

Guide to Domestic Violence

Domestic violence, also known as relationship violence, spousal abuse, or intimate partner violence, is often defined as any sort of abuse that occurs between romantic or sexual partners. However, the term “domestic violence” can also include abuse directed at any members of a shared household. This includes elder abuse and child abuse. Domestic violence can happen to anyone, regardless of gender, age, sexual orientation, ethnicity, or cultural background.

What Is Domestic Violence?

Domestic violence is a pattern of abuse of a romantic partner or household member. It takes many forms, but the basis of this type of abuse is the use of violence to control the victim. This might be through overt physical violence or through tactics of isolation and manipulation. Very often, a perpetrator will use multiple abusive behaviors to control the object of their abuse. They might alienate their target from family and friends, make them financially dependent upon the abuser, cause the target to doubt their own worthiness or competency, or use violence or threats of violence against their target and/or their target's loved ones.

[The Legal Definition of Domestic Violence](#): The United States Department of Justice website outlines what is legally defined as domestic violence: any pattern of behavior intended to control or manipulate a partner or member of a household. Their list includes categories of abuse and specific examples of each.

[Domestic Violence Against Men](#): This Mayo Clinic article describes what abuse against men may look like. It includes details regarding heterosexual, gay, bisexual, and transgender men's experiences of domestic violence.

[Domestic Violence Against Women](#): In addition to defining and detailing women-specific facets of domestic violence, this site also offers data on long-term effects of abuse on women and children in abusive households.

[Domestic Violence in Families With Children](#): This page created by the American Academy of Family Physicians explains how domestic violence can harm entire families, particularly those with young or dependent children. It describes what signs to look for in children who are suspected of having suffered abuse.

[Domestic Violence Demographics](#): Read this collection of data and statistics to learn about rates of domestic violence affecting individuals of different racial identities and ethnicities.

[Differing Rates and Types of Domestic Violence by Ethnicity and Sexuality](#): This article compiles findings from several different studies between 1975 and 2012.

[Violence and Abuse in Rural America](#): The Rural Health Information Hub expands on the particular issues of those experiencing domestic violence in rural communities. It notes in detail how geographic isolation and tightly knit communities can mean that necessary resources may be difficult to reach or unavailable for victims in rural communities.

[Domestic Violence in the Suburbs](#): This article discusses the particular struggle of individuals in suburban households who appear to be affluent but are constrained by having no money of their own or have a hard time convincing others of the severity of their plight.

[The Types and Shape of Domestic Violence](#) | [Why Do People Perpetrate Domestic Violence?](#)

The essential motivator for domestic violence is one person's desire for control over another. There are many factors that can contribute to a person deciding to abuse their partner, such as the environment they were raised in, cultural norms, perceptions of gender roles, substance abuse, mental illness, stressful situations, and many others. However, none of these factors excuse or explain away the action of perpetrating domestic violence.

[Risk Factors for Domestic Violence](#): The National Institute of Justice presents a list of statistics and social risk factors for domestic violence on this page.

[Why Do People Become Abusive?](#)Â Read this short article to learn about several cultural, personal, and even medical factors that may lead an individual to be abusive.

Why Do People Stay in Abusive Relationships?

Leaving an abusive relationship can be very hard or, in some cases, nearly impossible. Attempting to leave an unhealthy relationship can also trigger violence or cause violence to escalate. Furthermore, the tactics used to control victims of domestic violence can leave them isolated, without resources, and with little remaining personal autonomy.

[Barriers to Leaving Abusive Relationships](#): This page explains some reasons why a victim may be unwilling or unable to leave their abuser, with emphasis on the impact of cultural values and threat of violence on a victim's choice.

[Why Doesn't She Leave?](#)Â There are several reasons why an abuse victim may have a hard time leaving their abuser.

[Reasons an Abuse Victim Might Stay](#): Societal and cultural factors can influence people to stay in, ignore, or minimize their abusive relationship.

