

About The Hotline

The National Domestic Violence Hotline is the only national organization that directly serves victims of domestic abuse, their friends and family. Highly-trained, expert advocates are available 24/7 by phone to talk with anyone who is affected by physical, emotional, verbal, sexual or financial abuse. The Hotline also offers an online chat service at www.thehotline.org that is available every day from 7 a.m. – 2 a.m. CT.

Our services are **completely free and confidential**, and we have the largest and most comprehensive database of local and national resources in the country. Along with these resources, we offer lifesaving tools, immediate support and hope to empower victims to break free of abuse.



CALL 24/7

1.800.799.SAFE (7233)



TTY 24/7

1.800.787.3224



CHAT

every day 7 a.m. – 2 a.m. CT

www.thehotline.org



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The National Domestic Violence
HOTLINE

[1.800.799.SAFE \(7233\)](tel:1800799SAFE) • [1.800.787.3224 \(TTY\)](tel:18007873224)

Sexual Coercion

**FREE
CONFIDENTIAL
24/7/365**



1.800.799.SAFE (7233)



What is Sexual Coercion?

Have you ever felt pressured by your partner to be intimate? Have you ever felt guilty into it or like you weren't able to say no? **Abuse is often centered on power and control in all aspects of the relationship**, so it's not uncommon that an abusive partner will try to force intimacy.

This is often referred to as **sexual coercion**. Sexual coercion can vary from being egged on and persuaded, to being forced to have contact. It can be verbal and emotional, in the form of statements that make you feel pressure, guilt or shame. You can also be made to feel forced through more subtle actions.

Being in a relationship never means that you owe your partner intimacy of any kind.

Signs of Sexual Coercion

Your partner might:

- Make you feel like you owe them; for example, because you're in a relationship, because you've had sex before or because they spent money on you or bought you a gift
- Give you compliments that sound extreme or insincere as an attempt to get you to agree to something
- Give you drugs and alcohol to "loosen up" your inhibitions
- Play on the fact that you're in a relationship, saying things such as: "Sex is the way to prove your love for me"
- React negatively with sadness, anger or resentment if you say no or don't immediately agree to something
- Continue to pressure you after you say no
- Make you feel threatened or afraid of what might happen if you say no
- Try to normalize their sexual expectations, saying things such as: "I need it, I'm a man"

Even if your partner isn't forcing you to do sexual acts against your will, being made to feel *obligated* is considered coercion. **Dating someone, being in a relationship or being married never means that you owe your partner intimacy of any kind.**

What is Healthy Consent?

In a relationship where sexual coercion is occurring, there is a lack of healthy consent and the coercive partner doesn't respect the boundaries or wishes of the other. But what is healthy consent?

- Consent means being clear and direct with your partner about what you do and do not want to do.
- Consent is not a "given" for any act, even if you've consented to that act in the past.
- Consent can be taken back at any time. You always have the right to stop.
- It's not consent if you're afraid—or unable—to say no.



Domestic violence can happen to anyone regardless of race, age, sexual orientation, religion or gender. If you or someone you know is in an abusive relationship, or if you have questions about abuse, we can help.

1-800-799-SAFE (7233)

thehotline.org



love is respect org

1-866-331-9474

loveisrespect.org

text "loveis" to 22522

Can an abusive partner really change?

While people do have the capacity to change, they need to deeply want to and be committed to all aspects of change in order to begin to do so — and even then, it's a lot easier said than done.

In discussing why abusers abuse, it's clear that a lot of the causal factors behind these behaviors are learned attitudes and feelings of entitlement and privilege, which can be extremely difficult to truly change. Because of this, there's a very low percentage of abusers who truly do change their ways.

One part of changing may involve an abusive partner willingly attending a certified batterer intervention program that focuses on behavior, reflection and accountability. At the Hotline we don't recommend couples counseling, anger management, substance abuse programs or mental health treatments for abusers to learn about and deal with their abusive patterns (although oftentimes these can helpfully supplement a batterer intervention program).

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Can an abusive partner change?



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*People can change
when they genuinely
want to and devote
themselves to doing so.*

*The big question is
“How?”*

How can abusers change?

- Admitting fully to what they have done
- Stopping excuses and blaming
- Making amends
- Accepting responsibility and recognizing that abuse is a choice
- Identifying patterns of controlling behavior they use and the attitudes that drive their abuse
- Accepting that overcoming abusiveness is a decades-long process — not declaring themselves “cured”
- Not treating improvements as vouchers to be spent on occasional acts of abuse (ex. “I haven’t done anything like this in a long time, so it’s not a big deal.”)
- Developing respectful, kind, supportive behaviors
- Carrying their weight and sharing power
- Changing how they act in heated conflicts
- Accepting the consequences of their actions (including not feeling sorry for themselves about the consequences, and not blaming their partner or children for them)

Batterer Intervention & Prevention Programs

A BIPP is different than other counseling and intervention programs in that it centers around complete accountability, victim safety and education about abusive behaviors. Certified batterer intervention programs have a wide range of durations, varying from a weekend retreat to 52 weekly meetings.

