

# Domestic Violence Awareness Month



**October is National Domestic Violence Awareness Month**, a time to acknowledge domestic violence survivors and raise awareness. Domestic violence is prevalent in every community, and affects all people regardless of age, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, gender, race, or religion. In an effort to provide information and resources to the community, HARC created this infographic.

## What is Domestic Violence?



Domestic violence, also called "intimate partner violence" is a **pattern of behavior in a relationship that is used to gain or maintain power and control over an intimate partner in a domestic setting, such as a marriage or romantic relationship.** Forms of domestic violence can include emotional abuse, psychological assault, economic control, physical violence, and/or sexual violence.

**More than 12 million people are affected by domestic violence each year in the United States.<sup>1</sup>**

## Warning Signs of Abuse<sup>2</sup>

Abusive relationships typically don't start abusive -- they begin quite happily.



Subtly, **over time, unhealthy behaviors start to emerge.** Red flags and warning signs of abuse include:

- Extreme jealousy; accusing the victim of flirting or cheating
- Possessiveness
- Verbal abuse
- A bad temper
- Controlling behavior
- Isolating you from others
- Forcing/pressuring sex
- Sabotage or obstruction of the victim's ability to work or attend school
- Abuse of other family members, children or pets



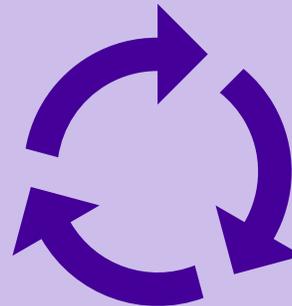
## Cycle of Abuse<sup>3</sup>

The cycle of violence is a model developed to explain the complexity of **abusive relationships and that abusive behaviors are often accompanied with loving behaviors.** This model helps all of us understand that breaking the cycle of violence is much more complicated than just "getting out" or leaving.

There are three phases in the cycle of violence: (1) Tension-Building Phase, (2) Acute or Crisis Phase, and (3) Calm or Honeymoon Phase.

### Crisis Phase

- The blow up
- Worse than before
- Threats
- Destruction
- Fear for your or your child's safety
- Drug and/or alcohol abuse



### Calm Phase

- You're reminded of the person you fell in love with
- "It won't happen again"
- "I'll get help"
- "I love you"

### Tension Phase

- Walking on eggshells
- Everything has to be perfect
- Always worrying or in fear
- Feeling "something" is about to happen

## Domestic Violence in the Coachella Valley

**1,339**

In 2019, there were a total of **1,335 domestic violence-related 911 calls** for assistance from the 9 cities in the Coachella Valley. This is about 3.9 calls per 1,000 people.

Year	2019
Total Domestic Violence-Related Calls	1,335
Cases with Weapons Involved	583 (43.7%)
Cases with Strangulation	62 (4.6%)

Source: California Department of Justice

## Helping Someone Facing Domestic Violence: As an Employer<sup>4</sup>



### Warning Signs to look for:

- **Excessive personal calls** or discussion of relationship issues
- **Physical symptoms** — from bruises to frequent headaches, stomach pains, muscle aches and general medical complaints
- Coming to work late or leaving early
- **Unplanned or increased absenteeism**
- Diminished productivity
- **Trouble concentrating** on tasks or making decisions

### How to Help an Employee:

- Let them know you **support** them and are available if they want to talk
- Give them a parking spot near the door or walk them to their cars
- **Remove their name or contact information from public directories**
- **Move their workstations** away from windows or entrances
- **Rework their schedules as needed**
- Allow them to seek help during the workday

### More Things to Consider:

- Consider **providing a training for supervisors to recognize the signs of domestic violence**. Training should address security procedures. For example, not accidentally giving victims' information to abusers, and what to do if an abuser arrives at the workplace.
- **Consider leveraging an Employee Assistance Program (EAP)**. EAPs are confidential services typically offered by third parties, such as health insurance carriers. EAPs have professionals who can help your employees with counseling and safety planning related to domestic violence.

## Helping Someone Facing Domestic Violence: As a Friend<sup>5</sup>

### Do's:

- **Approach them respectfully**. If they deny that there is a problem, respect their privacy. Don't force the person to talk when they are not ready.
- **Listen without judging**. Never blame them for what is happening or underestimate their fear of danger.
- **Allow them to make their own decisions**. Domestic violence is complex and ending the relationship can be **difficult**.
- **Help them find a domestic violence support service**.

### Don'ts

- **Don't blame them** for the domestic violence. It is likely they feel many difficult emotions such as guilt — it's important to be positive.
- **Avoid blaming** alcohol, drugs, or mental health issues for violence behavior.
- **Avoid telling them what to do**.

Abusive relationships are extremely complex situations and it takes a lot of courage to leave. Beyond the physical risks of leaving an abusive situation, there are countless other reasons why people stay in their relationships. **Some reasons people stay in abusive relationships** include fear, love, normalized abuse, lack of resources, immigration status, cultural context, and children. In order to help someone, it is critical to understand the situation they're facing.



# How to Leave an Abusive Relationship<sup>6</sup>

If you are in an unsafe, violent relationship, **it is important to always have a safety plan in place.** You do not have to leave the relationship today or do it all at once, but a safety plan is critical for making a safe escape. Below are some things to consider for your safety plan.



