



Understanding Intimate Partner Violence

A Guide for Friends and Family



What is intimate partner violence?

Intimate partner violence, also called domestic violence, is when one romantic partner tries to use power and control over the other partner. Most people have used an unhealthy behavior at some point in their relationship, but when it becomes a pattern and one partner is afraid of the other, it is considered intimate partner violence.

Anyone can be a victim of intimate partner violence, and abuse is **NEVER** the victim's fault. Everyone deserves to feel safe and respected in their relationships.

Abuse can look different in every relationship. It can include threatening or scaring a partner, insulting a partner and calling them names, or telling a partner what they can and cannot do. A person does not have to be hit to be abused.

Abusive behavior can be:



verbal



physical



sexual



digital



financial



stalking

Why don't victims leave?

People often wonder why victims of intimate partner violence stay with their abusive partners. Remember that abusive partners have gained control in their relationship and the abuse is not always something you can see.

There are many reasons leaving an abusive relationship can be difficult, some of which include:

- Thinking the abuse is their fault
- Lack of support from friends/family
- Having no other place to go
- Not having money or a job
- Cultural or religious beliefs
- Wanting to keep their family together
- Love for their partner
- Hope the abuse will stop

Ending an abusive relationship is never easy, and leaving is the most dangerous time for a victim. Sometimes staying in the relationship is one of the ways they are keeping themselves safe. It can be a life-saving decision.

What to say to a victim of intimate partner violence

“I’m sorry this happened to you”

“It is not your fault”

“No one deserves to be abused”

“You are not alone”

“There is help”

“How can I support you?”

It takes all of us

Intimate partner violence is not just a family problem; it is a social issue that has effects on the entire community. It will take all of us to support survivors and provide victims with the help they deserve. Call House of Ruth Maryland to find out how you can help us in the fight to end intimate partner violence.

410-889-7884

If someone you care about is being abused:

- Be supportive and listen without judgment.
- Let the person know the abuse is not their fault and they are not alone.
- Allow them to make their own decisions, without telling them what they should or shouldn't do.
- If they do end the relationship, continue to be supportive afterwards.
- Remember that you cannot “save” the person.
- Help them create a safety plan.
- Know that it's okay if you don't have all the answers.
- Encourage them to talk to people who can offer help and advice.
- Get support for yourself too. Taking care of yourself allows you to be in a good place to help others.

House of Ruth Maryland's 24-hour Hotline
410-889-7884

National Domestic Violence Hotline
800-799-7233

2201 Argonne Drive, Baltimore, MD 21218

24 Hour Hotline: 410-889-RUTH (7884) • **Administrative Office:** 410-889-0840 • **Linea en Español:** 410-889-7889 **Oprima 8**
www.hruth.org • **Facebook:** facebook.com/houseofruthmaryland • **Twitter:** @houseofruthmd