Abuse and LGBTQ+ People]

Abuse within and perpetrated upon the LGBTQ+ community is often complicated and multifaceted. In addition to all of the same tactics that can be used to control someone in a heterosexual romantic relationship, it is also possible to use an LGBTQ+ person's gender identity or sexuality against them. An abuser might exert control by convincing their partner that the authorities will not help a homosexual, bisexual, or transgender individual. The abuser might play on their partner's insecurities by asking them to prove their gender/sexuality by doing things that make them uncomfortable or that they are otherwise unwilling to do. Another common technique is to threaten to out a closeted individual in order to force their compliance.

[LGBTQ+ People Face Increased Instances of Violence and Possible Discrimination in Support Services, Law Enforcement Assistance](#)]: This issue summary from the Obama administration details concerning statistics about domestic and sexual violence against LGBTQ+ people and how biases of law enforcement officials and others may impact their response to LGBTQ+ people.

LGBTQ+ People Struggle With Stereotypes, May Not Be Taken Seriously by Criminal Justice System: Find out how preconceived notions of abuse and gender roles can prevent LGBTQ+ people from receiving the legal aid and support services they need to escape or recover from domestic violence.

[Domestic Violence in Same-Sex Relationships](#)]: From the Center for American Progress, this page details specific issues facing victims of domestic violence who are in a same-sex relationship.

[Connecting to the Transgender Community](#)]: The federal Office for Victims of Crimes offers a thorough article on things to keep in mind when attempting outreach or aid directed at a transgender person.

[Abuse Tactics Specific to Transgender and Non-Binary Individuals](#)] **Abuse and Immigrants]**

Immigrant populations are particularly susceptible to abuse. Many immigrants may not speak English, may not have legal status in the United States, or may not understand that their legal status isn't dependent on staying with an abusive partner. These factors can leave immigrant populations unable to reach out for help or frightened of involving the authorities for fear of deportation.

[What Are the Legal Rights and Options of an Immigrant Who Has Experienced Domestic Violence?](#)]Â The Department of Homeland Security explains the legal rights of an immigrant who is a victim of domestic violence and explains options to gain or maintain legal immigration status for individuals and their children whose current immigration status may be reliant on their abuser.

[A Guide to Assisting Immigrants to Escape Domestic Violence](#)]: This guide by the Battered Women's Justice Project offers advice and techniques for helping immigrants escape abusive households or relationships.

Abuse and the Workplace]

Domestic violence is not just an issue that is confined to the privacy of a home. It has many effects on businesses as well. Ranging from employee disruptions to directly affecting the bottom line, domestic violence's impacts are felt throughout the business world.

[Employment Wheel Cycle](#). The Domestic Violence Employment Wheel describes how a job can act a a "protective factor" to help prevent abuse.] [Employment Leave for Victims and Family Members of Abusive Behavior Act](#). Massachusetts legislature has enacted a great piece of legislation for those affected by domestic violence.] [Chipping Away at the "Mythceptions."](#) The Corporate Alliance to End Partner Violence busts many businesses' explanations for not having domestic violence workplace programs in place.] [Cost of Domestic Violence in the Workplace](#). Domestic violence is not just a private matter, but a workplace issue as well. Employers Against Domestic Violence explains why.] [Will Putting A Dollar Amount On Domestic Violence Suffering Finally Get Companies To Act?](#) Samantha Cole, for Fast Company, writes about how new research shows how domestic violence can impact a company's bottom line. Will this depressing perspective finally get companies to care?]

What Does a Healthy Relationship Look Like?]

Every relationship is different, and sometimes, it can be difficult to tell whether a relationship is or is not healthy, especially if you're not a part of it. The bottom line is that healthy relationships are based on communication and mutual respect. Unhealthy ones are not.

[Understanding a Healthy Relationship](#)]: These guidelines, tips for improving stale relationships, and signs of a relationship going bad are a good outline to get started with.

[Characteristics of Healthy and Unhealthy Relationships](#)]: This article explains the differences between respectful, healthy disagreements and hostile, unhealthy disagreements.

[Healthy Dating for Teens](#)]: The American Academy of Pediatrics provides an easy-to-understand guide to features of a healthy relationship and contrasts them with some red flags that may indicate that a relationship is becoming unhealthy.