



## Dear Friends and Family

Thank you for your concern and curiosity regarding how to be most helpful to someone you know. Your awareness that something could be wrong is the first step. We hope this packet helps you understand things a little better. Watching someone you care about experience abuse can be very taxing emotionally, so make sure you have support for yourself and please feel free to call and speak with an advocate at any time. 24/7, 365.

Sincerely,  
Christine Ann Domestic Abuse Services Staff

### **Warning Signs that someone you care about may be in an abusive relationship:**

- Do they seem isolated from people, places, or activities they have typically enjoyed?
- Do they seem unable to make decisions or answer questions for themselves, big or small?
- Do they seem disconnected from you and very attached to the other person, overly apologetic, or have they developed a low self-esteem?
- Do they lack access to their own finances?
- Do they seem fearful or often injured with unusual excuses?

If you recognize some of these changes in your friend/loved one-point out their changes. What do you see, hear or feel?

**Doing this may set up a counter viewpoint from the abusive person.** This will take time, but you will have planted a seed, and made them feel seen and less alone.

## Your instinct may be to swoop in and save your friend or encourage them to end the relationship. However, keep in mind...

Abuse is part of a pattern of controlling behaviors which take away a person's ability to make their own choices and believe in their capacity to do so. By empowering your friend/loved one to make the choice they would like to make, when they are ready to make it, is the best thing you can do. Restore their autonomy and respect their judgment, fears, and feelings!!

Encourage them to broaden their support system in any way they can. Abuse thrives in isolation, as it is a tactic abusive people tend to do, taking a person away from people, places or things that help them feel strong and supported. A support system is key to surviving, leaving, and avoiding unhealthy relationships.

Stay supportive, regardless of what your friend/loved one does. Establishing your support as unconditional allows your friend/loved one to concentrate on what they need, instead of what everyone else expects from them. The data tells us that it takes an average of over seven times before someone ends an abusive relationship for good and leaving can be a dangerous time, so encourage your friend/loved one to seek support of a trained professional. Help is Here, always, at Christine Ann.

### Always remember...

Whatever your loved one chooses to do (stay in the relationship, leave, seek help) is their decision, not yours.

## Important

- It is important that the unhealthy person does not know you're concerned, as then you may be someone they specifically target or cut their partner off from, your concern will mean a lot to your friend/loved one.
- You may feel caught in the middle, as you too might also love and care about the unhealthy person. This is normal. Abusive people are usually not always abusive. In fact, they can be the most loving-looking person out there.

**Your only job is to stay safe yourself and be a safe, supportive person for your friend/loved one.**



### Social/Technological:

- Monitoring communication or mileage.
- Using popularity, class, race, or disability to manipulate a person.
- Sending unwanted text messages or pressuring a person to look at, take, or send sexual photos.
- Breaking into a person's social networking profile, email, or cell phone.
- Stalking behaviors.

### Special Privilege/ Domination:

- Treating a person as insignificant.
- Being the only person to define roles in the relationship.
- Infringing on a person's right to make decisions.
- Always being right.
- Manipulating information.
- Forcing a person to accept a way of thinking.

### Spiritual/Cultural:

- Putting down one's beliefs, religion, or culture.
- Isolating a person from their community.
- Using beliefs to a person's right to make decisions.
- Using texts or cultural customs against a person.
- Forcing a person to adopt a mindset.

### Pets and Property Abuse Includes:

- Punching walls or doors.
- Smashing, stealing, to destroying property.
- Throwing objects.
- Physically harming pets or animals in a person's presence.
- Refusing to permit a person to buy pet food or provide pet care.

### Using Children:

- Belittling a person in front of the children.
- Making a person feel guilty about their children.
- Using children to monitor a person's activities.
- Using visitation as leverage or as an opportunity to harass a person.
- Abusing children or threatening to harm or take children away.

### Isolation is:

- Isolating a person from their friends or family.
- Controlling what a person does, where they go, who they see or talk to, or what they wear.
- Limiting a person's outside involvement, which often includes using jealousy to justify this action.

## Power and Control

### Financial:

- Preventing a person from getting or keeping a job.
- Making a person ask for money, live on an allowance, or hand over a paycheck.
- Withholding information about or access to the family income.
- Making a person account for every penny, closing bank accounts, or creating debt.
- Not paying child support.

