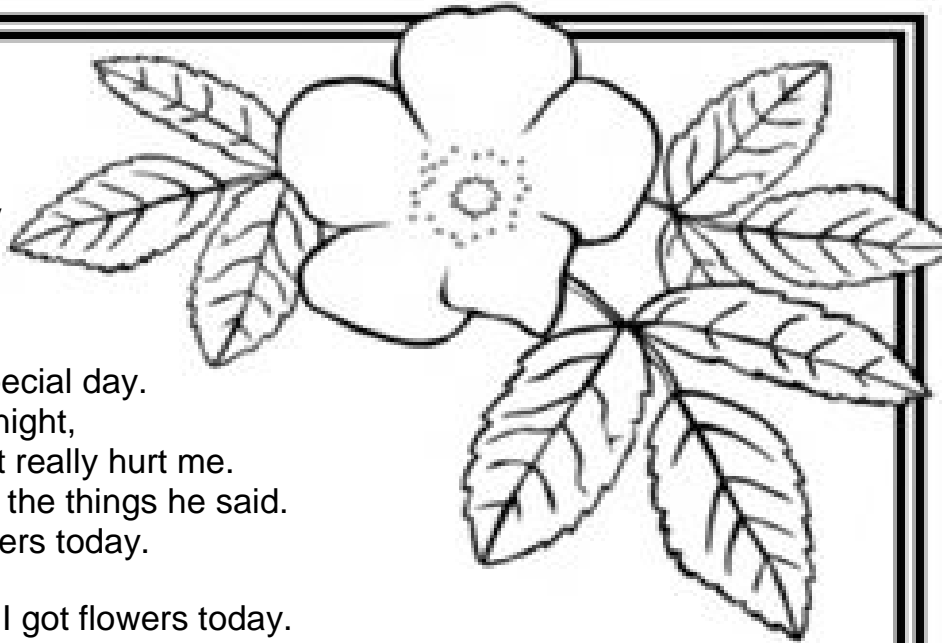
This phase often begins with emotional abuse: belittling, nitpicking, jealousy, threats... and often continues to escalate...

**Explosion:** This is when the tension builds to the assault – this may be emotional, verbal, or physical; or it can take multiple forms at once.

*This cycle often happens over and over again, but no relationship (or abuser) is the same -- for some there may be no flowers stage, only constant walking on eggshells or it may even escalate to perpetual violence.*

No matter the level of violence, there is always some type of behavior at **every** stage that is about gaining and maintaining power and control.

## I Got Flowers Today

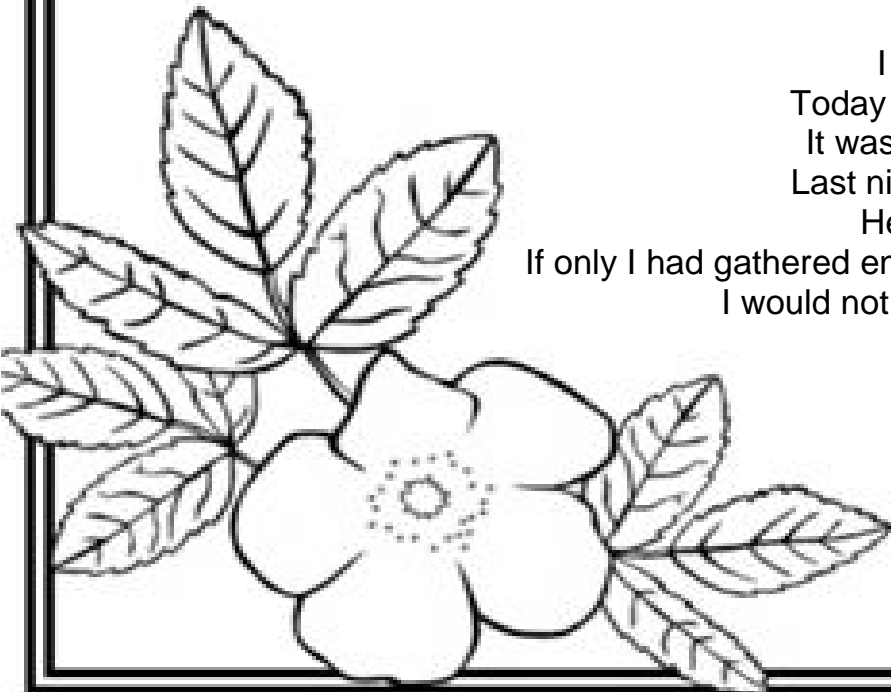


I got flowers today.  
It wasn't my birthday or any other special day.  
We had our first argument last night,  
And he said a lot of cruel things that really hurt me.  
I know he is sorry and didn't mean the things he said.  
Because he sent me flowers today.

I got flowers today.  
It wasn't our anniversary any other special day.  
Last night, he threw me into a wall and started to choke me.  
It seemed like a nightmare.  
I couldn't believe it was real.  
I woke up this morning sore and bruised all over.  
I know he must be sorry.  
Because he sent me flowers today.

I got flowers today,  
and it wasn't Mother's Day or any other special day.  
Last night, he beat me up again.  
And it was much worse than all the other times.  
If I leave him, what will I do?  
How will I take care of my kids?  
What about money?  
I'm afraid of him and scared to leave.  
But I know he must be sorry.  
Because he sent me flowers today.

I got flowers today.  
Today was a very special day.  
It was the day of my funeral.  
Last night, he finally killed me.  
He beat me to death.  
If only I had gathered enough courage and strength to leave him,  
I would not have gotten flowers...today.



## RED FLAGS FOR ABUSIVE PERSONALITY

*In the beginning of a relationship some things can initially feel wonderful and be exciting, or not seem like a big deal, but often as a relationship progresses those little things can become big and scary. It often takes time for their abusive characteristic to be revealed.*

