

## Where to Look for Help

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### **The Catholic Church:**

Read "When I Call For Help" to learn more about what the Church teaches at

<http://tiny.cc/dvhelp> (English and Spanish)

### **Domestic Violence Resources and Safety Planning Guidelines**

- National Domestic Violence Hotline  
1-800-799-SAFE (1-800-799-7233)  
www.ndvh.org
- GA Coalition Against Domestic Violence www.gcadv.org  
24 Hour Hotline for Georgia:  
1-800-33-Haven (1-800-334-2836)
- Men Stopping Violence  
www.menstoppingviolence.org  
(404) 270-9894

### **For help in many languages:**

- International Women's House  
24 Hour Hotline: (770) 413-5557
- Tapestri, Inc.: (404) 299-2185 or  
1-866-562-2873 www.tapestri.org
- Domestic Violence Line (Spanish)  
(404) 413-6348
- Caminar Latino www.caminarlatino.org
- Good Shepherd Services (Vietnamese,  
Mandarin, Cantonese) 770-455-9379,  
Clayton and South: 404-366-8677
- United Way: Dial 211

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**If You Are In Immediate Danger  
Call 911/ Police**



## Check Your Relationship For Abuse

- Does your partner embarrass or make fun of you in front of others, frequently criticize you, belittle your choices, achievements and goals?
- Are you told you are worthless or unable to manage or make decisions on your own?
- Are you frequently checked up on, mistrusted, falsely accused of being disloyal or unfaithful?
- Are you blamed by your partner for what your partner does or how your partner feels?
- Do you feel responsible for your partner's frequent mood swings, drinking or drug use?
- Do you find yourself guarding your words or actions so your partner doesn't lose control?
- Do you more and more frequently give in rather than cause a problem?
- Have you gradually given up contact with friends or family to please your partner?
- Have you been forced, by threats or violence, to do something you don't want to do?
- Has your partner shoved, slapped, hit, kicked, choked or in any other way hurt you?
- Are you sometimes scared for your safety and sanity yet continue to believe that your partner would change if you could just love them better?
- Do you believe your partner has the right to hurt you since that's how it was in your family?
- Do you accept being treated this way because you've been told that this is God's will?
- Are you worried for your safety if you leave?
- If some or all of these describe your relationship seek advice and help now now.

# Domestic Violence and Abuse

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*Break the Silence,  
Stop the Cycle*



## Are you in an abusive relationship?

Domestic abuse and violence is often shrouded in silence. Families may hide it, and those outside the home are reluctant to interfere. Who wants to believe this can happen? But it exists among the rich and poor, across cultures and religions, whether couples are married, dating or living together.

When someone maintains control and power over their partner through fear and intimidation, they are abusive. This can be done verbally, physically, sexually, psychologically, or even financially. Abuse often gets worse over time. Times of family transition such as pregnancy, separation or divorce can be the specially dangerous. Some abusers are women, but violence against women is more common and much more likely to result in injury or death. In Georgia, it's the leading cause of injury for women and girls aged 15-44. And over half of the men who abuse their wives also beat their children.

Whether children are beaten or not, they are always traumatized by abuse and violence at home. They are now at great risk to become abusers or to become trapped in other abusive relationships later on. Thus family violence is transmitted from generation to generation.

If you have misgivings about the way you are being treated in your relationship, or have been advised by someone you trust that you aren't being treated with respect and dignity, you may be in an abusive relationship.

## If you are not sure who is causing the problem...

Talk it over with someone you trust and who has your best interest at heart. One of the most powerful means for abuse to continue is for the abuser to slowly convince you that your opinion has little value, that you are incompetent or stupid, and that any problems that exist between you are actually your fault. They can gradually isolate you from family or friends who would disagree and you lose confidence in your own judgment. You can come to believe that you have no one to rely on but your abuser, while at the same time fearing what they might do next.

## If you are abusive...

You may truly love this person and yet treat them very badly through insults, threats, forcing them to do your will regardless of their wishes, physical or sexual violence. You may feel terrible after an incident and promise never to repeat it, but tensions or stress may build, and you lash out again. You may eventually convince yourself that hurting the one you love is proper, necessary or justified by their behavior. However, nothing your loved one says or does can ever justify you inflicting pain or humiliation.

### The Cycle of Abuse

abusive behavior  
remorse  
honeymoon phase  
tension builds  
abusive behavior



## The Catholic Church condemns domestic violence...

Religion has been misused for generations as a means for one to control another. "A correct reading of Scripture leads people to an understanding of the equal dignity of men and women and to relationships based on mutuality and love... women and men are created in God's image." <sup>1</sup>

Sometimes a spouse will believe that they must endure abuse for the sake of their vows. Jesus tells us to forgive "seventy times seven." However, He never meant for this to enable one person to keep harming another. Even when you forgive, you remain responsible before God to keep yourself safe in body and mind. The Church does not ever want you to be harmed for the sake of reconciliation.

Start with the resources under Where to Look for Help. If you're abused, create a safety plan. Then, whether you are a victim, an abuser or both, seek help. You aren't alone. Break the silence and stop the cycle.

<sup>1</sup> When I Call For Help U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops

