

Office of the State Attorney  
Fifth Judicial Circuit



Bill Gladson  
State Attorney

## Domestic Violence is a Crime!

Domestic Violence can happen to anyone, regardless of religious, social, economic, ethnic, gender or educational background. Domestic violence happens to people of all ages and in every community. Domestic Violence is a pattern of controlling behavior by one person who has or has had a personal, intimate or family relationship with another person. This may be a spouse, an ex-spouse, a live-in partner, or someone with whom you have had a child.

Domestic Violence may include making threats to you, slapping, choking or pushing, holding you down, kicking, forcing or pressuring you to have sex when you don't want to, or any other types of unwanted touching. Rape is often a form of violence used in intimate relationships. If any of these things have happened to you, you may have feelings of helplessness, fear, shame, guilt and anger. You may blame yourself for the things that are happening and feel responsible for what happens to your abuser. There may be other problems in your home such as lack of resources and concern for children or other family members that make it hard to leave an abusive relationship.

## WARNING SIGNS

There are things that your partner may do that are considered "RED FLAGS." They can help you decide if you are in a potentially dangerous relationship.

- Does your partner tease you in hurtful ways or call you names in public or in private?
- Does your partner act jealous in front of your friends, family or co-workers?
- Does your partner get angry about your clothes or how you wear your hair?
- Does your partner insist on knowing who you talk to on the phone, through social media, mail or go through your accounts or personal things?
- Does your partner check up on you by calling, driving by or getting someone else to check on you?
- Does your partner make important family decisions without you because they are the "head of the household"?
- Does your partner keep money from you, keep you in debt, or have "money secrets"?
- Has your partner kept you from getting a job or caused you to lose your job?
- Has your partner made you sell your car; made you give up your license or not repaired your car?
- Have you lost friends, or do you no longer see some of your family because of your partner?
- Does your partner accept no blame for their problems, failures at work or with money?
- Does your partner get mad so easily that you feel like you are "walking on eggshells"?
- Does your partner blame you for their abusive behaviors, deny hurting you or "make light" of hurting you?
- Does your partner blame you for their problems, their moods, or their abusive behavior?
- Does your partner accuse you of seeing someone else?
- Does your partner often drink?
- Does your partner often use illegal drugs or abuse prescription drugs?
- Does your partner insist that you drink or do drugs with them?
- Is your partner like a "Jekyll and Hyde"; acting one way in front of people and another way when you are alone?
- Does your partner hit walls, drive dangerously or do other things to scare you?
- Does your partner threaten to hurt you, your children, your pets or other family members?
- Does your partner have access to firearms or other weapons?
- Does your partner force you to have sex when you do not want to?
- Does your partner force you to have sex in ways you do not want to or have makeup sex after a fight or hurting you?
- Has your partner ever violated an Injunction for protection?
- Does your partner have a history of violence that has become worse over time?
- Has your partner threatened to kill you or commit suicide if you ever leave them?

## Safety Planning

Abusers are not predictable, and every case of domestic violence is different. Planning may help keep you and your children safe.

*Here are some things to consider:*

- Decide where you can go for help.
- Tell someone what is happening and make sure to have their contact information on you.
- Have an electronic device that can contact 911.
- Make a "getaway bag" in case you need to leave quickly. Your "getaway bag" should include things for you and your children that you must have or that would be hard to replace like:

Driver's license or any form of ID  
Birth Certificates/Social Security Cards  
Medications/Copies of Prescriptions  
Pictures of abuser and your children  
Cash, debit/credit card (s)  
Extra set of house keys and car keys  
Clothes and Small Toys for children  
Divorce/Custody/Injunction paperwork  
Extra Electronic device to contact 911

- Teach your children emergency action:

How to call 911

Not to get in the middle of violence and how to escape the house during violence; it is not their job to protect you; Safe places to go (like a neighbor's or friend's house)

**Leaving an abusive relationship can be dangerous. These are things to think about if you plan to leave or have already left.**

Get an Injunction for Protection, and always keep it with you.

Change/block social media accounts.

Keep record of any contact (e.g. texts, calls, emails, social media messages etc.) and promptly report violations to law enforcement.

Notify children's schools, daycares or babysitters of the situation and give them copies of any court orders related to custody. Have them report any unusual contact from the abuser

Do not meet or contact the abuser alone under any circumstances. Have another person pick up and deliver children for visitation.

If you must meet the abuser, choose a safe, public location and take another person with you.

Change your routine and the routes you travel to work and school.

Do not go to places that you and the abuser went to together, or places where they are known to spend time.

## Effects on Children

Domestic Violence is a learned behavior. As children grow up and learn about right and wrong, they learn the most from the people who are closest to them, usually their parents. Children need to understand that violent behavior is NOT okay, and that it is NOT a way to deal with frustration and anger.

Not all children react the same way to violence in their home, but these are some of the harmful effects that domestic violence can have on your child:

### Mental

depression  
fearful of being left alone  
angers/upsets easily  
"stores up" anger  
feels guilty about abuse  
problems trusting others

### Social

does negative things to get attention  
overreacts to little things  
"don't care" attitude  
trouble making/keeping friends  
problems at school  
stays away from home or runs away

### Physical

tired, difficulty sleeping  
headaches, stomachaches  
bad dreams  
alcohol/drug use  
difficulty concentrating  
doesn't eat or over eats  
violent towards others

Children who grow up seeing abuse may have a higher risk of becoming an abuser or a victim of abuse, but it does not mean that this must happen. Children who have seen or experienced violence can be helped if they are given a safe place to talk about their feelings and tell their stories. However, it is important to discuss these issues with children in a safe place, such as a shelter or with a counselor. Reassure your children that you love them and that the abuse is NOT their fault.

**If you feel you are in a potentially dangerous relationship, please call the Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-500-1119 or contact your local domestic violence center.**

To find a list of local domestic violence shelters, please visit our website at [www.sao5.org](http://www.sao5.org)