

## how can I help someone else who is being abused?

If someone you know is in an abusive and/or violent relationship, you can make a difference.

- Make supportive, direct statements about your concerns. Be willing to listen, but don't push the person to talk.
- Don't be judgmental or blaming. Focus on the behavior and its consequences.
- Give clear messages that violence is never okay, and is not the victim's fault. However, be careful not to tell him or her what to do.
- Take safety seriously. Inform the person of local domestic violence programs, and assure them that they are not alone.

**Remember**, domestic violence is not caused by alcohol, drugs, depression, finances, or jealousy. Only the perpetrator is responsible for their behavior.

**Domestic violence is never acceptable.**

**It is wrong.**

**It is against the law.**

Aspirus Employee Assistance Services has counselors available who can help you learn more about domestic abuse and violence, and how to end the cycle.

## Help is available

Aspirus Employee Assistance Services has counselors available to help you and your family. You can call the confidential helpline 24 hours a day at:

715.848.4357 ~ 800.236.4457  
TDD# 715.845.4928

**Remember,  
Aspirus Employee  
Assistance Services  
is confidential.**



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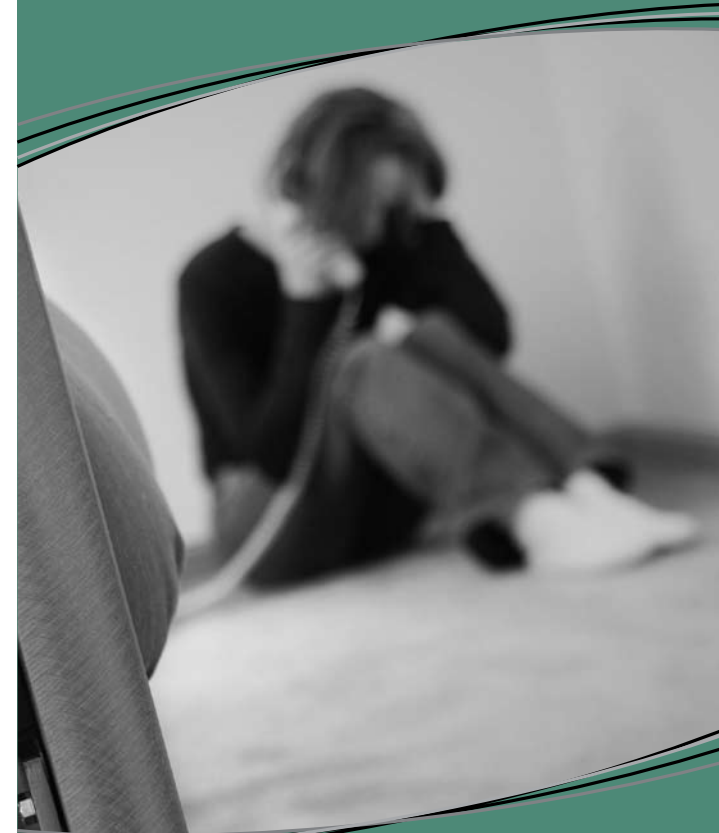
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## Domestic Violence



questions and answers



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## living in fear

We have few needs as basic as the need to feel safe in our own homes. Yet many people live in fear due to the violent and abusive behavior of a spouse, close friend or family member. If you are feeling afraid or unsafe in your own home, you may be a victim of domestic violence. You need to learn what domestic violence is, and how to stop it.

## what is domestic violence?

Domestic violence is the behavior of one partner in a relationship directed at the other partner that creates an environment of fear and intimidation. It may involve unwanted sexual contact, personal violence, damage to property, verbal abuse, or threats directed at the partner, their loved ones, pets or possessions. In an abusive or violent relationship, a person's money, movements, activities, and friendships may be completely controlled by their partner.

## why do I stay?

Sometimes fear for the safety of oneself or loved ones may cause someone to stay in an abusive relationship. Other factors include social isolation resulting in the victim feeling emotionally and physically dependent on the abuser.

There may be a loss of a sense of self apart from the abuser. Also, a victim is often made to feel at fault for the abuser's behavior, and feels undeserving of happiness. In addition, he or she may be given hope by the abuser's frequent promises to change.

## what can I do?

Always remember that you do not deserve to be physically, sexually, or emotionally abused. You can stop the violence by being firm about what you will and will not tolerate. Educate yourself about abusive relationships and the community resources available to help. Contact domestic abuse programs, the shelter home, Aspirus Employee Assistance Services, or other counselors in your community. If physical violence is a possibility, develop an "escape plan." If someone physically threatens you, initiate your escape plan and call 911 before something happens that could result in serious consequences for both you and the perpetrator.



Don't be afraid that if you leave this relationship you will be alone. The same strength that has helped you survive in an abusive relationship will help you become more independent. You are better off alone than with someone intentionally hurting you.

## what if I don't act?

If you do not set limits or leave an abusive relationship, the situation is more likely to get worse than better. You may begin to believe that you have no power to stop the cycle, or you may even think you deserve the abuse. Your children may learn that abusive or violent behavior in relationships is normal, and will be more likely to develop behavioral problems of their own. Meanwhile, the abuser will not get the help he or she needs to become healthy.