



Domestic Violence: Getting Help

If you are in an abusive relationship, seek help from relatives, friends, law enforcement or community resources. With their help, you may be able to stop the abuse or, if necessary, leave the relationship. Realize that once the abuse has started, it will nearly always get worse.

Seeking help

Don't try to confront your abuser by yourself or try to leave without a well-established plan and help from others. There are many places for you to seek help:

- friends and family
- 24-hour hotlines for advice and guidance
- shelters where you and your children can stay temporarily
- support groups
- legal advice to guide you if you wish to separate or get a restraining order
- medical and mental health professionals who can care for your physical and emotional wounds

- religious leaders who can support and counsel you

These people can give you emotional support if you decide to stay in the relationship. If you decide to leave, they can give you practical advice and assistance.

If you are in immediate danger, call 911. The police can arrest your abuser, help you get a restraining order, take you to a battered women's shelter or take you for emergency medical care.

Forming a safety plan

If you decide to leave, get help putting together a safety plan. This plan will include memorizing important phone numbers, telling a neighbor you trust, securing a hiding place in the home, locating other safe places to go, and assembling an escape bag with important papers, money and clothing.

Remember to get help with your escape plan because your attempt to leave will anger your abuser. If you don't successfully get away, your partner may take it out on you.

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