

## Domestic Violence

**D**omestic violence is any act of an abusive nature directed at a member of the family, be it between spouses or other members within a family (e.g. parent and child, siblings etc.). For the purpose of this reference sheet, we will discuss domestic violence within intimate relationships – marriage, common law and dating relationships.

Abuse can occur in any relationship, regardless of social, cultural or economic status. Statistically, this abuse is most likely to be directed towards a female by her male partner. However, abuse can also be directed towards a man by his female partner, or can be present in gay and lesbian relationships as well.

### Types of Abuse

There are six main categories of abuse: physical, psychological, verbal, emotional and sexual:

#### Physical

- Pushing
- Hitting
- Holding against the wall
- Restraining
- Slapping
- Shoving
- Preventing from leaving, etc.

#### Psychological

- Name calling
- Humiliating
- Overly compliant behaviour
- Harming
- Belittling
- Mind control
- Isolation from friends and family.

#### Verbal Abuse

- Swearing
- Opinionated
- Put downs
- Belligerent
- Criticisms

#### Emotional Abuse

- Blaming
- Contradictory behaviour
- Put downs
- Criticisms
- Correcting, etc.

#### Sexual

- Physical
- Masturbation
- Voyeurism
- Fondling
- Intercourse
- Exhibitionism

#### Financial

- Giving an allowance
- Prevents from getting a job
- Must ask to get money
- Taking money from the person

- Not allowing access to finances
- Controls finances

There are also other methods of abuse:

#### Using the Children

- Having them convey messages
- Threatening to take them away
- Using them to induce guilt
- Using visitation to harass the partner

#### Immigration Threats

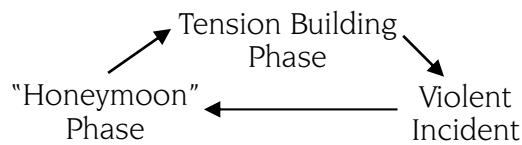
- Fear of losing immigration status
- Exploiting language difficulties
- Fear of deportation
- Exploiting lack of knowledge about Canadian laws

### Why Victims Stay

- Financially dependent upon partner.
- Immobilized by fear. Feels partner has a problem and that they can cure them through love and understanding.
- Feels loyalty to marriage vows.
- Emotional ties are difficult to break.
- Don't want to separate the children from the other parent.
- Religious beliefs.
- Family and societal pressure.
- Shame, guilt and stigma.
- Isolation and loneliness.
- No support system/no where to go.
- Low self-esteem.
- Cultural/language barrier.

# Domestic Violence

## The Cycle of Violence



### Tension Building Phase

Partner is edgy, challenges the abused partner and puts them down. Abused partner internalizes anger at the unfair treatment; symptoms include anxiety, depression, headaches etc. As tension increases, minor violent incidents increase e.g. slapping, pinching and shoving.

### Violent Incident

An explosion of violence. Abused partner may not fight back. Following this, the abused partner is in a state of physical and psychological shock. Abuser may discount the incident and minimize the abused partner's injuries.

### "Honeymoon" Phase

Both parties are relieved that the violent incident is over. Abuser is genuinely sorry and fears the abused partner will leave them. Apologizes, may shower the abused partner with gifts and praise to raise their self esteem. In time, tension begins to mount again and the cycle repeats itself.

## If You Are the Victim of Domestic Violence

- Call the police!
- Make sure you are safe. If you feel you are in danger, leave the house with your children/pets and go somewhere safe. Take important papers (e.g. citizenship, driver's license, birth certificate, SIN card etc.).
- Get medical attention – don't try and treat

yourself. You may be more injured than you are aware.

- Seek assistance from a professional. Contact shelters, support groups or Victim Services.
- Save all the evidence/proof you can. Consider visiting the Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Care and Treatment Centre for a forensic exam. If you decide to press charges at a later date you can submit it to police.

## Emotional Support

You are NOT to blame. You are not the cause of this behaviour, and are an important and worthwhile human being. You deserve to be treated with respect and to have power over your own life. You can decide what is best for you and your children, and can make your own decisions. You are not alone; others can help you if you want them to. You can make changes, and are worth working and changing for. You deserve to have a safe and happy life!

## Staying Safe in the Home

- Keep a packed bag in a safe place (do not keep at home if not safe to do so) with ID, money, passport, other important documents and medications.
- Find a safe place in the house where you can lock the door.
- Get a portable phone (no cords).
- Stay away from the kitchen**, if possible.
- Try and stay near windows, doors and a phone if you sense the potential for a violent outburst.
- Teach kids to call 9-1-1 and run to a neighbour's home.
- Always keep an extra set of car keys.**



Caledon/Dufferin  
Victim  
Services

**Caledon:** 18 Mill Street, Bolton, Ontario L7E 1C1  
905-951-3838 1-888-743-6496 F: 905-951-2772  
**Dufferin:** 390 C Line, Orangeville, Ontario L9W 3Z8  
519-942-1452 1-888-742-2658  
[www.cal-dufvictimservices.ca](http://www.cal-dufvictimservices.ca)