What Else Can You Do?

- The abuser’s power is based on secrecy. Abuse must be brought into the open and talked about. Many women’s health centers and mental health agencies sponsor support groups for abused partners and children. Call and give yourself the chance to talk to other victims. You’ll find out that you are not alone!

- Through the ADT Aware® program, ADT Security Services, Inc., donates and installs electronic security systems (which include hold-up alarm pendants and 24-hours-a-day monitoring) in the homes of domestic violence victims. Victims in need of the program should contact their local battered women’s shelter or domestic violence unit at the police department to see if they qualify.

- No single tactic may work by itself. In many cases, a combination of legal intervention and counseling is the best way to protect victims, help the batterer, and minimize damage to family relationships.

If It Happens to Someone You Know...

- Urge the victim to call the police, a community mental health center’s crisis hotline, or a battered women’s shelter.

- Look at the community’s resources for victims of family violence. Are they adequate and do people know about them? Volunteer to help.

- If no local resources are available, contact the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, 1532 16th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20036; phone: 202-745-1211; fax: 202-745-0088; the National Domestic Violence Hotline: 800-799-SAFE (7233).

- Encourage friends and family to channel anger constructively. Anger management classes, offered at community centers and mental health clinics, may be helpful.
Most people, when beaten or intimidated by someone in their own family, feel helpless, afraid, embarrassed, and guilty. These emotions, plus a belief that violence is the only way to solve problems, lead quickly to an attack, then remorse and a period of reconciliation follow until tension again builds and is released by violence.

Myth: Children do not suffer long-term effects from family violence.

FACT: Children of abusive parents often are abused physically or sexually. In many cases, they continue the cycle of violence by abusing their own children. Statistics show that children who witness violence are more likely to commit acts of violence later.

Myth: Family violence is not widespread.

FACT: Domestic violence is a widespread and serious problem in America, with devastating consequences for individuals, families, and communities.

Myth: Family violence happens only to women in low-income groups.

FACT: Although violence in families is distressingly common, it affects all kinds of people regardless of gender, race, culture, age, sexual orientation, class, or citizenship status.

Myth: Victims of family violence can easily leave before violence becomes a serious threat.

FACT: Economic dependence, fear, complex family emotional ties, low self-esteem, and lack of safe places to go make leaving almost impossible for many abused family members.

Myth: Family violence is not a crime. It occurs in the home and is strictly a private matter that doesn’t affect anyone else.

FACT: Any threat or attack against a person is a crime, no matter where it happens or who does it.

Myth: No one can help. The police, courts, and social workers often are釉我不快 from family violence.

FACT: Women’s health centers, mental health agencies, volunteer groups, and law enforcement agencies throughout the country are helping victims of family violence by providing advice, counseling, and medical assistance and referral to appropriate services. Relatives, neighbors, and friends can also help. The police, courts, and social workers can get involved, but you have to ask. They can’t help if they don’t know you need help.

How To Protect Yourself Against Abuse

Call 911 or leave home immediately if you feel you are in real physical danger. If you think relatives may not want to help, seek a shelter for battered women. Police, sheriffs, hospitals, churches, and community mental health centers can give you information.

Save evidence of the assault. Keep torn or bloodied clothing and go to the emergency room for treatment. Get the names, addresses, and phone numbers of any witnesses.

If you have children, don’t leave them alone. You must protect your other personal items: keys, money, and valuable papers. If you lock the door, pack clothing and other personal items into the lock. If you do not, the abuser will be able to break in and steal them.

If you are leaving, you are breaking into your own home, and that may constitute abandonment, which could limit your chances of getting custody of your children. Also, leaving them may constitute abandonment of your home. You can stay in the home if you have custody, but you will not be able to go to the hospital. The abuser can stay in the hospital if you cannot stay in the home. If you leave your children with the abuser, they can tell your local government that you have abandoned them. They can even get an arrest warrant if they think you have abandoned them.

If you leave your children with the abuser, the police or child protective services may take your children away. If you are the abuser, you can be arrested and taken to jail. If you are on probation, you may be rearrested.

No one can help. The police, courts, and social workers who often are釉我不快 from family violence.

FACT: Women’s health centers, mental health agencies, volunteer groups, and law enforcement agencies throughout the country are helping victims of family violence by providing advice, counseling, and medical assistance and referral to appropriate services. Relatives, neighbors, and friends can also help. The police, courts, and social workers can get involved, but you have to ask. They can’t help if they don’t know you need help.

How Can You Use the Legal System?

There is no legal system that can make anything happen if you do not report abuse. You must report the assault to your local law enforcement agency as soon as possible.

Report the assault to your local law enforcement agency. The local law enforcement agency should report the assault to a prosecutor. The prosecutor should report the assault to the court.

If you are a victim of family violence, you can have the abuser arrested by the police. The police can arrest the abuser and take you to the hospital. They can also stay while you pack clothing and other personal items if you choose to leave.

If you have children, don’t leave them alone with the batterer. They may also be in danger of abuse. Also, leaving them may constitute abandonment of your home. You can leave them with relatives or friends if you choose to leave.

If you have children, don’t leave them alone. You must protect your other personal items: keys, money, and valuable papers. If you lock the door, pack clothing and other personal items into the lock. If you do not, the abuser will be able to break in and steal them.

By Violence: until tension again builds and is released and a period of reconciliation follows, then a predictable cycle—tenion builds again. Everyone hopes it won’t happen again. Violence against domestic violence victims is often long-term and can happen repeatedly. This can happen to anyone, regardless of gender, race, culture, age, or sexual orientation. It affects all kinds of people, regardless of gender, race, culture, age, or sexual orientation.

Why bother to have someone arrested? It lets the abuser know that violence will not be tolerated. It gives you as a victim some control over the situation and allows the court to mandate treatment for the abuser.