

If you or someone you know is experiencing emotional, psychological, physical or sexual abuse, help is available. You have the right to receive free and confidential support from a family violence shelter center.

You do not need to be involved with law enforcement to engage in services at a family violence shelter center. It is important to remember that violence does not have to leave visible injuries for it to be domestic violence.

### Helpful Books:

*Never Ever After: How recognizing red flags in relationships can save you a whole lot of grief*, (2024) by Geneece Goertzen

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*The Black Woman's Guide to Overcoming Domestic Violence: Tools to Move Beyond Trauma, Reclaim Freedom, and Create the Life You Deserve*, (2022) by Robyn L. Gobin, Shavonne J. Moore-Lobban, and Thema Bryant (Foreword)

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*Mejor sola que mal acompañada: para la mujer golpeada / For the Latina in an Abusive Relationship*, (1993) by Myrna M. Zambrano

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*The Power to Break Free: Surviving Domestic Violence, with a Special Reference to Abuse in Indian Marriages*, (2012) by Anisha Durve

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*Breaking the Silence: Domestic Violence in the South Asian-American Community*, (2001) by Sandhya Nankani (Editor)

Support services including peer support, counseling, legal advocacy and emergency shelter can be located at:

#### TCFV Service Directory

([https://tcfv.org/wp-content/uploads/2024-TCFV-Service-Directory\\_web-pages.pdf](https://tcfv.org/wp-content/uploads/2024-TCFV-Service-Directory_web-pages.pdf))

#### The National Domestic Violence Hotline

THEHOTLINE.ORG

1.800.799.7233

text 'START' to 88788 to connect with NDVH

#### LovelsRespect.org

1.866.331.9474

800.787.3224 (TTY)

text 'loveis' to 22522 to connect with LovelsRespect

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PO BOX 163865  
AUSTIN, TX 78716

512.794.1133

TOLL FREE  
888.450.TCFV (8238)

WWW.TCFV.ORG

Texas Council on Family Violence promotes safe and healthy relationships by supporting service providers, facilitating strategic prevention efforts, and creating opportunities for freedom from domestic violence.



## Is it Domestic Violence?

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A guide to understanding if domestic violence is happening in your relationship

**It can feel overwhelming when trying to understand if domestic violence is happening in your relationship.**

The most important thing to remember is to go with your instincts. You are the expert in your life. If it feels scary, wrong, and controlling then reading this brochure may help you. If concerns have brought you here, know that you are not alone.

Domestic Violence is a pattern of behavior used to establish power and control over an intimate partner through fear and intimidation, often including the threat or use of violence.

Although the terms “*domestic violence*” and “*intimate partner violence*” are used interchangeably in this brochure, the Texas Family Code refers to family violence as an act by a member of a family or household against another member of the family or household that is intended to result in physical harm, bodily injury, assault or sexual assault *or* that is a threat that reasonably places the member in fear of imminent physical harm, bodily injury, assault or sexual assault, but does not include defensive measures to protect oneself.

While law enforcement only recognizes physical forms of violence and threats to be offenses, it is vital to recognize that tactics of abuse do include emotional, psychological, and/or economic abuse.

**1 in 3 Texans have experienced intimate partner violence in their lifetime.**

**Domestic violence affects people and families of all ages, races, ethnicities, and LBGQTIA+ identities. It also affects people regardless of income, education level, or religious practices.**

## EMOTIONAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL ABUSE

This list does not cover ALL forms of emotional and psychological abuse. It is meant to give you initial ideas to help determine if someone is using power and control tactics against you. Remember to follow your instincts.

- » **Extreme Jealousy** - Does your partner give you *rules* about with who, when, and where you can go? Get angry when these *rules* are broken? Does your partner's jealousy make you fear for your emotional and/or physical safety?
- » **Sudden Mood Swings** - Does your partner go from nice to angry with no warning or apparent reason and blame you for it? Is your partner aggressive or unstable verbally or physically?
- » **Strict Gender Roles** - Does your partner argue about what women and men are supposed to do in a relationship and/or use strict gender roles to make *rules* about your relationship?
- » **LBGTQIA+ Exploitation** - Does your partner threaten to out your status? Say hurtful things about your sexual orientation or gender identity? Pressure you to engage in sexual activity that you are not comfortable with because of your orientation?
- » **Attitudes or Rules About Sex** - Does your partner pressure you to engage in sexual activity that you are not comfortable with? Make threats to cheat on you as a punishment for saying no? Threaten to expose nude or sexual photos or videos?
- » **Minimizing, Denying, and Blaming** - Does your partner make you feel like you are the problem? Make you feel like you *must* compromise and sacrifice for the sake of the relationship? Do you often feel confused after a verbal or physical argument, wondering if it was your fault because of what your partner said?
- » **Economic Abuse** - Does your partner hide money or benefits? Make *rules* about how money and benefits are used? Pressure you to take out credit, or loans that you do not want to? Threaten to report you to government agencies to make you lose your benefits? Do these behaviors lead to arguments that make you fear for your emotional and/or physical safety?
- » **Intimidation, Violence, and Threats of Violence** - Does your partner say things, using certain tones or hand gestures that cause you to fear for your safety? Threaten to harm you, others, or themselves? Has your partner used physical violence in the past that scared you? Threaten to take your children away? Threaten to make false reports to Child Protective Services?

## PHYSICAL AND SEXUAL ABUSE

Trying to understand why someone you care about has hurt you can feel scary and confusing. The important thing to remember is that **nothing justifies someone hurting you physically, emotionally or sexually.** Domestic violence is never an appropriate response to relationship conflict.

Physical and sexual abuse is often used against a partner to gain power and control. It starts with your partner attempting to control your actions, getting aggressive or reactive when they cannot control you, and then choosing to use violence against you to regain control.

Physical and sexual abuse can take many forms. This list does not cover ALL forms of physical abuse. It is meant to give you initial ideas to help determine if someone is using power and control tactics against you. Remember to follow your instincts.

### Has your partner...

- » Gotten in your face, or personal space, to yell, threaten, or intimidate and scare you?
- » Broken or punched items around you? Thrown objects at you or in your direction?
- » Tried to hold you down to prevent you from doing something or leaving?
- » Purposefully locked you out of your shared living space as a punishment?
- » Abandoned you in dangerous places, or left you with no safe way to get home?
- » Forced you to ride in the car while driving recklessly?
- » Refused to let you get help or call 911 when you needed it or after a violent argument?
- » Forced or pressured you to have sex after a violent argument calling it “*make-up sex*”?
- » Pushed, shoved, or dragged you?
- » Slapped or punched you on any part of your body?
- » Used weapons or objects to hit you?
- » Grabbed your neck, covered your mouth and nose, or made it hard or impossible to breathe?
- » Threatened to kill you, your children, loved ones or pets?