CHARACTERISTIC	FEELS EXCITING OR LIKE NO BIG DEAL	FEELS SCARY
<b>Quick Involvement</b>	Comes on very strong. Seems too good to be true. "I've never felt loved like this by anyone." Pressures for an exclusive commitment almost immediately.	You are suddenly living together, pregnant, married or otherwise intertwined when you start to see the other signs.
<b>Extreme Jealousy</b>	Wants to check on you all the time because they care so much and miss you so much. Shows-up just to surprise you. Says you are so beautiful and attractive they are afraid everyone is after you.	Excessively possessive Stalking Isolation Accusations of affairs.
<b>Controlling Behavior</b> <b>Constant Criticism</b>	"You don't have to worry about anything." "Let me spoil you and make the decisions." Uses flattery to get you to change.	"You can't do anything right" "You can't even make a decision on your own."
<b>Hypersensitivity</b>	Appears assertive & confident in dealing with people and problems. Easily angered by issues at work, or stuff on the news, or little accidents at home. Flies off the handle very quickly.	If you complain about anything, your partner accuses you of nagging or blames you for starting the fight. Their feelings are the ones always hurt.
<b>Lack of Accountability</b> <b>Blames Others</b>	Admits past relationships were bad, but it was because the women were crazy and manipulative or to blame. They've been hurt before. Says "you make me angry" instead of "I am frustrated/angry."	It is always someone else's fault if anything goes wrong; yours, the boss, the bank, the police officer... Blames others for their feelings, their problems, abusive behavior, their addiction...
<b>Entitlement</b> <b>Unrealistic Expectations</b> <b>Rigid Roles</b>	"You are the most amazing/perfect person I have ever met." "I can't live with out you." "You know just want I want and need."	All your time and energy goes into making and keeping your partner happy at the sacrifice of your own wants & needs.
<b>Manipulation</b> <b>Dr. Jekyll &amp; Mr. Hyde</b>	"I've been hurt before, and I don't know if I can trust again." "I'm so sorry, I just had a rough day..." "I was just upset I couldn't see you..." "I was just angry at my ex..."	You feel like everyone else thinks your partner is wonderful. Your partner and/or others blame you for the conflict. You feel like you are imagining it, or are the one going crazy. Your partner accuses you of being crazy, or tells others you are crazy.



<b>Intimidation</b> <b>Threats of Violence</b>	"Playful" use of force in sex. Makes statements like 'I'll break your neck' and then dismisses it with 'everybody talks that way,' or 'you just can't take a joke.'	"You don't want to make me mad..." Cruelty to animals and/or children. "If I can't have you no one else can..." "If you ever leave me, it will be the last thing you do..."
<b>Isolation</b>	"I just want to only be with you." "We don't need anyone else, they don't understand what we have." "They are always interfering with our relationship."	Depriving you of phone/car. Preventing you from holding a job, going to school, family & social functions.

### Other Red Flags:

- **No personal responsibility** - always minimizing ("it wasn't that bad"), denying ("I never did that"), making excuses and blaming others (it's your fault I did that), and justifying ("I have a right to be angry;" "You just don't know how to handle someone being angry.")
- **Prejudices, judgmental of others, and rigid thinking** - strong animosity towards certain groups or types of people, not open to others ideas or opinions, and is demeaning and dismissive to others and their ideas, opinions or feelings.
- **Past Battering** - Admits hitting partners in the past, but says they made them do it or the situation brought it on.

### How do I really know?

- **If it seems to good to be true:**
  - Ask trusted friends and family for their opinion and impressions and be open to their feedback. (But remember sometimes other don't see the things you do.)
  - Trust your own instinct -- is your gut telling you something doesn't feel right?
  - Tell your dating partner you want to take things slow, they should be willing to respect that and not push you to jump into things faster than you feel comfortable.
- **How they woos you in the beginning:**
  -
- **How they use stuff from prior relationships against you:**
  -

**Remember:** *It may take time for abusive characteristics to come out. Just because you didn't see it in the beginning doesn't mean you are bad in relationships, that you always attract partners like that, or that you deserve to be treated that way. It just means that some abusers are very savvy at maintaining a good image in the beginning. If things start to make you uncomfortable, you have the right to make changes if you are not happy with your life or your relationship.*

## FEELINGS, EMOTIONS & TRAUMA

*Experiencing abuse is traumatic and can affect how we feel and how we respond to other people and the world around us. Our responses to abuse help us to survive and cope with the abuse and its traumatic effects, but these same responses can sometimes create obstacles to our safety, well-being, and life goals. Understanding how abuse and trauma have affected us can help us to access safety, heal from the traumatic effects of abuse, and support others to do the same.*

**"We want you to know that whatever you are thinking and feeling, you are welcome here."**

### **If someone is abusing you, you might...**

- Feel scared, hurt, sad, confused, angry, embarrassed, guilty, angry or hopeless
- Feel numb or like you can't feel anything at all
- Feel flooded or overwhelmed with fear, anxiety, or panic
- Feel like you are losing your mind
- Want to run away from or avoid something because it makes you feel scared or reminds you of past abuse
- Use alcohol or other drugs as a way of surviving and coping with the abuse and its traumatic effects
- Be startled easily or feel your heart racing.
- Have lots of aches and pains, or feel like your muscles are often tense.
- Feel like you are spacing out when someone is talking to you
- Feel like it's hard to make decisions or get things done
- Notice that the abuse makes your mental health symptoms worse
- Feel like you don't want to be around other people
- Have a hard time sleeping or feel tired all the time
- Find it difficult just to get out of bed in the morning
- Feel like you don't want to live anymore

**"You are not alone. Many people have feelings like these when they are being abused or after leaving an abusive relationship."**

### **Your abuser may blame you for feeling or acting these ways by...**

- Telling you that you are "crazy"
- Telling you that you are stupid, lazy, or a bad parent
- Telling you that no one will believe what you say
- Telling you that you are the one with the problem

### **Your partner may try to use information about your mental health to convince friends, family, the police, prosecutors, or judges that...**

- You are lying
- You are "crazy"
- You are a bad parent
- You should not have custody of the children
- You were "out of control" and needed to be "restrained"

**"The abuse is not your fault. You deserve to be treated with kindness and respect."**

**"You deserve to be listened to and believed."**

From the National Center on Domestic Violence, Trauma & Mental Health

[www.nationalcenterdvtraumamh.org](http://www.nationalcenterdvtraumamh.org)

**Domestic Violence Services**

**509.582.9841**

800.648.1277

*"No One Deserves to be Abused"*

## Your abuser may also try to prevent you from feeling well by...

- Depriving you of sleep and other basic needs
- Controlling when or how you receive mental health treatment
- Speaking for you or preventing you from talking to doctors or mental health professionals
- Controlling your prescription medications (e.g., by giving you too much or too little)
- Forcing or coercing you to use alcohol or other drugs, controlling your access to alcohol or other drugs, or interfering with substance abuse treatment

**"You have a right to control your own mental health treatment and medications."**

### When you might need extra help coping with feelings and emotions:

- Your attempts to feel better don't help.
- Your thoughts and feelings are affecting your physical health.
- Your thoughts and feelings are affecting your ability to care for yourself or your children.
- You are having thoughts of harming yourself or others
- You are having thoughts of killing yourself.

