




Community  
Education  
Group



What You need to Know About

# INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE



*Q: Do women know when they're in this type of situation?*

"I think girls know it's **wrong**,  
but they're **afraid**"

"When my girlfriend's husband hit her  
in the face with his Dr. Scholl's shoe, you  
know what she told me? So what if he  
beat me up like this, he loves me."

"They just think they can't get  
anybody else."

"When girls are in a domestic  
violence relationship, they just think  
it's cute. Oh he hit me, he loves me.  
He loves me because he hits me."

**"How are you gonna love somebody  
that put their hands on you?"**

**YOU DESERVE TO BE SAFE IN YOUR RELATIONSHIP.**

## DEFINITIONS

**What is Intimate Partner violence?** Intimate partner violence, or IPV, is better known as domestic violence, or DV.

IPV is any hurtful or unwanted behavior done to one person, known as the “victim” or “survivor,” by another person known as the “abuser.” IPV happens between two people who have been, or are currently intimately involved through some type of relationship. This relationship can be a husband, wife, parent, boyfriend, or girlfriend.

IPV victims and abusers can be male or female, young or old, of any racial or religious background, rich or poor, and of any sexual orientation.

Abusive behavior includes physical, sexual, psychological and emotional abuse or harm. It is primarily a behavior that is learned, and without help becomes more destructive, hurtful or severe over time. Most abusers will often promise to never hurt you again – but then do.

Examples of IPV include yelling, pushing, hitting, slapping, punching, choking, kicking, forced fondling or touching, rape, and forced sodomy. IPV also includes stalking (when a person continues to contact you or visit you when you have asked them to stop), destroying property in a way that makes a you feel unsafe, threats to hurt you, your children, your family members or others that you know. In extreme cases, IPV includes kidnapping and murder.

- **IPV is not a caring act or a way to express love.**
- **IPV is a way to control what you say, do and think through force and fear.**
- **IPV increases your risk for other health problems and behaviors.**

**You do not need to live with abuse and fear.**

"Sometimes women don't like others to know  
what's going on behind closed doors"

**"You ain't got to tell nobody, people know"**

**"You stayin for money?** So what you saying is  
you want your eye black for \$100?"

"For some men, beating on a woman is an  
outlet for them, you know, for their frustrations.  
But they would never step to a real man."

"I really think that a relationship should  
start with a friendship,  
companionship, and THEN a relationship.  
He ain't got to have it that night."

"No man can put his hands on me."



## IPV FACTS

### DC FACTS

In 2003, the DC Police Department reported 101,215 calls related to domestic violence, or **28 calls per day**. Unfortunately, because IPV is not reported or recorded well in DC, the actual number of people calling about IPV might be much higher.

### NATIONAL FACTS

For people 18 years old and over, almost 5.3 million cases of IPV are reported by women and 3.2 million cases of IPV are reported by men each year in the United States. Most of these cases are minor and mostly include pushing, grabbing, shoving, slapping and hitting.

**More than 2 million serious injuries happen each year because of IPV.** About 1.5 million women and more than 800,000 men are raped or seriously hurt by an intimate partner each year.

Each year, at least **1,300 people are killed** by someone who claims to love them. In one study, it was found that 44% of the women who were murdered by an intimate partner had been to an emergency room because of an IPV injury within two years of being killed.



# THE WARNING SIGNS – Sometimes you can tell if someone

## **JEALOUSY**

Jealousy is not love! It is a sign that a person has a low self-esteem, is insecure, or that they are possessive and controlling. A jealous person may question you about who you talked to or saw during the day and may accuse you of flirting or cheating. They may have problems with your family, friends, and children and may not want you to see them. They may visit you with no warning or without asking, refuse to let you work, and ask friends to keep an eye on you.

## **CONTROLLING BEHAVIOR**

A lot of times, the abuser might try to control your every move and say it is because they are concerned for your wellbeing. A controlling person might be angry if you are 'late' even if you told them you would be late. They may question you closely about where you were, who you spoke to and what you talked about. They might decide how you spend your time and money or even make you ask for permission to do things. Many controlling people will try to take control of how your money is spent. Without financial independence, your abuser can control you with money.