## Who can I talk to about leaving?

It might be unsafe if an abusive partner finds out you're thinking about leaving. Try to talk only to people who will not tell the abuser about your plans. Some people to consider are:

- **Family or friends** who knew you before you met an abusive partner.
- A **counselor or therapist.**
- Your **doctor or nurse.**
- A **teacher, counselor, or principal at your child's school.** An adult at your child's school can help connect you to shelters and other safe places in your community.
- If you work outside the home, the **human resources (HR) department at your workplace** may be able to connect you to resources in your community.



**Do not be ashamed, abuse is not your fault.**

## Documents to Take With You

Keep documents (or copies of documents) you will need if you must leave quickly. It is also important to keep these items secret from your partner. Some documents include:

- **Identity records** including birth certificates, Social Security cards, drivers license, passports or immigration papers for you and your children
- **Health insurance cards** for you and your children
- **Financial records**, including recent bank statements and stocks or mutual fund records
- The title or lease paperwork for your car
- **Housing documents**, such as rental agreements, mortgage statements, or the title
- Statements for any **retirement** plans
- The past two years' **tax returns**
- A written copy of **phone numbers** or important **addresses.**



## Create a Safety Plan

Your safety plan will help you be prepared. Some things for your safety plan include:

- **Identify safe friends and safe places to go.** Create a code word to use with friends, family, or neighbors to let them know you are in danger without the abuser finding out. If possible, agree on a secret location where they can pick you up.
- **Keep an alternate cellphone nearby.** Your partner might be able to trace the numbers if you call for help from your home phone or cell phone.



- **Memorize or write down the phone numbers of friends, family, or shelters.** If your partner takes your phone, you should still have access to these contacts.
- **Make a list of things to take if you have to leave quickly.** (See the Safety Packing List)
- If you can, **hide an extra set of car keys** so you can leave if your partner takes away your usual keys.
- Try to **take any evidence of abuse** or violence if you leave your partner.
- Keep a separate savings account so you have **access to money** if you need it.



## Abuse and Cultural Context

Cultural context can play a large role in a survivor's decision to leave an abusive relationship. The specific cultural setting may be determined by your race, gender, sexuality, class, education, or any number of factors. Thus, **certain communities experience heightened vulnerability** to domestic violence and are outlined here:

### Abuse in Disability Communities<sup>7</sup>



**Non-traditional forms of abuse impacting people with disabilities can make it difficult to identify the abuse when it occurs.** Examples of non-traditional abuse include:

- Stealing or withholding Social Security Disability checks.
- Using a disability in an effort to shame or humiliate.
- Withholding, damaging, or destroying assistive devices.
- Preventing their partner from seeing a doctor.
- Harming or threatening to harm their partner's service animal.
- Using the disability to justify abuse.

### Abuse in LGBTQ+ Communities<sup>8</sup>



**Obstacles to reaching safety that LGBTQ+ people might confront include:**

- Fear of isolation or ostracization from family or community stemming from their prejudice.
- Shame or embarrassment around identity.
- Fear of not receiving services because of discrimination or stereotypes about LGBTQ+ people or relationships used to minimize the abuse being experienced.

### Abuse in Immigrant Communities<sup>9</sup>



**Immigrant survivors often choose not to report incidents of abuse out of fear of immigration consequences.** Common types of abuse:

- Abusive partners may attempt to prevent their partner from learning English or from communicating or interacting with others, especially anyone with a shared cultural background.
- Threatening deportation or withdrawal of petitions for legal status is a common abuse tactic.
- Manipulation regarding citizenship or residency.

## Local Resource

### Shelter From the Storm

Shelter From The Storm is a domestic victim assistance service and shelter provider in the Coachella Valley. They provide a 24-hour crisis hotline, crisis counseling, safety planning, assistance with finding shelter, advocacy with the police, and other services.

Shelter From The Storm's Hotlines:

24 Hour Toll Free Crisis Hotline: 800-775-6055

24 Hour Crisis Hotline: 760-328-SAFE (7233)

Visit <https://www.shelterfromthestorm.com> for information.

## Online Support

### National Domestic Violence Hotline:

- Call 1-800-799-7233
- Or visit: <https://www.thehotline.org>

### Hope Recovery

- Register for free online support groups and workshops by visiting: <https://www.hope4-recovery.org/group.html>

## Sources

1. Black, M.C., Basile, K.C., Breiding, M.J., Smith, S.G., Walters, M.L., Merrick, M.T., Chen, J., & Stevens, M.R. (2011). The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS): 2010 Summary Report. Atlanta, GA: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

2. <https://ncadv.org/signs-of-abuse>

3. <https://www.shelterforhelpinemergency.org/get-help/cycle-violence>

4. <https://thebenefitguide.com/how-to-support-employees-struggling-with-domestic-violence/>

5. <https://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/domestic-violence/my-situation/i-want-to-help-someone>

6. <https://www.womenshealth.gov/relationships-and-safety/domestic-violence/leaving-abusive-relationship>

7. <https://www.thehotline.org/resources/abuse-in-disability-communities/>

8. <https://www.thehotline.org/resources/abuse-in-lgbtq-communities/>

9. <https://www.thehotline.org/resources/abuse-in-immigrant-communities/>

For more resources,  
please visit:

[HARCdata.org](https://www.harcdata.org)