*If support from family and friends, positive lifestyle changes, and emotional skills building aren't enough, you may want to seek help from a mental health professional.*

### A counselor or mental health professional can help you:

- Come up with plans for solving problems
- Feel stronger in the face of challenges
- Change behaviors that hold you back
- Look at ways of thinking that affect how you feel
- Heal pains from your past
- Figure out your goals
- Build self-confidence

Be sure to find a counselor that is knowledgeable about abuse and trauma. Ask questions about their training and experience. Not all counselors are a good fit for everyone. If you feel like your counselor is not helping, then you have the right to go to another counselor.

#### LOCAL RESOURCES:

Crisis Response Unit: 783-0500

Lourdes Counseling Center: 943-9104

Nueva Esperanza: 545-6506

Grace Clinic (Free services to uninsured): 735-2300

National Suicide Hotline: 800-784-2433

LGBTQQ Focused Suicide: 866-4-U-TREVOR

Assessment Center: 735-2704

Narcotics Anonymous: 546-8244

Catholic Family & Child: 946-4645

Lutheran Community: 735-6446

Tri-City Chaplaincy (Grief counseling): 783-7416

Youth Suicide Prevention: 800-273-8255

Detox Center: 547-9000

Alcoholics Anonymous: 735-4086

*Check out page 25 for tips on "How to Find a Counselor for Your Child" -- the same advice applies to how to find a counselor for yourself!*

# GRIEF

## Grieving is normal following trauma

*Whether or not a traumatic event involves death, survivors must cope with the loss, at least temporarily, of their sense of safety and security. The natural reaction to this loss is grief. Like people who have lost a loved one, trauma survivors go through a grieving process. This process, while inherently painful, is easier if you turn to others for support, take care of yourself, and talk about how you feel.*

### Losses Which are Grieved After an Abusive Relationship Ends

- Independence
- Security
- Intimate Relationship
- Support of Family and Friends
- Social Networks
- Hope
- Belief Systems
- Trust
- The Happy Ending
- The parent they were supposed to be.
- The life your children were supposed to live.
- The future that you will have in an abusive relationship.
- The future you expected to have.
- The way it was.
- The way you wish it had been.
- The person you thought they were.
- The person you expected them to be.
- The relationship you deserved to have.
- The life you were supposed to lead.
- The person that you were before the abuse.
- The person you wish you had been the first time the abuse happened.

### Things that may Help Grief:

- Read and learn about grief. *See the back-side for some basic information.*
- Allow yourself to mourn loss.
- Recognize and acknowledge the emotions. Express them if possible.
- Use ritual as a method for acknowledging and recognizing the grief experience.
- Remember that crying is a normal healthy response to hurting. Tears release a hormone that is relaxing, so each set of tears runs its own course.
- Talk to someone who will listen, be non-judgmental, and who understands your experience of domestic violence.
- Accept that grief can be a long process. It's not possible to wipe away pain and hurt quickly, or in a structured way. Be patient with yourself.
- Mark change or movement since the loss.
- Recognize lessons learned in the experience.
- Don't idolize the violence or abusive relationship.
- Find and practice ways to connect with yourself and to care for yourself.
- If you are finding it hard to make change or movement on your own, please speak with a doctor or a counselor.

## The 5 Stages of Grief:

- Denial: “This can’t be happening to me.”
- Anger: “Why is this happening? Who is to blame?”
- Bargaining: “Make this not happen, and in return I will \_\_\_\_.”
- Depression: “I’m too sad to do anything.”
- Acceptance: “I’m at peace with what happened.”

## Other Stages of Grief:

- Guilt: “I didn’t do enough to prevent this.” “I’m so shamed and embarrassed this happened.”
- Relief: “It’s finally over.”

## Truth about Grief

The same way grief is unique as our fingerprint, how the stages will occur in someone’s life is also unique to them. The stages don’t happen in any specific order; Not everyone goes through all stages; And, we often go through stages multiple times. The stages reflect where we are and identify different emotions that naturally occurs after loss and change.

The emotions are complex -- the stages are general emotions that contain many other emotions. For example, Denial also contains shock. Anger contains rage, bitterness, and annoyance. Bargaining is the “if only’s” and the “what-if’s.” Depression contains sadness, despair, emptiness and yearning. Acceptance just means you acknowledge the reality of the loss. It does not mean you’re okay with it or you like it. Guilt contains shame and embarrassment. Relief contains peace, joy, respite, and liberation.

## Grief can be a Roller Coaster

Instead of a series of stages, we might also think of the grieving process as a roller coaster, full of ups and downs, highs and lows. Like many roller coasters, the ride tends to be rougher in the beginning, and the lows may be deeper and longer. The difficult periods should become less intense and shorter as time goes by, but it takes time to work through a loss. Even years after a loss, especially at special events such as a family wedding or the birth of a child, we may still experience a strong sense of grief.

## Sometimes Grief is Disenfranchised

This means it is not openly acknowledged, not socially validated or not publicly observed. It is the belief that you have no right to grieve that loss or to mourn in that particular way. This may stem from lack of recognition of the relationship, lack of acknowledgement of the loss, or the exclusion of the griever.

## FEELING BETTER & SELF-CARE

*Finding ways to feel better and take care of yourself is an important part of recovering from trauma.*

### Stay Connected

- Following a trauma, you may want to withdraw from others, but isolation makes things worse. **Connecting to others will help you heal**, so make an effort to maintain your relationships and avoid spending too much time alone.
- **Ask for support.** It's important to talk about your feelings and ask for the help you need. Turn to a trusted family member, friend, counselor (who has been trained in trauma & abuse), or religious leader.
- **Participate in social activities**, even if you don't feel like it. Do "normal" things with other people, things that have nothing to do with the traumatic experience. If you've retreated from relationships that were once important to you, make the effort to reconnect.
- **Join a support group.** Being with others who are facing the same problems can help reduce your sense of isolation and hearing how others cope can help inspire you.
- **Volunteer.** As well as helping others, volunteering can be a great way to challenge the sense of helplessness that often accompanies trauma by reminding yourself of your strengths and reclaiming your sense of power.

#### **REMEMBER:**

- Recovering from emotional and psychological trauma takes time.
- Give yourself time to heal and to mourn the losses you've experienced.
- Don't try to force the healing process.
- Be patient with the pace of recovery.
- Finally, be prepared for difficult and volatile emotions.
- Allow yourself to feel whatever you're feeling without judgment or guilt.

### Stay Grounded

- **Stick to a daily routine**, with regular times for waking, sleeping, eating, working, and exercise. Make sure to schedule time for relaxing and social activities, too.
- **Break large jobs into smaller, manageable tasks.** Take pleasure from the accomplishment of achieving something, even it's a small thing.
- **Find activities that make you feel better** and keep your mind occupied (reading, taking a class, cooking, playing with your kids or pets), so you're not dedicating all your energy and attention to focusing on the traumatic experience.
- **Allow yourself to feel what you feel when you feel it.** Acknowledge your feelings about the trauma as they arise and accept them. Accepting your feelings is part of the grieving process and is necessary for healing.

