



Stop the violence. Start the healing.

What is Domestic Violence?

Domestic Violence, or Intimate Partner Violence (IPV), is defined as

A pattern of abusive behaviors that one person uses in an intimate relationship to maintain **power and control over another person.**

This abuse can take many different forms, including physical assault, emotional and verbal abuse, financial abuse, sexual violence, abuse of children or pets, withholding essentials such as medication, isolation of a partner from friends or family, scare tactics, threats, stalking, and coercion, among other behaviors.

A destructive relationship can contain multiple forms of abuse and may or may not include physical and/or sexual violence. IPV can range in severity but always originates over issues of **power and control**. It is important to recognize unhealthy controlling behaviors early in a destructive relationship, as abuse tends to escalate over time—an insult becomes a push, a push becomes a slap, a slap becomes a punch, and so on. Recognizing abusive behavior early can prevent someone from feeling trapped in abusive cycles that are harder to break as time goes on.



Violence can occur within any intimate relationship, regardless of social, cultural, economic, educational, religious, or ethnic considerations. While intimate partner violence remains predominantly a gender-based violence with women being the primary victims of abuse by male perpetrators, anyone, including men and those in same-sex relationships, can be a victim.

Early Warning Signs:

- Moving a relationship to a serious and intimate level very quickly
- Showing extreme jealousy and possessiveness
- Having a controlling attitude, restricting another's personal freedoms
- Needing to know a partner's whereabouts all the time and being uncomfortable with time apart
- Making someone feel the need to check in all the time
- Changing moods quickly, making a partner feel as if he or she is "walking on eggshells"
- Making someone feel self-conscious by making comments about personal appearance or behaviors
- Telling a partner what to wear or not to wear
- Insulting a partner or making fun of a partner
- Pressuring a partner sexually
- Exhibiting any physical roughness
- Abusing drugs or alcohol or engaging in criminal activity

Domestic Violence is a crime.