



What are the different forms of abuse?

Many Latinas experience emotional, physical, and sexual abuse, as well as other forms of control in their relationships. This happens in heterosexual and same-sex relationships. Many times women are not sure if they are victims of domestic violence and don't know what to do.

If you think that to be abused you have to have been beaten, bruised, or injured, you should know that abuse can take other forms as well.

VERBAL OR EMOTIONAL ABUSE

- Have you lived with someone who frequently screams at you, insults, or humiliates you? Or maybe criticizes you constantly about your skills as a partner or as a mother?
- Does he become extremely jealous?
- Does he prevent you from seeing your family or friends, screens your calls or reads your mail?
- Has he threatened to take the children from you if you don't do what he wants?
- Has he threatened to injure you or your children, pets or family members?
- Does he threaten to call the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) and tell them about your legal status so you are deported?
- Does he deny you access to the car, bank accounts, or does he control the family finances and make you account for every single expense?
- Does he destroy your things or items in the house?

PHYSICAL OR SEXUAL ABUSE

- Instead of discussing something that may have happened, does he quickly lose his temper, and push you, pull your hair, or beat you?
- Has he forced you to have sex when you are tired, sick, or simply not in the mood?
- Has he made you participate in sexual acts against your will?

These are some of the behaviors that the abuser uses to control and hurt you. If any of these have happened to you, you may be a victim of abuse.

But remember, you are not alone. Unfortunately, there are many women who suffer similar circumstances.

The good thing is that you have alternatives, and there are people who can help.

What can you do if you have been abused?

You are not the cause of the abuse and do not deserve to be abused. We all have the right to live a life free of violence.

CALL A LOCAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PROGRAM.

You can speak about:

- ★ your situation
- ★ a safety plan for you and your children
- ★ a plan to leave the violent person
- ★ a safe place, a shelter, or a safe-house for you and your children
- ★ support groups or counseling for batterers and survivors
- ★ referrals to programs that can help you with clothes or food
- ★ how to obtain other legal services, or a protection order

People who work in these programs understand your situation. Often, they know the cultural and spiritual values of Latinas and know how to guide you. Moreover, the people who work in these programs know the laws of the state where you live, are familiar with the new immigration laws, and may be able to help you solve issues with your immigration status.

In these programs they will help you find alternatives that are available to you and everything is kept confidential.

LOOK FOR LEGAL ASSISTANCE

You can get a protection order as well as other court orders and obtain information about immigration laws.

Prepare a safety plan

Before another violent act takes place, make plans so you are sure where you are going and how you will get there in case of emergency. Do not tell your partner what you are planning. Leave the following items with a friend or neighbor:

- A bag of clothes for you and the children
- Important documents (copies of passports, green cards or visas, birth and/or marriage certificates, police reports, and medical reports. Include your children's documents, and if possible, those of your spouse/partner).
- An extra set of keys and coins to make phone calls.

The use of violence in relationships is a problem that affects many women and their children. Sometimes woman don't dare to look for help for fear of the unknown, fear of the abuser, because they have nowhere to go, and for fear of having to care for the children on their own.





Although the best way to solve problems that arise in the home is through communication, many times women don't dare to speak with their partners. They are afraid to be screamed at, humiliated, or that their partner may become violent and hurt them.

Have you experienced any of these situations?



When you get angry at your partner, do you tell him why you are angry?

If your partner gets angry at you, does he tell you why he is angry?

Do not risk your life or your children's lives. You do not deserve to be abused by anybody.

We know that making the decision to change your life is not easy. But by having the necessary information and support, you can live free of violence and in peace.

HOW TO GET HELP

There are many places that offer 24-hour support, emergency shelters, legal services, and information about safe options for yourself or your friends. For more information and assistance, please call:

National Domestic Violence Hotline
1-800-799-7233
1-800-787-3224 TTY

Locally, call:

Este folleto es parte de una serie creada por la Alianza Latina Nacional para Erradicar la Violencia Doméstica. Para obtener copias de este folleto, vaya a www.dvalianza.org o mande un mensaje por correo electrónico a information@dvalianza.org



This project was supported by Grant No. 2001-WT-BX-K004 awarded by the Office on Violence Against Women, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. Points of view in this document are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.



Homes Free of Violence

Options and Help for Abused Women