#### **Try this...**

*If you are feeling disoriented, confused, or upset, you can do the following exercise:*

1. Sit on a chair. Feel your feet on the ground. Press on your thighs. Feel your behind on the seat and your back against the chair.
2. Look around you and pick six objects that have red or blue. This should allow you to feel in the present, more grounded, and in your body. Notice how your breath gets deeper and calmer.
3. You may want to go outdoors and find a peaceful place to sit on the grass. As you do, feel how your body can be held and supported by the ground.

## **Stay Healthy**

*A healthy body increases your ability to cope with stress from a trauma.*

- **Get plenty of sleep.** After a traumatic experience, worry or fear may disturb your sleep patterns. A lack of sleep can make your trauma symptoms worse and make it harder to maintain your emotional balance. Go to sleep and get up at the same time each day and aim for 7 to 9 hours of sleep each night.
- **Avoid alcohol and drugs** as their use can worsen your trauma symptoms and exacerbate feelings of depression, anxiety, and isolation.
- **Exercise regularly.** Regular exercise boosts serotonin, endorphins, and other feel-good brain chemicals. It also boosts self-esteem and helps to improve sleep. For maximum results, aim for 30 to 60 minutes of activity on most days.
- **Eat a well-balanced diet.** Eating small, well-balanced meals throughout the day will help you keep your energy up and minimize mood swings. While you may be drawn to sugary foods for the quick boost they provide, complex carbohydrates are a better choice. Foods rich in certain omega-3 fats—such as salmon, walnuts, soybeans, and flaxseeds—can give your mood a boost.
- **Reduce stress.** Making time for rest and relaxation will help you bring your life back into balance. Try relaxation techniques such as meditation, yoga, or deep breathing exercises. Schedule time for activities that bring you joy—favorite hobbies or activities with friends, for example.

### **Things that can make it worse:**

*It is natural to want to find a way to make ourselves feel good, but when we do something too much it can sometimes have its own negative effects.*

- Substance abuse
- Gambling
- Eating disorders (including overeating)
- Compulsive spending or shoplifting
- Excessive working out
- Sexually risk-taking
- Cutting or self-harm

## **SELF-SOOTHING TECHNIQUES**

*Many of us have never learned how to self-soothe, how to do those often simple things that makes us feel better. Experiment with different techniques of soothing each of your five senses until you find some that are comfortable and helpful for you.*

- VISION:** Walk in a pretty part of town. Look at the nature around you. Go to a museum with beautiful art. Buy a flower and put it where you can see it. Sit in a garden. Watch the snowflakes decorate the trees during a snowfall.
- HEARING:** Listen to beautiful or soothing music, or to tapes of the ocean or other sounds of nature. Sit by a waterfall. Listen to someone chopping wood. When you are listening, be mindful, letting the sounds come and go.
- SMELL:** Smell breakfast being cooked at home or in a restaurant. Notice all the different smells around you. Walk in a garden or in the woods, maybe just after a rain, and breathe in the smells of nature. Light a scented candle or incense.
- TASTE:** Have a special treat, and eat it slowly, savoring each bite. Cook a favorite meal. Drink a soothing drink like herbal tea or hot chocolate. Let the taste run over your tongue and slowly down your throat.
- TOUCH:** Take a bubble bath. Pet your dog or cat or cuddle a baby. Put on a silk shirt or blouse, and feel its softness and smoothness. Sink into a really comfortable bed. Float or swim in a pool, and feel the water caress your body.

## BUILDING SELF ESTEEM

### Things You Can Do Right Away—Every Day—to Raise Your Self-esteem

- Pay attention to your own needs and wants.
- Take time to do things you enjoy.
- Get something done that you have been putting off.
- Do things that make use of your own special talents and abilities.
- Dress in clothes that make you feel good about yourself.
- Give yourself rewards
- Spend time with people who make you feel good about yourself— people who treat you well. Avoid people who treat you badly.
- Make your living space a place that honors the person you are.
- Begin doing those things that you know will make you feel better about yourself—like eating healthy, beginning an exercise program or keeping your living space clean.
- Do something nice for another person.
- Make it a point to treat yourself well every day.

### Get rid of negative self-talk

You may think these thoughts or give yourself these negative messages so often that you are hardly aware of them. Pay attention to them. Carry a small pad with you as you go about your daily routine for several days and jot down negative thoughts about yourself whenever you notice them.

Ask yourself the following questions about each negative thought you have noticed:

- Is this message really true?
- Would I say this to another person? If not, why am I saying it to myself?
- What do I get out of thinking this thought? If it makes me feel badly about myself, why not stop thinking it?

You can work on changing your negative thoughts to positive ones by —

- Replacing the negative thought with the positive one every time you realize you are thinking the negative thought.
- Repeating your positive thought over and over to yourself, out loud whenever you get a chance and even sharing them with another person if possible.
- Writing them over and over.
- Making signs that say the positive thought, hanging them in places where you would see them often-like on your refrigerator door or on the mirror in your bathroom-and repeating the thought to yourself several times when you see it.
- Also try thinking of where that negative voice comes from, who use to say those things to you and when you first hear that voice. Name them out loud. Now when you hear that voice in your head you tell yourself : "That's not me!" "I choose not to listen to them any more."



You can also fold a piece of paper in half to make two columns, use one side to write negative thoughts and the other side to write the corresponding positive thought. For example:

<u>Negative Thought</u>	<u>Positive Thought</u>
I am not worth anything.	I am a valuable person.
I have never accomplished anything.	I have accomplished many things.
I always make mistakes.	I do many things well.
I am a jerk.	I am a great person.
I don't deserve a good life.	I deserve to be happy and healthy.
I am stupid.	I am smart.

Now try to write two positive thoughts for each negative thought!

It helps to reinforce the positive thought if you repeat it over and over to yourself when you are deeply relaxed, like when you are doing a deep-breathing or relaxation exercise, or when you are just falling asleep or waking up.

Changing the negative thoughts you have about yourself to positive ones takes time and persistence. If you use the following techniques consistently for four to six weeks, you will notice that you don't think these negative thoughts about yourself as much. If they recur at some other time, you can repeat these activities. Don't give up. You deserve to think good thoughts about yourself.

### **Make affirming lists**

Making lists, rereading them often, and rewriting them from time to time will help you to feel better about yourself. If you have a journal, you can write your lists there. If you don't, any piece of paper will do.

