



What Is Domestic Violence?

Domestic violence is behavior - emotional, psychological, physical, or sexual abuse - that one person in an intimate relationship uses in order to control the other. It takes many different forms and includes behavior such as threats, name-calling, isolation, withholding of money, actual or threatened physical harm and sexual assault. Most domestic violence is committed against women by their male partners. It also occurs in lesbian and gay relationships and is common in teenage dating relationships. In a small number of cases, men are abused by female partners, but because 91 to 95 percent of all adult domestic violence assaults are perpetrated by men against their female partners, this booklet will refer to victims as female and abusers as male. In any case, every victim of domestic violence, whether female or male, gay or heterosexual, has the right to legal relief.

The following checklist may help you decide if you or someone you know is being abused. Does your partner:

- constantly criticize you and your abilities as a spouse or partner, parent or employee?
- behave in an over-protective manner or become extremely jealous?
- threaten to hurt you, your children, pets, family members, friends or himself?
- prevent you from seeing family or friends?
- get suddenly angry or "lose his temper"?
- destroy personal property or throw things around?
- deny you access to family assets like bank accounts, credit cards, or the car; or control all finances and force you to account for what you spend?
- use intimidation or manipulation to control you or your children?
- hit, punch, slap, kick, shove, choke or bite you?
- prevent you from going where you want to, when you want to, and with whomever you want to?
- make you have sex when you don't want to or do things sexually that you don't want to do?
- humiliate or embarrass you in front of other people?

If you answered "yes" to any of these questions, you may be a victim of domestic violence. You are not to blame and you are not alone - millions of women are abused by their partners every year. Not all acts of domestic violence are violations of the law. In any case, you need not face domestic violence alone. You deserve help, and help is available:

Nassau County Coalition Against Domestic Violence

(516) 542-0404
24 hour Hotline

Circulo de la Hispanidad, Inc./Salva DV Program

(516) 889-2840
24 hour Hotline

The foregoing information was excerpted from the following: [New York State Coalition Against Domestic Violence. (2004). *Domestic Violence Handbook*, New York.]. The Handbook was developed and published with funding support from the New York State Department of Social Services. For further information their website is: www.nyscadv.org. To order a copy of the Handbook, contact the New York State Coalition Against Domestic Violence via the statewide Hotline at 1-800-942-6906 or call their office at 518-482-5465, 9am-5pm, Monday-Friday.

Quote of the Month

"It is our choices that show what we truly are, far more than our abilities."

~J.K. Rowling

