

Do you feel safe?

Relationships are not easy. It can be hard to tell if you are having relationship or abuse problems. When your partner often uses power, fear or intimidation to control you, this may be domestic abuse.

Domestic violence can happen to anyone, regardless of gender, ethnicity, age, education, religion, disability status or sexual orientation. It can happen to couples who are married, living together or dating. Living with domestic violence can also be harmful to your children, even if they are not present when the violence happens.

Forms of abuse

Physical: Any forceful or violent behavior

Emotional: Any abuse that attacks someone's self-esteem and definitions of who they are

Economic: The use of finances to control or limit a partner

Psychological: Any abuse with the threat of violence, including fear, pain and degradation

Sexual: unwanted sexual activity without consent

Warning signs that your relationship may be abusive

Does your partner or caretaker...

- Make you or your children feel afraid?
- Often say you can't do anything right?
- Force you to have sex or try to control whether or not you get pregnant?
- Tell you that you deserve to be hurt or mistreated?
- Cause you to avoid topics or situations because you are afraid they will become angry?
- Undermine how you parent your children or threaten to take your children from you?
- Limit your access to money, necessities and personal documents?
- Use technology to watch or control your activities?
- Cause you to have frequent injuries from "accidents"?
- Cause you to frequently or suddenly miss work, school, or other plans?
- Make you feel isolated from friends and family?

You do NOT deserve to be treated this way! Help is available.

A Safety Plan

A safety plan is what you can do to help keep you and your children safe.

- Teach your children when and how to call 911, and make sure your children have a friend or family member to call if they sense danger.
- Pick a code or secret word to use with children, family, and friends to let them know when it is time for them to call for help.
- Have a plan for somewhere to go and a safe way to get there. Practice this with your children.
- A hidden bag, perhaps with a friend, with items you might need in an emergency – medications, keys, credit cards, money, driver’s license, car registration, important papers, passports, phone, extra clothing, toys, and things that mean a lot to you.

Helpful Resources

SAFE – Stop Abuse for Everyone (located in Austin) safeaustin.org is dedicated to ending violence through prevention, advocacy, and comprehensive services for individuals and families affected by abuse. If you are unsure if you or someone you know is in a violent or controlling relationship, or if you have questions about getting help, you can call, text or chat:

- 24/7 confidential SAFE line: (512) 267-SAFE (7233)
- Text: (737) 888-7233
- Chat: Start a live chat by going to safeaustin.org and clicking “SAFEline chat”

The National Domestic Violence Hotline thehotline.org can help you with:

- Crisis intervention, safety planning, information about domestic violence and direct connection to services in your area
- Help in over 100 languages
- Call 1-800-799-SAFE (7233) or 1-800-787-3224 (TTY) or (206) 787-3224 (video phone - only for deaf callers)

The information in this document is informed by the SAFE Alliance of Austin, Texas; the National Domestic Violence Hotline website; and the American Psychological Association.