## **QUICK INVOLVEMENT**

A lot of victims of IPV know the abuser for less than six months before they are engaged or living together. Abusers will often claim 'love at first sight'. The abuser may tell you that they have never loved anyone so much when you have really only known each other for a short amount of time. They may pressure you to commit or make love before you feel the relationship has reached 'that stage'.

## **UNREALISTIC EXPECTATIONS**

The abuser may expect you to be the perfect husband, wife, mother, father, lover, and friend. This may include statements like: 'If you love me, I'm all you need.' or 'You are all I need.' Abusers may expect you to provide everything emotionally, practically, financially or spiritually, and then blame you for not being perfect or living up to expectations.

## **ISOLATION**

Almost all abusers will limit your interactions with other people and may prevent you from spending time with your friends or family. They may accuse you of not being committed to the relationship, or see your friends as 'causing trouble' or 'trying to put a wedge' in your relationship. They may cut off phones, not let you use the car, stop you from working or gaining further education or skills.

# is abusive. Watch out for these common Warning Signs!

## **BLAME-SHIFTING FOR PROBLEMS**

Very rarely will an abusive personality accept responsibility for any negative situation or problem. It is always someone else's fault, be it the boss, the government, or their mother. They may feel that someone is always doing them wrong, or out to get them. The abuser may blame you for their actions, saying it's your fault you're being abused.

## **BLAME-SHIFTING FOR FEELINGS**

Most abusers will blame you for how they feel. For example, they may say 'you make me mad' or 'you are hurting me by not doing what I ask'. The abuser may use your feelings to manipulate you. For example they may say 'I would not be angry if you didn't do that!' In the mind of the abuser, you become the cause of good and bad feelings and things that happen in the relationship. You are also to blame for any negative feelings such as anger, sadness, frustration or depression. However, it is important to remember that only they can be responsible for their own feelings and actions.

## **HYPERSENSITIVITY**

Most abusers have very low self-esteem and are easily insulted or upset. They might say they are 'hurt' when they are really angry, or take comments and disagreements as personal attacks. For example, if you prefer pink to their blue, they will see this as a personal criticism.

## **CRUELTY TO ANIMALS**

Abusers may be mean or cruel to animals. They may beat, kick or physically hurt animals. They may be insensitive to their pain or suffering, or neglect to care for the animals by not feeding them all day, leaving them outdoors on very hot or cold days without water or shelter.

## **CRUELTY TO CHILDREN**

Abusers may be mean or cruel to children. The abuser may have unrealistic expectations of children. For example, the abuser may get angry with a two-year old for wetting their pants, getting sick on the carpet, or waking at night and being upset by nightmares. Abusers may tease children until they cry, or punish children way beyond what could be deemed appropriate.

## **'PLAYFUL' USE OF FORCE IN SEX**

Some abusers may want to act on their fantasies and pressure you into forceful or violent acts during sex. The abuser may show little concern about whether you want to have intercourse and may manipulate you to have sex by sulking or getting angry. Some abusers may start sex while you are sleeping, demand sex when you are ill or tired, or refuse any form of intimacy unless you are willing to go 'all the way' - all signs that this person can be sexually abusive or sexually violent.

# THE WARNING SIGNS *(continued)*

## **RIGID GENDER ROLES**

Abusers usually believe in gender roles, or how a man or woman is “supposed” to act. For example, a man may expect a woman to serve him; stay at home, obey him in all things—even things that may be illegal. A male abuser will often see women as inferior to men, less intelligent, or unable to be a whole person without a relationship. Female abusers may expect the man to provide for them entirely, shift the responsibility for her well-being onto him or heckle him as not being a ‘real man’ if he shows any weakness or emotion.

## **VERBAL ABUSE**

Abusers will say things that are meant to be cruel and hurtful, in public or in private. Often the abuser will tell you that you are ‘stupid’, and cannot manage without them. An abuser may keep you up all night to argue or ‘sort this out once and for all.’ They may even wake you at night to continue to verbally abuse you and to argue. The abuser may even speak badly about you to friends and family.

