



# Life Balance

Healthy matters to keep in mind.

October 2014

## Love should never be violent. If it is, it's not love; it's control.

*"I should have known better: Tony hates salty food. Last night I was running late, so I picked up Chinese on the way home. I guess it had too much soy sauce because when he took the first bite, he went berserk. He threw his plate and glass at the wall. As I was trying to get away from the table, he twisted my arm back and pushed me against the wall, yelling that what I needed to do was get home early so I could cook a proper meal. I promised him I would. He finally released me and slammed out the door. When he came back an hour later, he took one look at me and cried like a baby. He couldn't believe what he'd done. He apologized repeatedly, and hugged and kissed me. He can be so gentle and caring at times. He's really not a bad guy. There are just certain things that set*

*him off. I should have known. It was really my fault."*

If you've ever been in a scene like this, you've experienced domestic violence. Domestic violence or intimate partner violence (IPV) happens between people in close — but not necessarily sexual — relationships, such as past or current partners, spouses, boyfriends or girlfriends.<sup>1</sup> The term refers to emotional, physical, sexual, psychological and/or financial abuse received at the hands of another person.<sup>2</sup>

Domestic violence is common among millions of people in the U.S and around the world. It knows no ethnic, racial or religious barrier. It affects the poor as well as the rich; gays and lesbians as well as heterosexuals; teens and adults as well as seniors, men as well as women. However, by far, women are its biggest target.<sup>3</sup>

Because of the love bond they share, victims may have a difficult time recognizing that they're involved in a dysfunctional, violent relationship.

Here are some definitions<sup>4</sup> that can help shed some light into what is considered domestic violence.

You've been a victim of domestic violence if your intimate partner:

- Has ever scratched, pushed, shoved, thrown, grabbed, bit, choked, shaken, slapped, punched or burnt you; or has tried to restrain you or use a weapon to control or threaten you.
- Has forced you against your will to have sex, regardless of whether the sex act was completed, or subjected you to a violent sex act.
- Has threatened you with physical or sexual violence. Has used words, gestures or weapons that convey the potential for death, disability, injury or physical harm.
- Has humiliated you and tried to control what you do. Has withheld information from you on purpose to demean you. Has driven you away from friends and family, and denied you access to money or other basic needs.

## SEAP

Call toll-free

1-800-692-7459

1-800-824-4306 (TDD)

or log on to

[www.liveandworkwell.com](http://www.liveandworkwell.com)

access code: Pennsylvania

## Reach out for help.

National Domestic Violence hotline **1-800-799-SAFE (7233)**, or **1-800-787-3224 (TTY)**.

National Dating Abuse Helpline text "loveis" to 22522 or call

**1-866-331-9474** or visit

<http://www.loveisrespect.org/>

National Sexual Assault Hotline

**1-800-656-HOPE (4673)**

National Sexual Assault Online Hotline

<https://ohl.rainn.org/online/>

### How it starts

It's clear that no one willingly gets into an abusive relationship. But these relationships don't start out being abusive. They normally start out like any other loving relationship. There's the mutual attraction, the dating, etc. But once you become a couple, the abuser may start to make threats, manipulate you and stalk you. The abuser may be jealous, controlling or possessive. These early signs may not be so noticeable at first or could be mistaken for "real" love. But as the relationship gets more serious, so does the abuse.<sup>5</sup>

Victims of domestic violence bear physical, mental and emotional scars. They may suffer from low self-esteem, depression, anxiety and substance abuse. Some may look upon suicide as their only ticket to freedom.<sup>6</sup>

### Breaking the cycle

If you want to escape an abusive relationship, but fear backlash from the abuser, think about the future. Not only your own, but that of your children if that is part of the picture.

Children are often the silent victims of domestic violence. Even if they have not been hurt physically, they may still suffer from the psychological trauma of witnessing the abuse, putting them at risk for emotional and physical abuse themselves.<sup>7</sup> If you believe you or your children may be in potential harm, it's time to develop a safety plan.\*

### Teen dating violence on the rise

Sometimes, parents set an extraordinary example for their children to follow. Other times, they lay out a path paved with violence. Children learn about relationships by watching their

parents interact. They also learn from the media and their peers. Teen dating violence is on the rise in this country. Why? Because when teens are surrounded by violence, they will consider it a normal part of life.<sup>8</sup>

Teens may use threats or violence to get what they want or to vent their frustration and anger. They may use alcohol or drugs, have several sexual partners or have friends who are violent. They may feel depressed, anxious and have issues either at home or in school and no one to talk to about them. These teens may come from a violent household where bullying and aggression are the norm.<sup>9</sup>

### It's not love; it's control.

Don't think for one minute that the person hurting you is doing it out of love, or that you're responsible for the behavior. Remember that for the abuser, it's all about control. However much you may fear leaving this relationship, continuing to endure the abuse is not a viable solution. On average, in the United States, more than three women a day are murdered by their husbands or boyfriends.<sup>10</sup> Don't be the next victim.

If you're in danger, call the **National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-7233**. Put yourself and your family first. And once you decide to leave, take extra precautions to safeguard your life and that of your loved ones.

## Resources

[www.liveandworkwell.com](http://www.liveandworkwell.com)

Search under the words "Domestic Violence" for access to links, articles and access to the Abuse: Domestic Violence Center. You can also search for a therapist in your area by clicking on the "Search for Clinician" link.

## Getting away — your safety plan\*<sup>11</sup>

- 1. Gather important documents** and keep them in a safe place or with a friend.
- 2. Create a survival kit** with items needed for an overnight stay.
- 3. Develop a getaway plan and rehearse escape routes**, if possible.
  - Find a safe destination.
  - Write down the domestic violence hotline, police and shelter numbers.
  - Create a code phrase that tells a friend to contact the police.
  - Teach your children to dial 911.
  - Carry a cellular phone, if feasible, and keep it charged.

### 4. After you leave

- File a protection order. Keep a copy. Give one to the police, your children's school and caregivers, and your employer.
- Change the locks, install a security system and sufficient lighting. Lock all doors and windows.
- Tell friends/neighbors about the abuser and ask them to call the police if they see the abuser nearby.
- Tell your employer about your situation.
- Change your shopping habits and the stores you frequent.
- Find someone who will listen and not judge you, such as a trusted friend.
- Talk to a therapist. Contact SEAP to find a counselor in your area.
- Find out more about your legal options, including divorce and custody issues. Call SEAP to access your legal benefits.

1 <http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/intimatepartnerviolence/index.html>

2 [liveandworkwell.com](http://liveandworkwell.com)

3 <https://www.liveandworkwell.com/member/library/guides/relationships.pdf>

4 <http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/intimatepartnerviolence/definitions.html>

5 <https://www.healthwise.net/liveandworkwell/Content/StdDocument.aspx?DOCHWID=te7721#te7722>

6 [http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/nisvs\\_report2010-a.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/nisvs_report2010-a.pdf)

7 <https://www.liveandworkwell.com/member/library/guides/relationships.pdf>

8 [http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/intimatepartnerviolence/teen\\_dating\\_violence.html](http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/intimatepartnerviolence/teen_dating_violence.html)

9 Ibid.

10 <http://dvrc-or.org/domesticviolence/resources/C61/>

11 <https://www.liveandworkwell.com/member/library/guides/relationships.pdf>