Make a list of —

- At least five of your strengths, for example, persistence, courage, friendliness, creativity
- At least five things you admire about yourself, for example the way you have raised your children, your good relationship with your brother, or your spirituality
- The five greatest achievements in your life so far, like recovering from a serious illness, graduating from high school, or learning to use a computer
- At least 20 accomplishments - they can be as simple as learning to tie your shoes, to getting an advanced college degree
- 10 ways you can "treat" or reward yourself that don't include food and that don't cost anything, such as walking in woods, window-shopping, watching children playing on a playground, gazing at a baby's face or at a beautiful flower, or chatting with a friend
- 10 things you can do to make yourself laugh
- Advice or words of wisdom you would give to a friend.
- Things you are grateful for -- in fact, you can create a whole separate gratitude journal!

## DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND DRUG & ALCOHOL USE

*Many survivors facing issues of domestic violence also face issues of around drug or alcohol use: their own or their partner's. Survivors may turn to drugs and alcohol as a way to cope with the pain and trauma, or may start to become addicted to or misuse the medication prescribed to treat the pain or injuries cause by the abuse. Additionally, the effects of victimization (feelings of guilt, shame, powerlessness, depression) can set a survivors up to fall further into a cycle of substance abuse.*

How an Abuser's Use Affects Risk	How a Survivor's Use Affects Risk
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More willing to use violence when using.</li> <li>• Takes risks while intoxicated - endangering themselves, you and/or the children.</li> <li>• Tricks or forces you to assist in illegal or dangerous behaviors.</li> <li>• Blames you for problems caused by his/her addiction.</li> <li>• Pressures and manipulates you into becoming substance involved.</li> <li>• Uses sobriety as a bargaining chip -- threatens to return to alcohol or drug use if you do not met demands.</li> <li>• Uses addiction as an excuse for the violence and abuse -- and many people and systems believe this excuse!</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May be less able to remember your safety plan when you use.</li> <li>• Your partner may facilitate your use as a way to keep you compliant.</li> <li>• May be more likely to be arrested because of drug use or drug related crimes.</li> <li>• May be judged more harshly by other systems such as police, courts and CPS because of your use.</li> <li>• Batterer may coerce you by threatening to tell others about your addictions. (Especially to police, courts or CPS)</li> <li>• Others may be more focused on your use than your experience of violence and abuse.</li> </ul>

### **How recovery can be used as a weapon by an abuser:**

- Your partner threatens to return to alcohol or drug use if you do not meet demands.
- Your partner places limits on your recovery -- not allowing you to go to meetings, only allowing you to attend meetings with them, limiting access to support people, or stalking or harassing you at meetings.

### **Relapse Prevention / Safety Planning**

- List people, places and things that help you stay safe and clean (including phone numbers and helplines).
- List people, places and things to avoid if you are trying to stay safe & clean.
- If you must be exposed to people, places and things that are dangerous or triggers for you, list what you can do to increase support for your safety and sobriety.
- If you are going to use, make plans for children, safety, housing, safe sex, and things that may reduce harm.

### **Myths about Drug & Alcohol Use:**

-



**UNHEALTHY RELATIONSHIP****HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP****Coercion and Threats:**

- ◆ Making and/or carrying out threats to do something to hurt you.
- ◆ Threatening to leave you, commit suicide, report you to CPS.
- ◆ Making you drop charges.

**Negotiation and Fairness:**

- ◆ Making you do illegal things.
- ◆ Being willing to compromise.
- ◆ Accepting change
- ◆ Seeking mutually satisfying resolutions to conflict.

**Intimidation:**

- ◆ Making you afraid by using looks, actions, and gestures.
- ◆ Smashing things. Destroying your property.
- ◆ Abusing pets.
- ◆ Displaying weapons.

**Non-threatening behavior**

- ◆ Feeling safe to be yourself.
- ◆ Talking and acting so that you feel safe expressing yourself and doing thing.
- ◆ Doesn't try to control your life.

**Emotional abuse:**

- ◆ Putting you down. Calling you names.
- ◆ Making you feel bad about yourself.
- ◆ Making you think or feel crazy.
- ◆ Making you feel guilty.

**Respect**

- ◆ Listening to you non-judgmentally.
- ◆ Being understanding.
- ◆ Values your opinions.

**Isolation:**

- ◆ Controlling what you do, who you see, and who you talk to, what you read, where you go.
- ◆ Limiting your involvement with friends or activities.
- ◆ Using jealousy to justify isolating behavior.

**Trust and support**

- ◆ Supports your goals.
- ◆ Able to have a life outside of the relationship.
- ◆ Respecting your rights to your own feelings, friends, activities and opinion.

**Minimizing, denying and blaming:**

- ◆ Making light of the abuse.
- ◆ Not taking your concerns seriously.
- ◆ Saying the abuse didn't happen or is your fault.

**Honesty and Accountability**

- ◆ Accepts responsibility for abusive behavior.
- ◆ Acknowledge their past use of violence.
- ◆ Communicates openly and truthfully.

**Using children:**

- ◆ Making you feel guilty about the children.
- ◆ Using the children to relay messages.
- ◆ Using visitation to harass you.
- ◆ Threatening to take the children away.

**Responsible Parenting**

- ◆ Shares parental responsibility.
- ◆ Is a positive non-violent role model for the children.

**Economic Abuse:**

- ◆ Preventing you from getting or keeping a job.
- ◆ Making you ask for or taking your money.
- ◆ Spending family money recklessly.
- ◆ Not letting you know about or have access to family income.

**Economic Partnership**

- ◆ Making money decisions together.
- ◆ Ability to talk about money openly and honestly.
- ◆ Making sure you both benefit from financial arrangements.

**Male Privilege:**

- ◆ Treating you like a servant.
- ◆ Making all the big decisions.
- ◆ Acting like "master of the house."

**Shared Responsibility**

- ◆ Mutually agreeing on distribution of household duties.
- ◆ Making family decisions together.

<b>Dysfunctional Families</b>	<b>Functional Families</b>
◆ Out of touch with most feelings. Don't feel!	◆ Sensitive to feelings in self and others.
◆ Lack of honest communication with self and others.	◆ Honest open talk.
◆ Child's well-being rarely considered.	◆ Child's well-being promoted
◆ Treatment of the child by the parent is rarely consistent.	◆ Treatment of the child by the parent is consistent.
◆ Behavior of parents is unpredictable.	◆ Behavior of parents is somewhat predictable.
◆ The household if often chaos.	◆ The household is only occasionally chaotic.
◆ Children are forced into parenting role while still very small because parents are physically or emotionally unavailable or extremely needy. Children are cheated out of a childhood.	◆ Children are children and the parents are parents.
◆ Unrealistic, inflexible, cruel rules often govern the household.	◆ Realistic, flexible, human rules govern the house.
◆ There is a lack of boundaries	◆ Boundaries are well developed.

