

Cycle Of Violence



Tension-Building

- Tension starts to build
- Minor incidents begin
- Victim feels the need to placate the abuser
- Tension becomes unbearable

Reconciliation

- Abuser apologizes for abuse
- Promises it will never happen again
- Blames victim for provoking abuse
- Denies abuse took place or that it wasn't as bad as the victim claims

Calm

- Incident is "forgotten"
- No abuse is taking place
- Promises made during reconciliation



The cycle can happen hundreds of times in an abusive relationship. Each stage lasts a different amount of time in a relationship, with the total cycle taking a few hours to a year or more to complete. It is during the *reconciliation* & *calm* stages that victims often enter a state of denial—victims will deny that the situation has been dangerous or that it will be again.

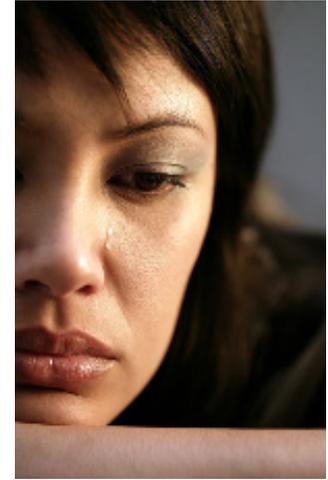


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It Can Happen To Anyone



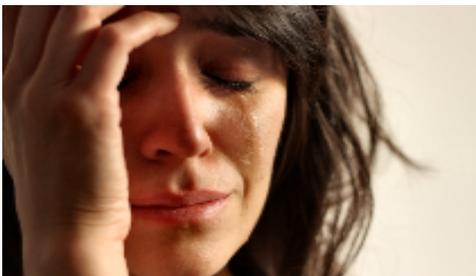
Domestic Violence is a serious problem that has been happening for centuries. In the U.S. each year it affects millions of people, most often women. Domestic Violence can happen to anyone regardless of employment or educational level, race or ethnic background, religion, marital status, physical ability, age or sexual orientation.

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It's NOT Your Fault

If you are being abused by your partner, you may feel confused, afraid, angry and/or trapped. All of these emotions are normal responses to abuse. You may also blame yourself for what is happening, but no matter what others might say, you are never responsible for your partner's abusive actions. Batterers choose to be abusive. **No one deserves to be battered.**

Victims often stay in abusive relationships because of fear, or because they continue to hope their partner will change. Some stay because they feel financially dependent on their partner. Some victims have been taught in our society to be subordinate and submissive in intimate relationships. It may be difficult to think of yourself as someone who has rights and who directs your own life.



Domestic Violence is often more than one instance of physical abuse in a relationship. It is a pattern of physical, sexual and/or emotional abuse used to maintain control of the victim. The following questions may help you decide what levels of abuse you have experienced.

Does Your Partner Ever?

- Hit, kick, shove, or injure you?
- Use weapons/objects against you or threaten to?
- Force or coerce you to engage in unwanted sexual acts?
- Threaten to hurt you or others, have you deported, disclose personal information about you, or take your children away?
- Control what you do and who you see in a way that interferes with your work, education, or other personal activities?
- Steal or destroy your belongings?
- Constantly criticize you, call you names or put you down? Make you afraid?
- Deny your basic needs such as food, housing, clothing, or medical and physical assistance?
- Isolate you from your family/friends?
- Act sweet and loving after hitting you?

If you answered “yes” to any of the above, it may be time to think about your safety.

Planning For Safety

Without help, domestic violence often continues to get more severe over time. It can sometimes become deadly.

To increase your safety:

- Telling others you trust such as friends, family, neighbors and co-workers, what is happening and talk about ways they can help.
- Memorize emergency numbers for the local police (such as 911) support persons and crisis lines.
- Identify escape routes and places to go if you need to flee from an unsafe situation quickly. Remove weapons from the home or lock them up.
- Talk with your children about what they should do if a violent incident occurs or if they are afraid.
- Put together an emergency bag with money/checkbooks, extra car keys, medicine, and important papers such as birth certificates, social security cards, immigration documents, and medical cards. Keep it somewhere safe and accessible, such as with a trusted friend.
- **Trust your instincts**– if you think you are in immediate danger, you probably are. Get to a safe place as soon as you can.