### Threats to:

- Use physical or sexual violence.
- End their own life.
- Report alleged misconduct to Department of Health and Family Services.
- Pressuring victim to drop charges and/or do illegal things.
- Report a person to the police.
- Expose a person's HIV or immigration status, or other private information.
- By displaying weapons.

### Denying, Minimizing, Blaming:

- **Denying** that the abuse happened.
- **Minimizing** the impact of the abuse, making light of the abuse, or not taking the victim's concerns about it seriously.
- **Blaming** the abusive behavior on stress, alcohol, drugs, jealousy, or the survivor saying they asked for/caused it.

### Verbal/Emotional is:

- Name calling, swearing, yelling, insulting, using sarcasm, being condescending, playing mind games, using humiliation tactics or guilt/silent treatment.
- Making a person feel insecure, guilty, and/or crazy.
- Making a person afraid or fearful by using looks, actions, or gestures.
- Telling lies/sharing private information about a person.

### Social/Technological:

- Respecting people's privacy on social media and boundaries regarding texting, messaging, and calling.
- Sending photos/videos only with permission.
- Paying attention to the person, even when other friends are around.
- Going to places and activities enjoyed by both people.
- Giving as much as receiving.

### Equality:

- Acknowledging your right and the rights of others.
- Valuing the other person's opinions.
- Having a balance of giving and receiving.
- Sharing decision making and influence in the relationship.
- Respecting a person's right to say, "No".

### Spiritual/Cultural:

- Learning about a person's beliefs, practices, customs, or traditions.
- Encouraging a person's involvement in their community.
- Respecting a person's spiritual/religious beliefs, texts, practices or cultural traditions, regardless of whether you practice them or not.

### Pets and Property Abuse Includes:

- Respecting a person's boundaries with property and pets.
- Treating a pet as a valuable to the person and not as the tool for control.
- Supporting a person's decision to own and care for an animal.

### Using Children:

- Being a positive, non-violent role model for children.
- Supporting a person's in their parenting role.
- Respecting a safe person's parenting style.
- Co-parenting without hostile, controlling, or harassing behaviors.

### Trust and Support:

- Valuing the other person's right to have friends, feelings, activities and opinions.
- Understanding that a person's interest in others does not mean a lack of interest in you.
- Showing concern for the other person's physical and emotional boundaries and desires.
- Supporting the other person's freedom, identity, confidence, and life goals.

Physical

Respect  
and  
Safety

Sexual

### Financial:

- Having a legal income.
- Making financial decisions together.
- Making sure both people benefit from making financial arrangements.
- Staying up to date and open about financial payments and debts.

### Negotiation and Fairness:

- Seeking mutually satisfying resolutions to conflict.
- Problem-solving to aid mutual benefit.
- Using positive language to express opinions.
- Allowing differences of opinion.
- Accepting that some changes may be necessary.
- Being willing to compromise.

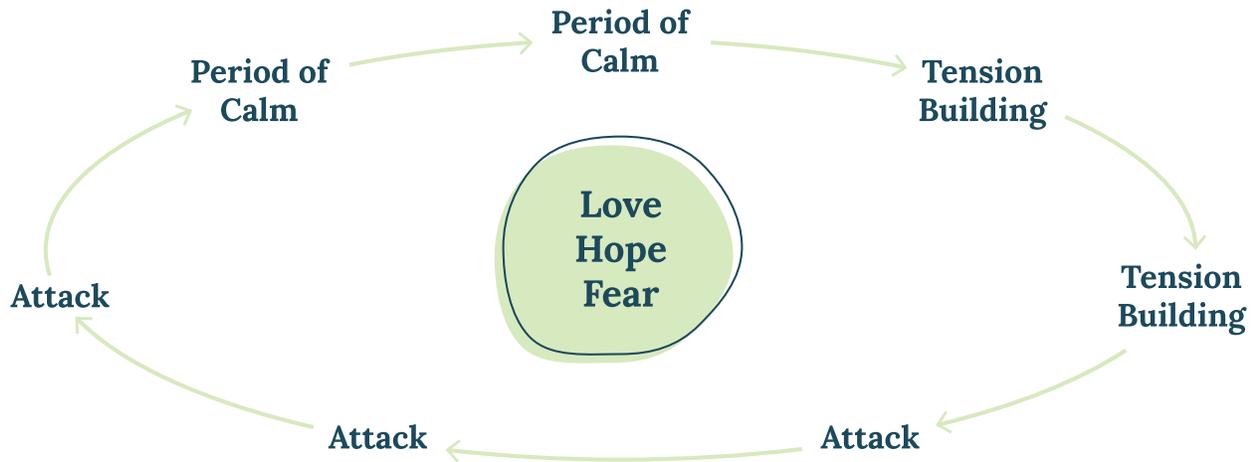
### Honesty and Accountability:

- Being truthful, even though it may not be an easy thing to do.
- Accepting responsibility for one's own actions by not making excuses for behavior.
- Being able to admit when someone is wrong.
- Admitting a past use of abuse or violence.
- Acknowledging responsibility for one's own health and happiness.

### Communication Includes:

- Speaking and acting in a way that makes the other person feel safe.
- Expressing thoughts and feelings.
- Communication openly and listening to the other person without judgment.
- Abiding by the mutually set boundaries in a relationship.
- Expressing how you want to be treated.

# The Cycle of Domestic Violence



1

## Period of Calm

Every relationship begins in the calm stage. The relationship is loving and fulfilling. In a **healthy relationship**, this stage becomes deeper as the individuals learn to handle conflict together. As a **controlling relationship** progresses through the cycle, this phase is characterized by apologies, blaming, promises to change, gifts, etc.

2

## Tension-Building

Every relationship has conflict. In a **healthy relationship**, tension may lead to an argument-ultimately towards problem solving. The problem is attacked, not the person. In a **controlling relationship**, the person is attacked, not the problem. This phase is characterized by criticism, yelling, swearing, using angry gestures, coercion, and threats.

3

## Attack

(Verbal/ Emotional/ Physical/ Sexual)

In a **healthy relationship**, any type of violence is unacceptable! Problem-solving involves negotiation- **NOT** threats, name-calling, and humiliation, physical or sexual assaults.

The cycle explains how three dynamics, love hope and fear, keep the cycle in motion and make it hard to end a violent relationship.

**Love...**for the person, the relationship has its good points, it's not all bad.  
**Hope...**that it will change, the relationship didn't begin like this.  
**Fear...** of the abuser (past & future threats) and of the unknown.

It is important to understand that things are always changing in your friend/loved one's life. Promises are being made along with apologies, and that often makes your friend loved one feel hopeful. Normal life happens and before someone realizes it, they are back in the state of tension, before some explosion. Over time, honeymoon/calm phases become smaller, tension becomes increasingly normal, and abuse/attacks become more severe. Though this is presented here as a cycle, it can also be thought of as a spiral- something that gets worse over time in either frequency or severity.

**We support survivors of abuse at every stage in the journey. We also support friends/loved ones.**

## FAQ

### Why is it so hard to leave?

- Fear
- Hope
- Love
- Threats
- Self-blame
- Children
- Economics
- Lack of access to resources
- Lack of support
- Isolation
- Societal pressure
- Low self-esteem

### Helpful statements to say to your loved one:

- I am concerned for you.
- I am here for you.
- I believe you. Thank you for sharing that with me.
- How can I help you?
- You do not deserve this. (Here is what I have observed:\_\_\_\_\_)

Use I-statements to share your feelings and what you are seeing or hearing. (e.g. "I felt really scared yesterday when I heard them scream at you.")

### What abuse is not:

**Just a bad relationship:** Domestic abuse is a broad term happening in all types of relationships including but not limited to marriages, dating partners, intimate partners, individuals living together, family members, etc.

**Caused by stress or drug use:** Though stress and drug use can intensify abuse, abuse is a choice to gain and/or maintain power and control over another person.

**Something that discriminates:** Anyone can be abused, and anyone can abuse. Domestic abuse impacts people in all racial, socioeconomic, religious, educational backgrounds.

#### **Something fixed by anger management alone:**

Abuse is a choice and it takes a person choosing to be non-violent for things to even begin to change.

**Always easy to spot:** Most abusers use a "mask" to further isolate their victim, so they appear one way to the outside world and a different way behind closed doors.

**Something deserved:** Always believe your friend/loved one, always remind them they do not deserve this. Your belief in and support of your loved one empowers them and helps them feel stronger to make decisions.

**When should I involve Law Enforcement? If you see or hear physical violence, call Law Enforcement.**