



Intimate Partner Violence



What is intimate partner violence?

This term (sometimes called IPV for short) refers to many behaviors that can take place between people in close relationships — including people who are dating, living together, married, or even separated or divorced. Sometimes intimate partner violence involves a single episode of violence, but other times it is an ongoing pattern of battering.

It includes four types of behavior:

- **Physical violence:** When a person uses physical force to hurt or try to hurt a partner. This includes slapping, hitting, or kicking.
- **Sexual violence:** Forcing a partner to take part in any kind of sexual act when the partner does not give consent.
- **Threats:** When someone threatens to harm one's partner or his or her possessions or loved ones. Threats can involve the use of weapons, words, or gestures that communicate the intent to cause harm.
- **Emotional abuse:** Includes stalking, isolating a partner from friends and family, or threatening to commit suicide if a partner leaves.



Intimate partner violence often starts with emotional abuse. It may progress to other types of violence. Sometimes only one form of violence is present, but other times all four are present in a relationship.

Take intimate partner violence seriously and get help today!

If you or someone you love has been the victim of intimate partner violence, please seek help. **VERY IMPORTANT:** If you seek help via telephone or online, please be sure to use a safe telephone or computer that cannot be monitored by the abuser.

National Domestic Violence Hotline
1-800-799-SAFE or www.thehotline.org

Myths and misunderstandings about intimate partner violence:

“Intimate partner violence is rare; it happens to very few people.”

False. Unfortunately, IPV is very common. Every year, women in the U.S. are the victims of almost 5 million assaults committed by an intimate partner.

“Intimate partner violence only happens to women.”

This is not true. Each year, men are the victims of nearly 3 million episodes of intimate partner violence.

“Victims of intimate partner violence should just leave. If they don’t, it’s their own fault.”

No one deserves to be hurt by a partner. Someone who suffers emotional abuse such as threats may be afraid to leave. In addition, many people are unsure about where to go or who to ask for help if they are assaulted by their partner.

Leaving a violent partner may not be easy. Fortunately, there is help available. Anyone can make anonymous calls to the National Domestic Violence Hotline to ask for help: 1-800-799-SAFE. Many communities also have local numbers to call or shelters where victims can go for help.



“Most of the time, IPV is just a push or a slap. It’s rarely all that serious.”

Intimate partner violence is always a serious problem. No one deserves to be threatened or hurt by a partner. The longer the abuse goes on, the more serious the effects on the victim. Threats and violence are not present in relationships that are healthy and safe.

“As long as children don’t witness IPV, they are ok.”

Intimate partner violence not only hurts the victim, it hurts children. Parents who are victims of IPV have a harder time meeting the needs of their children. Also, children pick up on violence around them and this impacts their emotional, physical, and social health. In fact, children exposed to IPV are at higher risk of being violent or victims of IPV in their relationships as teens and adults.

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