## IMPACT OF ABUSER BEHAVIOR ON YOUR PARENTING

Your partner's behavior may be affecting your ability to parent by undermining your authority and damaging the relationship between you and your child. Children learn from the abusive man's behavior that disrespecting you is acceptable. This behavior can destroy any source of strength, pride or self-confidence that you have in your ability to parent. It also ensures that the abuser maintains control of the home and is the primary influence on family members.

- Does your partner overrule you?
- Does your partner make jokes / tease / put you down in front of children?
- Does your partner interfere with your parenting?
- Does your partner reward the children for inappropriate behavior toward you?
- Does your partner forbid you to go to the aid of your child?
- Does your partner punish the children when mad at you?
- Does your partner play favorites between the children?
- Does your partner sabotage your relationship with your children?
- Do your children act as if they don't respect you?
- Do your children ignore limits you attempt to set for them?
- Is your partner rude or domineering to you in front of the children?
- Does your partner overrule or undercut your parenting decisions?
- Does your partner think you are not a very good mother, especially when it comes to big or tense issues?
- To control your children, do you have to threaten to tell their other parent what they did?
- Do your children listen to their father more than they listen to you?

### **You have the right to fully equal say over how your children are to be raised, including:**

- What style of discipline they will experience.
- What their routines will be.
- What freedoms they will be permitted.
- How they are allowed to express their emotions.
- What people they can spend time with, including your friends and relatives.
- What schools and religious institutions they will attend.
- What types of extracurricular activities they can participate in.
- How to approach every other aspect of the complex and highly demanding process of deciding how best to help children flourish.

## IMPACT OF ABUSER BEHAVIOR ON CHILDREN

**Even if the child has not directly witnessed abuse, almost all children know that the violence is going on in their home and are affected by it in some way.**

There are lots of things we can do to help children when they have witnessed domestic violence. It is normal for people who have been in a violent relationship to NOT want to talk to their kids about it. It is difficult to realize that your children are aware of the violence and are impacted by it. It may seem like not talking about it will help them forget it happened. But not talking about the violence often causes kids to be more confused and scared.

### **How to Talk to Kids about Domestic Violence:**

- ♦ Be patient. Don't push it. Try another time if they don't want to talk/listen.
- ♦ Talk about it at a time when you are both relaxed and won't be interrupted.
- ♦ Remember that you are helping them by talking about it; you are not making it worse.
- ♦ Listen. Stay Calm. Pay attention to your non-verbal cues when you talk to your children (how you face and body express your feelings).

When you talk to your kids about the violence you might find out they have been more affected than you were aware of. It is not easy to hear about your children's bad feelings and fears. Most parents feel responsible and that they have not been a good parent. Remember that you are doing the best thing you can do right now to help them recover.

### **Know that when you talk to your children about the violence you are helping them to:**

- ♦ Feel safer.
- ♦ Learn that violence isn't their fault.
- ♦ Learn that violence is not the way to solve problems.
- ♦ Feel cared for and understood.
- ♦ Learn that it is OK to talk about their feelings.

*It is a lot scarier for kids when no one ever talks to them about the violence.*

### **Resiliency**

Most children are very resilient, meaning they can recover naturally with help from their mother and from other supportive, non-violent people in their lives, rather than professionals.

### **When to Get Counseling for Your Child**

If you notice any of the reactions listed below in your children lasting for an extended period of time without improvement, or if they have extreme changes in behavior, it may be necessary to seek counseling for them:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| ♦ Withdrawing                                     | ♦ Running away from home                            |
| ♦ Bullying, threatening or intimidating others    | ♦ Intentionally hurting her/himself                 |
| ♦ Initiating physical fights                      | ♦ Having frequent nightmares for a prolonged period |
| ♦ Using a weapon                                  | ♦ Showing a sudden change in behavior/personality   |
| ♦ Being physically or emotionally cruel to people | ♦ Changes in eating/sleeping patterns               |
| ♦ Being cruel to animals                          | ♦ Showing lack of interest in friends/school/etc.   |
| ♦ Deliberately destroying others' property        | ♦ Grades change at school.                          |

### How to Find a Counselor for Your Child:

- ♦ Ask for recommendations or referrals from others that you trust.
- ♦ Ask what licenses the counselor has and what their training and experience is in working with children.
- ♦ Ask what their approach to treatment is and take some time to learn about that approach to decide if you think it would be helpful for your child.
- ♦ A counselor should be an ally with the parent and help strength the child's support, not try to replace you or other supportive adults.
- ♦ A counselor should help families in learning skills and taking actions that create positive change, not blame the child, family, school or other for issues.
- ♦ A counselor should understand and respect your culture, and be willing to build on how your culture can help strengthen your child.
- ♦ Not all counselors are a fit for every person. If the counselor can't seem to build a rapport with your child or your child isn't engaging with the counselor, find another that works.

<b>DIFFERENT TYPES OF PROFESSIONALS</b>
<p><b>Psychiatrists:</b> These are doctors who specialize in the diagnosis and treatment of mental or psychiatric illnesses. They have medical training and are licensed to prescribe drugs. They are also trained in psychotherapy, or "talk" therapy, which aims to change a person's behaviors or thought patterns.</p>
<p><b>Psychologists:</b> These are doctoral degree (PhD or PsyD) experts in psychology. They study the human mind and human behavior and are also trained in counseling, psychotherapy, and psychological testing -- which can help uncover emotional problems you may not realize you have.</p> <p>Cognitive behavioral therapy is the psychologist's main treatment tool -- to help people identify and change inaccurate perceptions that they may have of themselves and the world around them. Psychologists are not licensed to prescribe medications. However, they can refer you to a psychiatrist if necessary.</p>
<p><b>Social Workers:</b> These are specialists that provide social services in health-related settings that now are governed by managed care organizations. Their goal is to enhance and maintain a person's psychological and social functioning -- they provide empathy and counseling on interpersonal problems. Social workers help people function at their best in their environment, and they help people deal with relationships and solve personal and family problems.</p>
<p><b>Licensed Professional Counselors.</b> These counselors are required by state licensure laws to have at least a master's degree in counseling and 3,000 hours of post-master's experience. They are either licensed or certified to independently diagnose and treat mental and emotional disorders.</p>



## HELPING CHILDREN DEVELOP IN HEALTHY WAYS

Even though your children may have been affected by domestic violence, they can recover and be emotionally healthy, especially if they receive encouragement and support in the following ways:

1. **Encourage your children:** Notice your children's positive qualities and let them know that you appreciate these.
2. **Set clear limits:** Set limits that are reasonable and appropriate to your children's ages, to help them feel valued and secure.
3. **Set routines and structure:** Children thrive in structured homes, where there is set meal times, play times and bed times. It helps them feel safe and secure.
4. **Listen carefully:** Pay attention to what your children say, and let them know you hear what they are saying.
5. **Be affectionate:** Hug, kiss, pat, and smile at your children. Tell them you care for them.
6. **Allow them to solve problems:** Encourage your children to solve problems and make some decisions for themselves.
7. **Communicate respectfully:** Share your feelings, expectations and needs with your children in a way that is respectful.
8. **Promote independence:** Allow your children to play independently in a safe environment.
9. **Spend time with your kids:** Reading together, talking and listening, or playing together helps children feel cared for.
10. **Arrange for new activities in which your child can succeed:** Set up new activities for your children that they enjoy, like playing on a sports team, or taking music lessons, so that your children learn new skills and gain self-confidence.
11. **Be a positive, non-violent role model for your children:** Maintaining safe, reliable interactions with your children can help them develop self-esteem.
12. **Let your children know they are capable:** Allow your children to have responsibilities and let them know you have confidence in them.
13. **Let your children know they are worthy of love** just for who they are, and not related to their behavior: Tell them you like them, enjoy them, and appreciate them.

Often you may see an increase acting out or misbehavior after you are separated from your partner.

Throwing tantrums or having "fits" are a natural emotional healing process in children. Crying, especially loud sobbing with lots of tears, is a form of release and healing for feelings of grief or fear.

While this may be overwhelming, take pride in the fact that you have created a safe environment for your children to finally have the freedom to express all their emotions, both good and bad.

### How to Assist Children in Releasing Painful Emotions

- Offer loving attention and name what the child is feeling.
- Keep child safe – away from hazards. Hold the child if it helps them feel more secure.
- Express love, and let them see you are not afraid.
- Do not permit child to break things, throw things or hit anyone. Provide safe items to hit or kick such a pillow.
- Allow tantrum to go on until it ends by itself.
- Lovingly refuse to give into demands.
- Children may cry after the source of distress has passed because it is only then that they are safe to release the fear.

This section is from the book *Why Does He Do That* by Lundy Bancroft.

**The gender language has intentionally been left as it was written by Mr. Bancroft, but the dynamics of abuser behavior explained below can be the same regardless of the gender of an abuser or a survivor.**

*For more information, visit his website at <http://lundybancroft.blogspot.com/>*

## MYTHS, EXCUSES, AND REALITY

### Men abuse because it works!

Abuser's behavior is driven by their values of entitlement and privilege. They learn that they can ensure that their feelings and needs are always the focus in the relationship by using tactics of power and control.

### Why does he do that?

Battering is a choice. Just like they chose not to abuse their bosses, neighbors, pastor, friends, or other family members, they chose to abuse their partners because they get what they want when they do it.

### Myths & Excuses about Battering:

Both abusers and many other people blame victims and make excuses for the abuser's behavior.

#### He is angry.

*If a man had an "anger control problem" he wouldn't be able to reserve that side for his partner only.*

#### He was drunk or wasted.

*Even while intoxicated, abusers continue to make choices about their actions; other wise everyone who drank or used would be abusive. Abusiveness and addiction are two distinct problems requiring separate solutions.*

#### He can't handle stress.

*Abusers can be very popular, successful, and have a lot of power in their jobs. For those that aren't, rarely does their behavior improve because their life situation has improved. Everyone has stress in their life, but not everyone chooses to abuse because of it.*

#### He is insecure.

*This myth is rewarding for an abuser, because it gets his partner, his therapists, and others to cater to him emotionally, and the more positive attention he receives the more he demands.*

#### He was provoked.

*Abusive men often have a distorted view of themselves as victims. This serves the purpose of redirecting the focus from their behavior by blaming the victim.*

#### He lost control.

*While a man is on an abusive rampage, verbally or physically, his mind maintains awareness of some level of what would look bad, get him in trouble, or hurt himself or his valuables which demonstrates a large level of control. An abuser's problem is not that he loses control of himself, but that he takes control of his partner*

### Will he ever stop?

Abusive men can change *if* they want to; *if* they recognize that their behavior is wrong, and that their belief that they have the right to control their partner through abuse is wrong. However, few men are willing to do this.

### Why does he stay the same?

Because he benefits from being the one in power and having control:

- He gets to have his way without compromise.
- He has someone to blame for his problems.
- He has someone to care for him & do all the work.
- He gets public status of partner and/or fatherhood without sacrifice.
- He is often in a better financial position
- He gets to be the center of attention.
- His careers, education or goals are the priority.
- He is exempt from the rules that apply to his partner.
- People are often supportive of his abusive attitudes.

### Will therapy help?

Abusers who do participate in individual therapy typically get worse as they use therapy to:

- Develop new excuses for their behavior.
- Develop more sophisticated arguments to prove that their partner is mentally unstable.
- Develop more creative ways to make her feel responsible for their emotional distress.

In addition, many therapists guide abusers in identifying and expressing feelings which feeds the abusers selfish focus on himself.

### Will medication help?

There is no particular mental health condition that is typical of abusers and some abusers perform normally in clinical evaluation and psychological tests. Some abusers may have a mental health diagnosis but it is their value system that is unhealthy not their psychology.

If they do have a mental health diagnosis, abuser behavior may improve for a while as a result of taking medication prescribed by a psychiatrist but typically this may only stop the most devastating or terrifying behavior but not his overall abusiveness.

### Will couples counseling help?

Domestic violence is a criminal act, not a marital problem. We do not recommend couples counseling because the behavior is solely the responsibility of the abusive person, only he alone is capable of changing it.

Couples counseling may have the following unintended effects:

- Allowing the abuser to stay focused on his criticisms of his partner, rather than dealing with his own problems
- Leading to retaliation by the abuser for the victim revealing information during a session,
- Ignoring the denial, minimization and deception of the abuser.
- Ignoring the victim's rights in a relationship.
- Increasing the victim's sense of isolation if the abuse is kept hidden.
- Implying that the victim has responsibility for seeing that her abuser gets help.

Violent behavior must be addressed and stopped before couples counseling takes place.

### What will help?

Anger management does not address flawed attitudes and beliefs that reinforce abusive behavior.

Perpetrator treatment is a 12 month program that promotes a change in belief system which supports the use of non-violence in intimate relationships, holds the abuser accountable for all abusive behaviors, confronts denial, minimization and victim blaming, and helps to develop non-violent, non-controlling relationship skills.

