

Everyday Advice for Preventing Violence Against Women



Image via [Pexels](#)

Violence Against Women: The Facts

Violence against women is a huge problem just about everywhere on earth. According to data collected from a national survey, over 50 percent of American women have experienced physical abuse at some point in their lives. This is a pretty high percentage compared to other “developed countries,” such as Sweden, where only 25 percent of women reported experiencing violence. About [1.3 million women a year](#) are victimized by a spouse, ex-spouse, or significant other-- a problem dubbed intimate partner violence.

While anyone can experience intimate partner violence despite identity, the rate women experience abuse is higher than that of men. One in five American women are raped in their lifetime according to data collected by the CDC. The majority of assaults against women-- seven in 10-- are perpetrated by an intimate partner, and one in every 13 female murder victims are killed by their husband or boyfriend. Addiction can play a significant role in domestic abuse situations. According to the American Society for Addiction Medicine, substance abuse is present in 40 percent to 60 percent of all [intimate partner violence](#) cases in the United States. Furthermore, domestic violence itself often spurs substance abuse in the victim as they seek self-medication

Spotting Domestic Violence

Noticing someone is in a dangerous domestic violence situation isn't always easy. Victims often hide the evidence of violence with clothing and makeup. If confronted, they may deny the abuse and defend their partner, making excuses for their inexcusable behavior. However, being the person to spot the warning signs of abuse can possibly save a woman's life, as intimate partner violence is often a [precursor to femicide](#).

[Signs of domestic abuse](#) include:

- The partner dictates behaviors, privileges, and opinions of the abused.
- The abused is often isolated and unable to attend activities previously enjoyed.
- The partner often humiliates the abused in public.
- The abused has no power over their finances.
- The partner is extremely critical of the abused party's appearance, weight, clothes, or other physical traits.
- The abused identifies their partner as having "another side" to them.
- The partner appears jealous of the abused party's children, family, friends or job.
- You notice frequent evidence of physical altercations. The abused may start wearing concealing clothing and accessories to cover bruises, bumps, and scrapes.

Safely Reaching Out to Someone Being Abused

If you fear someone you know is being abused by their intimate partner, it is important to [approach the situation delicately](#). Without using caution, you can frighten the abused and trigger a defensive reaction that can reinforce the fear that is keeping them with their abuser.

Remember to come from a place of love and caring when talking to a person you fear is being abused. Accusatory and aggressive language is counterproductive.

No matter what, make sure that the abusive partner cannot get wind of you bringing up their alleged violence. Fearing their partner may leave them will either make an abusive person double down on their intimidation or turn on their "charm switch" as a way to persuade the victim to stay.

Tell your friend, family member, or coworker that you are worried about them and their situation. Explain to them how you only want to see them happy, healthy, and comfortable in their own

living situation. Then, ask them what they want their life to be like. Be there for them, and always reiterate that the abuse is never their fault. When they are ready, you can help them construct an [escape plan](#) that removes them from the abusive household in a safe manner.

Once you have helped your friend develop an escape plan, and when they're ready to move on, you can help them find a place to live where they'll feel safe. Your friend's first stop might be a shelter where they can get their bearings. As soon as they're ready, help them look at [home pricing trends](#)/rental pricing trends in the area to determine what they can afford. Be a support system for moving day to help them settle in. For an added dose of security, help them install a [DIY security](#) system that will offer additional peace of mind.

Violence affects a staggering amount of women. If you see warning signs of abuse in someone you know, reaching out to them can possibly save her life. When approaching the situation, come from a place of love and support to avoid scaring the abused and sending them even deeper into a terrible situation.

As part of their regular training programs, [Step Solution](#) offers a one-hour Domestic Violence class for groups of 10 or more. Classes can be in-person or virtual. Reach out today to set up your training!