



# Domestic Violence



Over a million women and men are physically assaulted by an intimate partner in the United States every year. You are not alone, and it is not your fault. There are many things you can do to keep yourself safe, but if you are in immediate danger call 911.

## Signs of an Abusive Relationship

Your spouse, partner, family member or friend may be abusive if they act in any of the following ways:

### Controlling

- Controls what you do such as where you work or go to school
- Controls what you wear or how you spend money
- Controls who you spend time with

### Threatening

- Threatens to hurt you, or your children, or does hurt you (by shoving, punching, kicking, biting, beating, pushing, or hitting)
- Threatens to use a weapon against you, or does use a weapon against you

### Critical

- Criticizes the way you look
- Criticizes you for little things
- Criticizes or humiliates you in front of others
- Blames you for their violent behavior or angry outbursts

### Forceful

- Forces you to have sex against your will
- Forces you to do things you do not want to do

## Seek Help

There are many resources and programs to assist you. All you have to do is call.

- Call your local domestic violence program to find out about community help and laws. Your state Coalition Against Domestic Violence program will be able to find you a safe place to stay if you leave.
  - Montgomery County Family Justice Center: (240) 773-0444  
600 Jefferson Plaza, Rockville, MD 20852
  - Montgomery County Crisis Center: (240) 777-4000  
MidCounty DHHS Building  
1301 Piccard Dr. Rockville MD, 20850
- **Call the National Domestic Violence Hotline 24/7 at 1-800-799-SAFE (7233)** for assistance and answers to questions, or visit their website for links to state and local programs at [www.ndvh.org/](http://www.ndvh.org/).

## Planning to Leave

If you leave or are planning to leave, take these items with you. You may need to pack them ahead of time, or keep them at the home of a friend or relative.

- Passports, green cards, work permits and school records
- Money, checkbooks, bankbooks and credit cards
- Lease agreements or house deed
- Keys (house, car, office)
- Clothes for you and your children
- Address book
- ID card/drivers license and birth certificates
- Health insurance papers and medical records
- Car registration, title and insurance information
- A month supply of all medications you and your children are taking

## Make an Emergency Plan

- **Create a code word** or sign to give to your friends, family, teachers, or co-workers. When you use the code word or sign they can call for help.
- **Know the abuser's red flags.** Red flags are signs of a violent outburst. Knowing these can help you predict when a violent outburst will occur so that you can leave or take measures to protect yourself.
- **Come up with believable reasons for leaving the house.** You can use these reasons to leave when you notice the red flag behavior.
- **Identify a safe place in your house.** Make a plan to go to this room if there is a violent outburst. Tell your children this plan. This place should:
  - Have access to a telephone
  - Have a window or door to the outside
  - Be away from potential weapons
  - Lock from the inside
  - Not be a small space such as a closet

## If the Abuser Has Moved Out

- Change the locks on your doors and get locks on the windows.
- Screen your calls and/or get Caller ID. Get an unlisted phone number.
- Ask your neighbors to call the police if they see your abuser at your house.
- Change your travel habits like shopping at different stores and getting rides with other people.

## Keep Your Children Safe

- Talk to your children and tell them it is their job to keep themselves safe, not to protect you.
- Teach your children how to call 911 and give your address and telephone number.
- Give your children's school or daycare a copy of your restraining order (if you have one) and make it clear that they are not to release your children to anyone without your permission. Establish a code word so that they know it is you on the phone and give them a picture of your abuser.

**Call 911 if you are in danger.**

**[Call The National Domestic Violence Hotline for information at 1-800-799-SAFE \(7233\)](http://www.ndvh.org/)**

Additional resources are available on their website at  
<http://www.ndvh.org/>