**Domestic Violence Services**

**509.582.9841**

800.648.1277

*“No One Deserves to be Abused”*

## SAFETY PLANNING

1. Keep an emergency 911 cell phone hidden and charged. DVS can provide one for free.
2. Consider friends and/or neighbors you can tell about the abuse and violence.
3. If safe, keep documentation about abuse. Such as a written diary, photos of injuries or property destruction, save voicemails, copies of e-mails, copies of medical reports.
4. Trust your own judgment and instincts. You know what has worked before, what hasn't worked, and how your partner might react to something.
5. Talk to someone when you feel down. Attend support groups or counseling to strengthen your relationships with other people.
6. Remember, you cannot stop your partner's abuse, but you can find help and support for yourself. No one deserves to be abused.

*If you are leaving, your and your children's life and safety are most important; everything else is secondary.*

7. Ask yourself:
  - ✓ How and when can I leave most safely?
  - ✓ Who can I trust to tell that I am leaving?
  - ✓ Would a protection order (restraining order) help?
  - ✓ How can I be safe traveling to/from work or the children's school?
  - ✓ What important phone numbers do I need? Shelter? Friends? Family? Schools?
  - ✓ Where can I go? Friends? Family? Shelter?
8. Set up a routine where it is normal for you to leave for a short time.
9. Have extra money and sets of car keys, clothes, copies of important papers with friends or relatives.
10. Keep change for phone calls with you, possibly open a savings account, rehearse your escape route with a support person, and review your safety plan periodically.
11. If possible, think about taking the following with you when you leave:
 

__ Birth certificates	__ Medications	__ Divorce papers
__ Social security cards	__ Copy of Protection Order	__ Insurance papers
__ School & medical records	__ Welfare identification	__ Address book
__ Money, bank books, credit cards	__ Passports, green cards, work permits	
__ Keys-house, car, office	__ Lease/rental agreement	
__ Driver's license & registration		

**CAUTION – Often it can get worse when you try to leave** or show signs of independence (like going to school or filing for divorce). The batterer may become desperate. Be careful.

*After you or your partner has left, consider:*

12. Change the locks, install dead bolts on doors, outside lighting, or a security system.
13. Tell neighbors or landlord that your partner no longer lives with you and ask if they will call police if they are observed around your home.
14. Tell the people who care for your children. Give names of those who have permission to pick them up from school or activities, and give copies of any protection orders you have.
15. Tell someone at work, give photo and/or copy of protection order to your supervisor or security, ask someone to screen your calls. Have your name removed from automated phone directories.
16. Use different stores, banks etc.

## HELPFUL RESOURCES:

### Domestic Violence Services of Benton & Franklin Counties:

- 24 hour crisis number and shelter .....582-9841 or 1-800-648-1277
- DVS & Richland Police Dept. Legal Advocate (*bi-lingual*) .....947-6222 or 735-1295
- DVS & Kennewick Police Dept. Legal Advocate .....582-1391 or 378-2558
- Rural Advocate .....
- Housing Advocate.....
- CSO Advocate ..... 736-2855
- Business office ..... 735-1295

### Legal Assistance:

- CLEAR – free legal advice .....1-888-201-1014
- Benton County Family Court Facilitator ..... located at 7320 W. Quinalt (Courthouse)
- Franklin County Family Court Facilitator ..... 1016 N. 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Pasco (Courthouse)
- Mary Santoy, DV Advocate.....735-3591 or 544-3080 x6040
- Benton County Superior Court ..... 735-8388
- Benton County District Court ..... 735-8476
- Franklin County Superior Court ..... 545-3525
- Franklin County District Court ..... 545-3593

### Child & Family Counselors in the Mid-Columbia:

- Catholic Family & Child Services\* ..... 946-4645
- Lourdes Counseling Center\* ..... 943-9104
- Nueva Esperanza\* ..... 545-6506
- Grace Clinic .....
- Leila Frech (bi-lingual) ..... 783-3332

\* *accepts medicaid*

### Additional Services:

- Crisis Response ..... 783-0500
- Community Information Line .....211  
*Refers to a variety of help resources and services*
- DSHS Child Support Enforcement 374-2000
- Department of Children & Family Services ..... 737-2800
- Support Advocacy Resource Center (SARC) ..... 374-5391
- Benton-Franklin Health Department
  - Kennewick ..... 586-0207
  - Pasco ..... 547-9794
  - Richland ..... 943-2614
- Alcohol and Drug Help Line.....1-800-662-4357
- Child Protective Services .....1-800-562-5624  
*To report child abuse or neglect*
- Department of Human Services .....  
*Assistance with housing and referrals*
- Food Banks
  - Kennewick ..... 586-0688
  - Richland ..... 943-2795
  - Benton City ..... 588-5454

## WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP?

You might think that something as simple as talking to a friend about abuse couldn't possibly make a difference, but it really does.

If you think a friend or loved one is being abused, talk to them about it. Listen to them. Let them know you care. You don't have to be an expert. You just need to be a friend. Just knowing that someone cares enough to ask about the abuse can break through the wall of isolation that can exist around victims of relationship abuse.

### What if They Decide to Remain in the Relationship?

Sometimes it can be frustrating when a friend returns to a batterer or stays in an abusive relationship. It is important to understand that there are many reasons for these decisions.

Just like ending any relationship is a process, leaving an abusive relationship takes time.

In many cases, the victim fears for their life. They may also want the children to grow up with both parents, and feel guilty, believing that the abuse is their fault. Sometimes a victim's self-esteem is so damaged by the abuse that they think they can't make it on their own. Or they may just want the violence to end, not the relationship.

Whatever the reason for their decision to stay in the relationship, there are many ways you can help.

- **Listen, without judging.** Often a victim believes their abuser's negative messages about themselves. They may feel responsible, ashamed, inadequate and afraid they will be judged by you. Telling the victim what to do can be just as controlling as the abuser, and often leaving is more dangerous than staying.
- **Tell them the abuse is not their fault.** Explain that violence in a relationship is never acceptable. There's no excuse for it – not alcohol or drugs, financial pressure, depression, jealousy or any behavior of the victim.
- **Be honest and supportive.** Tell your friend you are afraid for them and their children. Tell your friend you want to help, but don't pressure your friend to leave. Avoid language like “You need to...” “You should...” “Why don't you...” “You have to...”
- **Make sure your friend knows they are not alone.** If and when they wants help, it is available. Let them know that domestic violence tends to get worse and become more frequent with time and that it rarely goes away on its own.
- **Explain that relationship abuse is a crime,** and that they can seek protection from the police or courts.
- **Suggest that they develop a safety plan in case of emergency.**
- **Think about ways you might feel comfortable helping them.** If they decides to leave the relationship, they may need money, assistance finding a place to live, a place to store their belongings or a ride to a domestic violence shelter.
- **Get advice.** If you want to talk with someone yourself, to get advice about a particular situation, contact DVS at 582-9841.