

Domestic abuse is a pattern of behavior used by one person to gain and maintain power and control over another in an intimate relationship. It can affect anyone — regardless of gender, age, race, or socioeconomic status — and includes various forms of mistreatment.

FORMS OF ABUSE

Recognising the Different Types

- **Physical Abuse:** Hitting, slapping, choking, or any form of physical harm.
- **Emotional Abuse:** Insults, threats, manipulation, and humiliation.
- **Sexual Abuse:** Forced sexual acts or coercion.
- **Financial Abuse:** Controlling access to money or resources.
- **Digital Abuse:** Monitoring online activity or using technology to harass.

WARNING SIGNS

What to Look For

Physical Signs

- Frequent bruises, black eyes, or injuries with vague explanations
- Wearing long sleeves or heavy makeup to cover marks
- Sudden changes in appearance or hygiene

Emotional & Psychological Signs

- Low self-esteem or sudden personality changes
- Fear of upsetting their partner
- Apologising excessively or defending their partner's behaviour

Controlling Behaviour

- Isolation from friends and family
- Monitoring whereabouts, phone, or internet use
- Dictating clothing, appearance, or daily activities

Financial Control

- Denying access to money or bank accounts
- Forcing dependence by preventing employment
- Stealing or misusing funds

Social Signs

- Avoiding social events or work without clear reasons
- Constantly checking in with their partner
- Appearing anxious or withdrawn in public

WHAT TO DO

If You Suspect Abuse

- **Plan for safety:** Create a safety plan that includes emergency contacts, safe places, and important documents. Avoid telling someone to "just leave" — leaving can be the most dangerous time.
 - **Seek local support:** Find shelters, legal aid, counselling, and financial assistance through local providers or advocacy groups.
 - **Believe and support survivors:** Listen without judgment. Affirm their experience: "You don't deserve this," "I believe you," "It's not your fault."
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CRISIS SUPPORT

- National Domestic Violence Hotline — 1-800-799-SAFE (7233) or text START to 88788



- Strong Hearts Native Helpline — 844-762-8483
- National Center for Victims of Crime — 855-4-VICTIM (855-484-2846)