## **DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE**

A lot of abusers usually seem perfectly normal and pleasant — especially to the outside world. They are rarely harsh, mean or violent all of the time. However, they will often change in the privacy of your home or change suddenly and without warning. For the victim, this can be very confusing especially if the outside world views the abuser as kind.

## **DRINK OR SUBSTANCE ABUSE**

Often an abusive person will blame drinking or using drugs for his/her abuse. However, a person who knows there is a risk he/she could be violent when drinking or on drugs that chooses to get drunk or high is thereby choosing to abuse. While alcohol and drugs do not cause violence, they do increase the risk of violence.

## **HISTORY OF BATTERING OR SEXUAL VIOLENCE**

Very rarely is abuse or violence a one-time event: a batterer will beat any person they are with; a sexually abusive person will be abusive toward all of their intimate partners. Sometimes friends or family may try to warn you about the abuser. Sometimes the abuser may tell you they have hit or sexually assaulted someone in the past, but may shift the blame onto the victim and not take responsibility for their actions by saying, “she made me do it by ...” or in some other way not take responsibility and shift the blame on to the victim. Past violence is one of the strongest indicators that abuse will occur.

## **THREATENING VIOLENCE**

This includes any threat of physical harm such as “If you speak to him/her again, I’ll kill you” or less obvious threats, such as “If you leave me, I will kill myself”. Threats are designed to manipulate and control you, to keep you in your place and prevent you from making your own decisions. People in healthy, loving relationships do not threaten their mates but an abuser will say “everybody talks like that.”

### **BREAKING OR STRIKING OBJECTS**

Abusive people may break your belongings, beat their fists on the table or chair or throw something at or past you. Breaking your things has the effect of de-personalizing you, denying you of individuality or literally trying to break links to your past. Beating items of furniture or throwing objects will often be justified by saying you made them so angry that they lost control. This behavior is actually used to terrorize the victim into submission. Only very immature or abusive people beat on objects in the presence of other people in order to threaten or intimidate them.

### **ANY FORCE DURING AN ARGUMENT**

Abusers may physically restrain you from leaving the room, lash out at you with their hand or another object, pin you against a wall or shout right in your face. Basically any form of force used during an argument can be a sign that actual violence is a strong possibility.

### **OTHER CHARACTERISTICS**

Other characteristics of an abuser often include: low self-esteem, low income, low academic achievement, aggressive or delinquent behavior as a child, heavy alcohol/drug use, depression, anger and hostility, personality disorders, few friends, isolated, under or unemployed, economically stressed, emotionally dependent and insecure, and lack of social support through institutions, relationships and community norms.

### **WHO IS MOST AT RISK FOR BEING A VICTIM OF IPV?**

While anyone can become a victim of IPV, most victims are women (85%), and many are young and live in poverty. Most victims are African American women, Hispanic women, and American Indian/Alaska Native women and men. Other factors that place a person at risk for IPV include a prior history of IPV, heavy alcohol/drug use, high-risk sexual behavior, witnessing or experiencing violence as a child, less education, under or unemployment.

### **IPV IS NOT JUST ONE PERSON'S FAULT.**

There is evidence that community factors such as poverty, the number and quality of community based organizations or community supports, and community beliefs and values about violence, play a role in the risk of becoming a victim of IPV. Communities that are under a lot of stress are more likely to have higher rates of violence and abuse.



## What prevents victims and abusers from getting help?

### VICTIMS

---

Community acceptance of violence  
Fear of more violence  
Think abuse equals love  
Shame and embarrassment  
Feeling it is their fault  
Economic and financial reasons  
Isolated from others  
Little to no social supports  
Don't want to be alone  
Fear of the legal system and police  
Lack of available resources for help  
Substance abuse and alcohol

### ABUSERS

---

Community acceptance of violence  
Feeling justified, that violence is OK  
Denial of the problem  
Guilt  
No available resources for help  
Substance abuse and alcohol  
Being a victim of abuse themselves  
Shame and embarrassment

---



## KNOW YOUR RIGHTS.

### You have the right to:

- > Be treated with fairness and respect for your dignity and privacy
- > Be reasonably protected from the accused offender
- > Be notified of court proceedings
- > Be present at all court proceedings related to the offense, unless the court determines that your testimony might be affected
- > Speak to a prosecuting attorney about what you would like to happen in the offender's criminal case
- > Be repaid by the person convicted of the criminal conduct that caused your loss or injury
- > Information about the conviction, sentencing, imprisonment, detention, and release of the offender

## WHAT TO DO/HOW TO GET HELP

### TELL SOMEONE.

Don't keep the abuse a secret. Start by telling someone you can trust. This could be a close family member or friend, the police, or a shelter. It is important to make someone aware of your situation so that you can begin to get help.

