



## Defining Partner Violence

**PARTNER VIOLENCE IS WHEN ONE PARTNER IN AN INTIMATE** relationship abuses the other. The abuse can be physical, sexual, emotional or a combination of all three.

Physical abuse can include very aggressive acts like beatings and forced sexual activity, including intercourse, or it can take the form of less severe acts like throwing, shoving and slapping.

In emotional abuse, the abusers frequently humiliates and puts down the victim. The weapon of emotional abuse include verbal insults, threats, control of physical activity, unfounded accusations of infidelity, control of economic decisions and social isolation.

**Partner violence can happen between all sorts of people, and in all sorts of relationships.** It happens between couples who are married and between couples who aren't living together. It can be abuse by a man against a woman, or by a woman against a man. It can occur in gay or lesbian couples.

Partner violence is a common reality in our society. It occurs in all social classes, ethnic groups, cultures and religions. Most people don't realize how common, because very often, victims of abuse keep quiet.

### Signs of Partner Violence

Abusive relationships have a powerful psychological impact on the victims. Victims of an abusive relationship may experience some of the following emotions and behaviors:

- Agitation, anxiety and chronic apprehension
- Constant state of alertness
- Difficulty relaxing or sleeping
- A sense of hopelessness or helplessness

- Difficulty making decisions
- A belief that one deserves the abuse
- A belief that one is responsible for the abuse

Victims of partner violence can also have physical symptoms including:

- headaches
- asthma
- gastrointestinal symptoms
- chronic pain
- restless sleep or inability to sleep
- genital soreness
- pelvic pain
- back pain

**No one deserves to be abused.** Help is available.

**If you are in immediate danger, call 911.** The police can arrest your abuser, help you get a restraining order, take you to a shelter