

TYPES OF ABUSE

Domestic violence is a pattern of abusive behavior in a dating or domestic relationship. This abuse can be physical, sexual, verbal or emotional, or a combination of some or all of these.

What Do I Need to Know?

Physical Abuse is any intentional unwanted contact with the victim's body by either the abuser or an object within the abuser's control. Physical abuse *does not* have to leave a mark or bruise. It doesn't even need to hurt. It includes the following behaviors:

- Scratching
- Punching
- Biting
- Kicking
- Throwing something at you
- Pulling hair
- Choking
- Pushing
- Using a weapon
- Slapping
- Shoving

Sexual Abuse is any sexual behavior that is unwanted or interferes with the victim's right to say "no" to sexual advances. It includes the following behaviors:

- Rape
- Unwanted kissing or touching
- Not letting the victim use birth control or protection against sexually transmitted diseases
- Unwanted rough or violent sexual activity
- Forcing the victim to go further than they want (even if they have had sex before)

Verbal/Emotional Abuse is anything that the abuser says or does to the victim that causes the victim to be afraid, lowers the victim's self esteem, or manipulates or controls the victim's feelings or behavior. It includes the following behaviors:

- Name-calling and put-downs
- Yelling and screaming
- Intentionally embarrassing the victim in front of other people
- Keeping the victim from seeing or talking with friends and family
- Telling the victim what to do
- Using online communities or cell phones to control, intimidate, or humiliate the victim.
- Making the victim feel responsible for the violence
- Stalking
- Threatening to commit suicide in order to manipulate the victim
- Threats of violence and harm, or to expose the victim's secrets (such as sexual orientation or immigration status), or to take away the victim's children

What Can I Do?

If you or someone you know has experienced any of these behaviors in a relationship, that relationship may be abusive. Break the Cycle can help you learn about your options and legal rights.

You have the right to a safe and healthy relationship..
free from violence and free from fear.