



## Domestic violence doesn't discriminate.

People of any race, age, gender, sexuality, religion, education level, or economic status can be a victim — or perpetrator — of domestic violence.

Domestic violence includes physical, emotional, financial and other forms of abuse that one person uses to establish and maintain power and control over another person in a current or former intimate relationship.

The trauma of relationship violence can take a toll on the development of children, make it difficult for survivors to regain control of their lives, and is the leading cause of homelessness for women and children.



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## KEY QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

### Is physical abuse worse than verbal and psychological abuse?

There is not one form of abuse that is worse than another. The toll physical and emotional abuse takes on a person are equally as devastating and harmful. Studies suggest that there is a relationship between intimate partner violence and depression and suicidal behavior. The psychological effects of domestic violence have been shown to cause adolescent pregnancy, unintended pregnancy in general, miscarriage, stillbirth, intrauterine hemorrhage, nutritional deficiency, abdominal pain and other gastrointestinal problems, neurological disorders, chronic pain, disability, anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), as well as noncommunicable diseases such as hypertension, cancer and cardiovascular diseases. Victims of domestic violence are also at higher risk for developing addictions to alcohol, tobacco, or drugs. Gateway is here to help anyone who has suffered from emotional, psychological, religious, financial and physical abuse.

### **Is Domestic Violence as prevalent as the news reports?**

On average, nearly 20 people per minute are physically abused by an intimate partner in the United States. During one year, this equates to more than 10 million adults. Domestic violence occurs in every community. Roughly, every 9 seconds an abuser stalks, beats, kicks, and terrifies the victim they promised to love. Domestic violence is difficult to measure with precision, but there is no doubt that it is a costly and devastating problem for our nation. If you doubt it, spend a night at an emergency room. Talk with a police officer who answers domestic abuse calls. Go to court and listen to the victims who are forced to seek restraining orders against their current or former abusive partners. The FBI says that domestic violence is the most committed crime in this country, but, the least reported—any statistics you read about are considered to be conservative. There is no denying that this is an epidemic we can no longer ignore. There is no excuse for domestic violence, and no excuse for any of us not to help in some way to end abuse.

### **Is Domestic Violence always perpetrated by men?**

Men are not the only gender that chooses to use violence as a means of gaining power and control over their intimate partner. Men and women can both be abusers. Gateway exists to assist anyone who is a victim of domestic violence. We serve all adults, children and family pets that reach out to us and need our support. Gateway welcomes the many men who are joining efforts to prevent and stop domestic violence. Men have just as critical a role to play in ending this epidemic as women do. It is beyond dispute that the gender roles in our society can reinforce attitudes that lead to violence against women – and certainly fail to condemn those attitudes. We cannot effectively address this epidemic if we ignore the impact of gender roles. Abused women are not helpless victims. Most find remarkable courage as they seek escape from the violence that threatens their lives and the lives of their children. We have to do more to help victims of domestic abuse. Police and doctors, clergy and employers, teachers and soccer coaches, men and women. You and I can help stop domestic violence. And, we must.

### **If a victim of abuse doesn't want to leave the relationship, what can be done?**

If victims stay in abusive relationships, it is because they lack the support and resources to protect themselves. Nobody wants to be terrorized and battered, and nobody deserves a home life filled with abuse. Every victim of abuse is the expert on their life, just as you are the expert on your life, and they are making the decisions that they feel are best for them in real time. As a society, we have looked the other way for too long. Domestic violence is an epidemic. It affects every community, every workplace, every family. There is no excuse for domestic violence and no excuse for any of us to ignore this any longer. Domestic violence is all of our business. Each one of us can and must be part of the solution. Pay attention, look for signs, know the resources in your community, speak up, educate yourself, listen and offer compassion, nonjudgment, and support when someone reaches out to you for support. You could be the difference in someone's life.

**Contact Gateway Domestic Violence Services to learn more about domestic violence and the safe shelter and compassionate services we provide to empower domestic violence victims to rebuild their lives.**

**[Gatewayshelter.org](http://Gatewayshelter.org)**

**Crisis Line – 303.343.1851**