

ABUSE

Abuse is an ugly word. It happens when a person hurts another person to gain power and control. More than 90% of adults who are abused are women. They are abused by men in their lives... their husbands, partners, sometimes their fathers or sons. Men who hurt women may also hurt their children.

No one has the right to abuse another person. Women often blame themselves for the abuse their man does to them. If you grew up in a family that was violent, you may even think it is normal to be hurt by others. Wrong! Everyone gets angry sometimes. But people can control their anger without hurting others.

There are many kinds of abuse. It can leave you hurt with cuts and bruises. Or, it can hurt you inside where no one can see. Each one destroys your life and the way you feel about yourself. Does your partner:

- beat, kick, slap, or spit on you, throw things at you, use a weapon to hurt or threaten you, lock you out of the house, refuse to give you money for food or clothes? That is **physical abuse**.

- force you to have sex (vaginal, oral, anal) you don't like, is painful, or when you don't want to, or force you to have sex with other people? That is **sexual abuse**.
- threaten to hurt you or your children, destroy your personal things, isolate you... keep you from your family, friends or medical care, accuse you of having love affairs, break things or hurt pets to scare you? That is **emotional abuse**.

If you answered yes to any of the questions, remember, **no one deserves to be abused... the violent man is responsible for his own behavior; it is not your fault!**

If you are being hurt, you do not have to keep living that way. You can get help and make a change. There are women around you, who will help you. They are always there to listen and will get you medical help. They can help you decide what to do next. If you decide to leave, they will find you a safe place to go.

You can call the domestic violence hotline toll free, any time, any day. **Call 1-800-799-7233.**

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Every woman and child deserve a life without abuse. ■

