

MORE WAYS TO HELP:

- donate funds to any shelter or ACWS
- donate new or gently-used goods and gift cards – contact the shelter to find out what they need
- volunteer at a shelter, fill a role on the shelter board
- attend shelter fundraising events
- speak to your MLA or MP about increasing support to shelters
- attend ACWS events

You do not have to stay in a shelter to receive help from them.



SHELTER HOTLINE: 1-866-331-3933

The shelter hotline will connect the caller with the shelter closest to them. Outreach services include support during crisis, personal safety planning and referrals to other services.

The Alberta Council of Women's Shelters is a province-wide voluntary organization supporting women's shelters through education, research and services for the benefit of abused women and their children.



Domestic Violence: HOW CAN YOU HELP?

Assisting victims of domestic violence is everyone's responsibility. Unfortunately, many people still don't know what signs to look for, or how they should help once they do see the signs. The following information can help you recognize someone living in domestic violence and deepen your understanding of the pressures victims often face as you try to help.

Each year, an average of 12,000 women and children take refuge in Alberta domestic violence shelters.

TYPES OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

While most people immediately assume all abuse is physical, there are in fact many forms of domestic violence. Some are less obvious and difficult to see but are no less devastating.

1. Physical Abuse
2. Emotional Abuse
3. Psychological Abuse
4. Sexual Abuse
5. Financial (Economic) Abuse
6. Spiritual Abuse

Alberta's rates of domestic assault are among the highest in Canada

SIGNS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

- bruising or injuries, often blamed on clumsiness or accidents
- unseasonable clothing (turtlenecks) that may cover bruising
- changes in ability to concentrate
- unexplained absences from work
- upsetting phone calls throughout the day
- uncharacteristic sadness, withdrawal or exhaustion
- uncharacteristic fear or anxiety
- hints about trouble at home (partner's bad temper, alcohol use, third-party concerns)
- controlling behavior of spouse

WHY DOES SHE STAY?

Some factors that can contribute to decisions to remain in abusive relationships include:

Internal Reasons:

- Fear (of being alone, of his threats, of being judged, etc.)
- Self-blame
- Anger
- Depression
- Lowered self-esteem
- Want the relationship to succeed
- For love
- Self-doubt
- Belief/hope that he'll change

External Reasons:

- No real protection
- Lack of access to protective orders
- Lack of shelter
- No transportation (to escape)
- Lack of child care
- Fear for pets
- Lack of health care
- No affordable housing
- Lack of language accessible services

Source: Funk, 2006

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

Your most important job is to listen. While your first instinct may be to take action, resist that urge. Give your support by showing concern, listening and being there when needed. Don't offer specific advice about leaving but instead be a link to resources in the community. It must be the victim's decision to leave.

The most dangerous time for a woman is when she has made the decision to leave the abusive relationship. There is nothing simple about her situation. Resist judgement.

If you are confident that there is an explicit threat to cause physical harm or if you are witnessing the violence directly, do call the police. Be sure to contact the child protection hotline if children are in danger.

Child abuse hotline is 1-800-387-KIDS

