

**D**omestic violence is a problem that you do not have to face alone. Advocates from the Saint Paul Domestic Abuse Intervention Project can help you understand how you can use the criminal justice system to hold the abusive person accountable for the abuse.

Project advocates can also lend support and talk with you about other resources available to help you deal with the domestic violence in your life.

We are here to help you regardless of your age, ethnic and racial background, sexual orientation, or economic level. A Spanish speaking advocate is available.

St Paul Domestic Abuse  
Intervention Project  
651-645-2824

Is battering ever life-threatening?

Yes. A woman is more likely to die at home at the hands of her abuser than by any other form of violence.

Am I to blame for the abuse?

No. The abusive person is always responsible for the violence. It is that person's attitudes, choices, and problems that cause the cause.

Do battered women ever feel like they are crazy?

Yes. Many abusive people are good at making women think they are crazy. The abuser may be a "nice person" to everyone else. In fact, other people may tell you that you are so lucky to be with that person. So when the abuser hits you and tells you it's your fault, it is easy to believe that since it appears that the abuser doesn't get angry with anyone else. You may come to doubt your sanity and lose track of what is real.

Is alcohol and excessive drinking the cause of the battering behavior?

No. There is little support for the idea that drinking or drug use causes physical abuse. In fact, where it is a factor, it seems to be used as an excuse for the abuse.

Do abusive people ever threaten to commit suicide?

Yes. Some abusive people threaten to commit suicide, especially if they sense that the person they want to control wants to leave. But abusers rarely do it. This is another way you may be manipulated through guilt to stay.

What are the effects of domestic violence on children?

Whenever there is abuse or violence within a family, everyone is affected. Sometimes the physical scars heal more quickly than the emotional ones. Children risk becoming victims of the abusive person. They may also become loners because they can't talk with friends about the family secret or don't feel free to have friends over. They may learn to become violent as they grow older or become battered because this is the type of role modeling they saw at home.

Why do battered women stay in abusive relationships?

Battered women stay for many reasons. Some feel responsible for making the relationship work. Some hope and believe that the abusive person will change. Others feel that somehow they caused and deserved the abuse. Some feel ashamed and guilty and do not want to admit that they are being beaten. Others stay because of the children or because they do not have a job or enough money to support themselves.

Many battered women are afraid to leave for fear they will be killed. Often they have been told they will be hunted down and killed. No place will feel like it be safe enough.

These reasons are complicated by the fact abusive people can be very loving, gentle and apologetic. A woman may feel that she has no power to change her situation and no place to go. But often there are choices.

Call us.

## What is domestic abuse?



(651) 645-2824

Crisis line answered  
24 hours a day;

Office hours:  
Monday-Friday,  
8:30 AM – 4:30 pm

**A** beaten, broken, and bloody woman is the picture that comes to mind when we hear the phrase battered woman. Actually, you can receive less severe abuse but still experience the fear, pain, and shame felt by a battered woman.

Assault, including domestic assault, is a crime in Minnesota. Many different abusive acts are against the law. While not all of the following examples of physical, sexual; and emotional abuse fall under the legal definition of assault, all of them do contribute to the fear, pain and shame that you can experience as a battered woman.



### What is physical abuse?

You have been physically abused if another person has

- Pushed and shoved you.
- Held you down and kept you from leaving or getting up.
- Bitten you.
- Kicked you.
- Choked you.
- Hit or punched you once, twice, or repeatedly, which may or may not have resulted in visible physical injury.
- Tied or otherwise physically restrained you.
- Thrown objects at you that may or may not have hit you.
- Locked you out of your house.
- Abandoned you in dangerous places.
- Refused to help you (for example, to get medical help) when you were sick, injured, or pregnant.
- Forced you or the children to ride in a car while that person drove dangerously.

- Forced you off the road or kept you from driving.
- Pulled your hair.
- Dragged you.
- Pulled your arms, legs, or other body parts.
- Ripped your clothing.
- Raped you.
- Threatened you with a weapon.
- Used a weapon on you.
- Hit or beat you with other objects.
- Stabbed you.
- Burned you

Sometimes these forms of physical abuse do not result in physical injury. However, the atmosphere of fear and violence these acts create is abusive and results in the emotional pain that accompanies physical abuse.



### What is Sexual abuse?

You have been sexually abused if another person has

- Told anti-women jokes or said bad things of a sexual nature about women.
- Treated women as sex objects.
- Acted like he or she owns you.
- Accused you of being sexual with others.
- Insisted that you dress more sexually than you wanted or said bad things about how you dress.
- Said bad things about your body.
- Put down your feelings about sex.
- Criticized your sexual past; blamed you if you had been sexually abused in the past or as a child.
- Criticized you sexually (for example, called you frigid).
- Insisted on touching you sexually when you did not want to be touched – either when you two were alone or when other people were around.
- Called you a whore or a slut

- Withheld or made you beg for sexual affection.
- Made you strip when you did not want to when you two were alone or when others were around.
- Openly showed sexual interest in other people when you were in public or at home (for example, while watching TV).
- Had affairs (often bragging about them) after agreeing not to have sex with anyone else.
- Forced you to have sex.
- Made you have sex with other people.
- Forced you into prostitution.
- Made you watch other people having sex.
- Made you perform sexual acts you did not want to do.
- Made you have sex after physically or emotionally abusing you.
- Made you have sex when you were sick or when it was bad for your health.
- Hurt you with objects or weapons while having sex.
- Committed cruel sexual acts.
- Made you pose for sexual photographs.
- Made you have sex with animals.

Sexual abuse is not just forced in intercourse. All forms of sexual abuse put us down and make us feel bad.



### What is emotional abuse?

You have been emotionally abused if another person has

- Ignored your feelings or made fun of them.
- Put down women as a group (for example, called them crazy; emotional, stupid). . .
- Withheld approval, appreciation, or affection to punish you.
- Constantly criticized you and called you names.
- Told you that nothing you do is ever good enough no matter what you do or how hard you try.

- Insulted friends or family, driving them away.
- Put you down in front of others.
- Avoided socializing with you (for example, going out with you but then ignoring you).
- Kept you from working, controlled your money, .made all decisions, demanded that you ask permission to do or have anything.
- Refused to work or share money.
- Taken away car keys or money.
- Destroyed, sold, or given away things that were important or of value to you.
- Kept you from talking to or seeing your family or friends.
- Often threatened to leave or told you to leave.
- Threatened to hurt your family or friends.
- Punished or kept things from the children when angry at you.
- Treated the children extra nice, leaving you out, when angry at you.
- Threatened to come and take the children if you ever left.
- Blamed you for any problems, real or made up, with the children.
- Abused pets to hurt you.
- Bragged about affairs to hurt you.
- Accused you of having affairs.
- Tried to control you with lies or contradictions.
- Tried to control you with emotions (for example: threatened to commit suicide if you left).
- Said it was your fault when that person physically or sexually abused you- that you asked for it, deserved it, or liked it.
- Denied that the behavior is abusive or minimized it by calling you crazy or stupid or telling you that you made it up.
- Threatened to tell or told your employer or family that you are a lesbian in order get you fired o.r.to have your children taken away.