People enter into BIPPs for various reasons. Many are required by judges to attend as a condition of probation or as part of a sentence. Others enroll to try to save a relationship and keep their partner from leaving. **The best reason for joining a BIPP is genuine desire to change.**

These programs teach all about abuse: the range of coercive or abusive behaviors, common abusive tactics and the effects that abuse has on partners and families. Participants learn about healthy relationships and non-violent behaviors. BIPPs also challenge pre-existing beliefs that abusive partners might have, such as entitlement/ownership and gender roles. The program should be structured around a clear understanding that abusive behavior is chosen, and that while substance abuse or mental health issues can occur simultaneously, they should be addressed through separate services.

As a result of attending this type of program, the abusive partner would ideally learn how to:

- effectively communicate with their partner instead of being emotionally, verbally, or physically abusive
- support their partner’s decisions even if they disagree
- encourage their partner to spend time with friends and family
- build trust and empathy within the relationship
- refrain from using coercive actions to control and intimidate their partner
- identify ongoing harmful behavior
- behave respectfully toward their partner

Why not Anger Management?

People who are abusive often express anger toward their partner, but having an anger problem means they would also behave the same way toward friends, family, coworkers and others – not just their partner. Examining what triggers their anger can reinforce the idea that the victim is responsible for the violence. This takes the abuser off the hook for their actions.

Why not Couples Counseling?

Abuse is not a “relationship” problem. Couples counseling may imply that both partners contribute to the abusive behavior, when the choice to be abusive lies solely with the abusive partner. Focusing on communication or other relationship issues distracts from the abusive behavior, and may actually reinforce it in some cases. Additionally, a therapist may not be aware that abuse is present and inadvertently encourage the abuse to continue or escalate.



Domestic Violence

WHAT IS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE?

Domestic violence is the willful intimidation, physical assault, battery, sexual assault, and/or other abusive behavior as part of a systematic pattern of power and control perpetrated by one intimate partner against another. It includes physical violence, sexual violence, threats, and emotional/psychological abuse. The frequency and severity of domestic violence varies dramatically.

DID YOU KNOW?

- In the United States, an average of 20 people are physically abused by intimate partners every minute. This equates to more than 10 million abuse victims annually.ⁱ
- 1 in 3 women and 1 in 4 men have been physically abused by an intimate partner.ⁱⁱ
- 1 in 5 women and 1 in 7 men have been *severely* physically abused by an intimate partner.ⁱⁱⁱ
- 1 in 7 women and 1 in 18 men have been stalked. Stalking causes the target to fear she/he or someone close to her/him will be harmed or killed.^{iv}
- On a typical day, domestic violence hotlines nationwide receive approximately 20,800 calls.
- The presence of a gun in a domestic violence situation increases the risk of homicide by 500%.^v
- Intimate partner violence accounts for 15% of all violent crime.^{vi}
- Intimate partner violence is most common among women between the ages of 18-24.^{vii}
- 19% of intimate partner violence involves a weapon.^{viii}

WHY IT MATTERS

Domestic violence is prevalent in every community, and affects all people regardless of age, socio-economic status, sexual orientation, gender, race, religion, or nationality. Physical violence is often accompanied by emotionally abusive and controlling behavior as part of a much larger, systematic pattern of dominance and control. Domestic violence can result in physical injury, psychological trauma, and even death. The devastating consequences of domestic violence can cross generations and last a lifetime.

SEXUAL ASSAULT

- 1 in 5 women and 1 in 59 men in the United States is raped during his/her lifetime.^{ix}
- 9.4% of women in the United States have been raped by an intimate partner.^x

STALKING

- 19.3 million women and 5.1 million men in the United States have been stalked.^{xi}
- 66.2% of female stalking victims reported stalking by a current or former intimate partner.^{xii}

HOMICIDE

- 1 in 3 female murder victims and 1 in 20 male murder victims are killed by intimate partners.^{xiii}
- A study of intimate partner homicides found 20% of victims were family members or friends of the abused partner, neighbors, persons who intervened, law enforcement responders, or bystanders.^{xiv}
- 72% of all murder-suicides are perpetrated by intimate partners.^{xv}
- 94% of murder-suicide victims are female.^{xvi}

If you are in crisis, contact The National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-SAFE (7233) or www.TheHotline.org.

Please visit the **National Coalition Against Domestic Violence's** website at www.ncadv.org for more fact sheets, membership information and valuable resources.



Domestic Violence

PHYSICAL/MENTAL EFFECTS

- Victims of intimate partner violence are at increased risk of contracting HIV or other STI's due to forced intercourse and/or prolonged exposure to stress.^{xvii}
- Intimate partner victimization is correlated with a higher rate of depression and suicidal behavior.^{xviii}
- Only 34% of people who are injured by intimate partners receive medical care for their injuries.^{xix}

ECONOMIC EFFECTS

- Victims of intimate partner violence lose a total of 8,000,000 million days of paid work each year, the equivalent of 32,000 full-time jobs.^{xx}
- Intimate partner violence is estimated to cost the US economy between \$5.8 billion and \$12.6 billion annually, up to 0.125% of the national gross domestic product.^{xxi}
- Between 21-60% of victims of intimate partner violence lose their jobs due to reasons stemming from the abuse.^{xxii}
- Between 2003 and 2008, 142 women were murdered in their workplace by former or current intimate partners. This amounts to 22% of workplace homicides among women.^{xxiii}

ⁱ Black, M.C., Basile, K.C., Breiding, M.J., Smith, S.G., Walters, M.L., Merrick, M.T., Chen, J. & Stevens, M. (2011). *The national intimate partner and sexual violence survey: 2010 summary report*. Retrieved from http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/nisvs_report2010-a.pdf.

ⁱⁱ Ibid.

ⁱⁱⁱ Ibid.

^{iv} Ibid.

^v Campbell, J.C., Webster, D., Koziol-McLain, J., Block, C., Campbell, D., Curry, M. A., Gary, F., Glass, N., McFarlane, J., Sachs, C., Sharps, P., Ulrich, Y., Wilt, S., Manganello, J., Xu, X., Schollenberger, J., Frye, V. & Lauphon, K. (2003). Risk factors for femicide in abusive relationships: Results from a multisite case control study. *American Journal of Public Health, 93*(7), 1089-1097.

^{vi} Truman, J. L. & Morgan, R. E. (2014). *Nonfatal domestic violence, 2003-2012*. Retrieved from <http://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/ndv0312.pdf>.

^{vii} Ibid.

^{viii} Ibid.

^{ix} Black, M.C., Basile, K.C., Breiding, M.J., Smith, S.G., Walters, M.L., Merrick, M.T., Chen, J. & Stevens, M. (2011). *The national intimate partner and sexual violence survey: 2010 summary report*. Retrieved from http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/nisvs_report2010-a.pdf.

^x Ibid.

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^{xii} Ibid.

^{xiii} Bridges, F.S., Tatum, K. M., & Kunselman, J.C. (2008). Domestic violence statutes and rates of intimate partner and family homicide: A research note. *Criminal Justice Policy Review, 19*(1), 117-130.

^{xiv} Smith, S., Fowler, K. & Niolon, P. (2014). Intimate partner homicide and corollary victims in 16 states: National violent death reporting system, 2003-2009. *American Journal of Public Health, 104*(3), 461-466. doi: 10.2105/AJPH.2013.301582.

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^{xvii} World Health Organization (2013). *Global and regional estimates of violence against women: Prevalence and health effects of intimate partner violence and non-partner sexual violence*. Retrieved from http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/85239/1/9789241564625_eng.pdf?ua=1.

^{xviii} Ibid.

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^{xxii} Ibid.

^{xxiii} Finkelhor, D., Turner, H., Ormrod, R. & Hamby, S. (2011). *Children's exposure to intimate partner violence and other family violence*. Retrieved from <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/ojdp/232272.pdf>.

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Facts about Domestic Violence and Physical Abuse

WHAT IS INTIMATE PARTNER PHYSICAL ABUSE?

Physical abuse includes the physical assault, battery, and sexual assault used as part of a systematic pattern of power and control perpetrated by one intimate partner against another. Physical abuse can cause severe injury and even death. It often co-occurs with other forms of abuse, including psychological abuse, economic abuse, and stalking.

INTIMATE PARTNER PHYSICAL ABUSE:

- More than 10 million Americans are victims of physical violence annually.ⁱ
- 20 people are victims of physical violence every minute in the United States.ⁱⁱ
- 1 in 3 women and 1 in 4 men is a victim of some form of physical violence by an intimate partner during their lifetimes.ⁱⁱⁱ
- 76% of intimate partner physical violence victims are female; 24% are male.^{iv}
- 1 in 7 women and 1 in 18 men are severely injured by intimate partners in their lifetimes.^v
- Domestic violence accounts for 15% of all violent crime in the United States.^{vi}
- Domestic violence is most common among women aged 18-24 and 25-34.^{vii}
- A majority of physical abuse is committed by dating partners rather than spouses.^{viii}
- More than 75% of women aged 18-49 who are abused were previously abused by the same perpetrator.^{ix}
- Intimate partner physical abuse has declined 67% since the passage of the Violence Against Women Act in 1994.^x
- Slightly more than half of intimate partner physical violence is reported to law enforcement.^{xi}

INTIMATE PARTNER HOMICIDE:

- In 2007, 1,640 women were murdered by intimate partners; in 2012, 924 women were killed by intimate partners.^{xiii}
- 40% of female murder victims are killed by intimate partners.^{xiv}
- Almost half of intimate partner homicides are committed by dating partners.^{xv}
- 76% of women who are killed by intimate partners and 85% of women who survive homicide attempts are stalked prior to the murder or attempted murder.^{xvi}

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Intimate partner physical abuse is not bound by age, socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion or nationality; it exists in all communities. Contrary to popular belief, physical abuse is not simply a mal-adjusted person's occasional expression of frustration or anger, nor is it typically an isolated incident. Physical abuse is a tool of control and oppression and is a choice made by one person in a relationship to control another.

If you need help:

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Or, online go to DomesticShelters.org

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Facts about Domestic Violence and Physical Abuse

OTHER FORMS OF ABUSE

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