

What is domestic violence?

Domestic violence is any form of violent or abusive behaviour that happens during a relationship or after a relationship ends. Domestic violence may include more than physical or sexual violence; it can include other forms of abuse in an attempt to control or intimidate someone.

Respect, honesty and trust are essential parts of a healthy relationship. Feeling hurt or upset at times is normal, but relationships should never make you feel scared, humiliated or controlled.

While many types of domestic violence are criminal offences, all types of domestic violence—physical and sexual assaults, threats, harassment and other forms of emotional abuse, and financial abuse or exploitation—are harmful. If you or someone you know has been or is in a violent or abusive relationship, help is available. Remember, violence and abuse is never the victim's fault.

Can I report domestic violence to the police?

Yes. You may wish to report domestic violence to the police. Involving the police and the justice system is critical to becoming safe and stopping the violence. A support person can be with you when you report a crime to the police.

Where can I get help?

- Police: If you are in immediate danger, call 911.
- Victim Services: Located in community agencies or police stations. Services include emotional support, justice system information, safety planning, referrals to counselling and other services and support to victims going to court.
- VictimLINK: Provides information and referrals to all victims, as well as immediate crisis response to victims of domestic violence. The service is confidential, anonymous and multilingual. Call any time, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. VictimLINK: 1-800-563-0808 or visit www.VictimLinkBC.ca.
- Transition houses and safe homes: Provide temporary safe housing for victims of domestic violence and their children. Visit www.BCHousing.org and go to Housing Options > Emergency Housing.

What are some signs of an abusive relationship?

- Does your partner check up on you or act possessively?
- Does your partner yell, put you down or call you names?
- Does your partner keep you from getting a job or an education?
- Does your partner have a temper or make you afraid?
- Do you try to please your partner instead of yourself to keep from getting hurt?

Steps to take if you need help

- If you or your children are in immediate danger or need urgent medical attention, call 911.
- If you or your children are not in a safe place, go to one. To find a transition house or safe home, call VictimLINK.
- Tell someone you trust what happened. Allow a friend or family member to provide emotional support or practical help to you.
- Contact victim services by calling VictimLINK: 1-800-563-0808.
- Get help from a victim service worker to develop a safety plan. A safety plan is a plan that helps to reduce the risks that you and your children face because of a violent situation.
- Go to a hospital, a walk-in clinic, or your doctors as soon as possible after being physically injured or sexually assaulted.
- If you want to contact the police but the situation is not urgent, call the non-emergency number for police in your community.
- If you have any questions about domestic violence, or your rights, do not hesitate to ask a victim service worker.

Domestic Violence Resources

Domestic Violence BC

- www.DomesticViolenceBC.org

HealthLinkBC

- Call toll free in 24 hours every day: 811 or go to www.HealthLinkBC.ca.
- Easy access to non-emergency health information and services.
- Translation services in over 130 languages on request

BC NurseLine

- Phone: 1-866-215-4700, 24 hours every day.
- Translation services in 130 languages.

Helpline for Children

- Phone: 310-1234, 24 hours a day

Legal Services Society (LSS Call Center and LawLINE)

- Phone: 604-408-2172 or 1-866-577-2525

What if I don't speak or understand English?

VictimLINK provides interpretation services for all the major languages spoken in BC.
Call VictimLINK: 1-800-563-0808 or visit www.VictimLinkBC.ca