

- Leave, or have someone come and stay with you. Go to a battered women's shelter — call a crisis hotline in your community or a health center to locate a shelter. If you believe that you, and your children, are in danger — leave immediately.
- Get medical attention from your doctor or a hospital emergency room. Ask the staff to photograph your injuries and keep detailed records in case you decide to take legal action.
- Contact your family court for information about a civil protection order that does not involve criminal charges or penalties.

## HAVE YOU HURT SOMEONE IN YOUR FAMILY?

- Accept the fact that your violent behavior will destroy your family. Be aware that you break the law when you physically hurt someone.
- Take responsibility for your actions and get help.
- When you feel tension building, get away. Work off the angry energy through a walk, a project, a sport.
- Call a domestic violence hotline or health center and ask about counseling and support groups for people who batter.

## THE HIGH COSTS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

- Men and women who follow their parents' example and use violence to solve conflicts are teaching the same destructive behavior to their children.
- Jobs can be lost or careers stalled because of injuries, arrests, or harassment.
- Violence may even result in death.

### For More Information

#### Domestic Violence Hotline 800-799-SAFE

This new, nationwide toll-free hotline will provide immediate crisis intervention, counseling, and referrals to emergency shelters and services

National Resource Center on Domestic Violence  
800-537-2238

Family Violence Prevention Fund  
383 Rhode Island Street, Suite 304  
San Francisco, CA 94103-5133  
415-252-8900



Crime Prevention Tips from  
National Crime Prevention Council  
1700 K Street, NW, Second Floor  
Washington, DC 20006-3817  
[www.weprevent.org](http://www.weprevent.org)

and



Clearwater Police Department  
645 Pierce Street  
Clearwater, FL 33756



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# DOMESTIC VIOLENCE



## THE HIDDEN CRIME



**A**s many as four million women in this country suffer some kind of violence at the hands of their husbands or boyfriends each year.

*Very few will tell anyone — a friend, a relative, a neighbor, or the police.*

*Victims of domestic violence come from all walks of life, all cultures, all income groups, all ages, all religions. They share feelings of helplessness, isolation, guilt, fear, and shame.*

## ARE YOU ABUSED?

### Does the Person You Love...

- “Track” all of your time?
- Constantly accuse you of being unfaithful?
- Discourage your relationships with family and friends?
- Prevent you from working or attending school?
- Criticize you for little things?
- Anger easily when drinking or using other drugs?
- Control all finances and force you to account in detail for what you spend?
- Humiliate you in front of others?
- Destroy personal property or sentimental items?
- Hit, punch, slap, kick, or bite you or the children?
- Use or threaten to use a weapon against you?
- Threaten to hurt you or the children?
- Force you to have sex against your will?

**If you find yourself saying yes to any of these — it's time to get help.**

## DON'T IGNORE THE PROBLEM

- Talk to someone. Part of the abuser's power comes from secrecy. Victims are often ashamed to let anyone know about intimate family problems. Go to a friend or neighbor, or call a domestic violence hotline to talk to a counselor.
- Plan ahead and know what you will do if you are attacked again. If you decide to leave, choose a place to go; set aside some money. Put important papers together — marriage license, birth certificates, checkbooks — in a place where you can get them quickly.
- Learn to think independently. Try to plan for the future and set goals for yourself.

## IF YOU ARE HURT, WHAT CAN YOU DO?

There are no easy answers, but there are things you can do to protect yourself.

- Call the police or sheriff. Assault, even by family members, is a crime. The police often have information about shelters and other agencies that help victims of domestic violence.