### CREATE A SAFETY PLAN.

In case of an emergency, keep a list of people it is safe to call, and a list of places it is safe to go to. Keep copies of important papers, such as protection orders, birth certificates for yourself and children, drivers licenses, social security cards, etc; and if you have a protection order, carry it with you at all times. After getting your protection order, change your locks, phone number, and daily routine to increase your safety, and let others know of the protection order, such as your children's school, your work, and your neighbors.

### REMOVE YOURSELF FROM THE SITUATION.

Get yourself and your children out of the house and away from your abuser. You can get a protection order or a civil protection order against your abuser. A protection order is an order from the court that can require the abuser to stop abusing you and your children; leave and stay away from your home, your workplace, and your family; have no contact with you; and/or stay away from the children, their babysitter, daycare, or school. A protection order cannot guarantee your safety, but it can help you by making it known that your abusive partner is not allowed near you or your children.

### GET AN ADVOCATE.

Using the legal system can be very frustrating. Getting help from a domestic violence advocate with the District of Columbia Coalition Against Domestic Violence can make it easier. Safety advocates can help by discussing safety concerns you have; providing emotional support throughout the legal process; providing information about protection orders; and making referrals to other legal, social and/or support services and counseling groups.

**IF YOU CAN'T LEAVE**, think about going to couple's counseling or a conflict resolution workshop **ONLY** if you feel safe doing so. Otherwise, seek counseling on your own.

**FOR MEN** who would like to receive help in stopping abuse, raising their sons to respect and value women, or would like to get other men help, contact: **Men Helping Men** at 415-924-1070, **Founding Fathers** at 415-252-9020, or **The National Center on Domestic and Sexual Violence** at 512-407-9020.

**If you need to talk, call The National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-SAFE (7233).**

# PROVIDERS IN DC

## DOMESTIC VIOLENCE INTAKE CENTERS

**Greater Southeast Community Hospital**  
1310 Southern Avenue, SE  
Washington, DC 20002  
Medical Services Building, Room 311  
Phone: 202.561.3095

**DC Superior Court**  
500 Indiana Avenue, NW, Room 4235  
Washington, DC 20001  
Phone: 202.879.7857  
Fax: 202.879.1191

## SHELTERS

Shelter Hotline 800.535.7252  
My Sister's Place 202.529.5991  
House of Ruth 202.347.2777  
Family Resource Center 202.724.4208  
Calvary Women's Shelter 202.783.6651  
Mary House 202.635.9025  
CCNV- 2nd & D Shelter 202.393.4409  
Sasha Bruce (Youth Only) 202.547.7777

## LEGAL SERVICES

Legal Aid Society 202.628.1161  
Bread for the City 202.587.0525  
AYUDA 202.387.0434  
Tahirih Justice Center 703.575.0070

## GENERAL SUPPORT CENTERS

Supporting Our Survivors  
(SOS) Program 202.561.3000  
My Sister's Place 202.232.8484  
DV Support Center 202.347.0390  
WEAVE 202.452.9550  
Ramona's Way 202.257.6790  
Different Avenues 202.526.9111  
Asian Pacific Islanders  
DV Project 202.464.4477

## OTHER SERVICES

Crime Victims  
Compensation 202.879.4216  
Court Clerks Office 202.879.0157  
MPD Warrant Squad 202.727.3800  
Child Support-Alice Ellis 202.879.7868  
Non-Emergency Police 311  
Victim Information & Notification  
Everyday (VINE) 877.329.7894

707- 8th St SE, Suite 200, Washington, DC 20003  
202.543.9142 phone · 202.543.9146 fax  
[www.communityeducationgroup.org](http://www.communityeducationgroup.org)



**Community  
Education  
Group**