

## **Domestic Violence**

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Domestic violence looks different within every relationship and is not defined by marriage, but rather by two people living together in an intimate relationship, hence it is an umbrella term for multiple types of abuse suffered in a domestic relationship, Regardless of the nature of relationship, age, races, ethnicities, genders, sexual orientation, class, and religion/spirituality of the victim, the main goal of an abuser is to establish power and control by inflicting mental, emotional, financial, sexual (or all forms at once) violence, and does not exist for only a set category of people.

### **Common Signs & Misconceptions**

The signs of domestic violence may go unnoticed because of society's rationalization, and corrupt justification of the perpetrators, often accompanied by hiding their actions and behaviors. Actions of hitting, screaming, intimidating, isolating, coercion, and more are signs of an abusive relationship (<https://www.thehotline.org/identify-abuse/domestic-abuse-warning-signs/>). It is important to consider that for any individual, violence towards a partner is never justified, even if backed by claims of mental illness/impulses or provocation. It is a serious topic that should be communicated to those closest to you. For most victims, this period of communication, followed by the period of leaving the abuser, is the most difficult and dangerous. However, it is important to acknowledge, both for the victims and for society, that one should never feel ashamed for wanting or attempting to leave.

## Statistics

Many people have experienced some form of domestic violence throughout their lives or have witnessed it. To put it into better perspective, according to National Statistics, 1 in 4 women and 1 in 9 men have experienced domestic violence, and according to Domestic Violence in Nebraska, 33.7% of women and 28% of men in this state have experienced domestic violence. On a daily average, more than 200,000 calls are made to domestic hotlines nationwide.

Moreover, by the findings of Mclean Hospital, the impacts of domestic violence can also appear in financial instability, physical and mental health problems, or the worst outcome, death, with only 31% of victims injured by domestic violence seeking medical aid.

Diseases that can be caused by domestic violence are:

- **Short-term and long-term diseases.**
  - Heart disease, digestive issues, and reproductive issues (usually from sexually transmitted diseases).
- **Mental issues and coping mechanisms.**
  - Major depressive disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder, substance or eating addictions.

On top of health risks, between 21-60% of victims lose their jobs because of the effects of domestic violence. The deadliness of domestic violence skyrockets when the abuser has access to a gun. The risk of homicide increases by 500%.

## Resources

You are not alone, and you deserve to be safe and feel safe. The Department of Health and Human Services contains the Office on Women's Health (<https://www.womenshealth.gov/>).

The Office on Women's Health offers information on healthcare, legal aid, and coordinating a safety plan. The website also features an FAQ to direct you to services you may need. It is normal to be scared to leave or unsure of how to do it and where to go. If you are unsure about leaving an abusive relationship or need help, you can contact the National Domestic Violence Hotline (<http://www.thehotline.org/>) at 800-799-SAFE (7233). The hotline is staffed 24/7 and toll-free. Know that people are there to help and that they want to help.

These sources may help you locate a **domestic violence shelter in your area** if your home is or becomes unsafe. Shelters are safe places to stay temporarily, but many shelters offer services including legal aid, financial and housing support, and support for any children you may have.

**For Nebraska specific shelters**, you can contact the National Domestic Violence Hotline or visit a domestic violence shelter registry (<https://www.domesticshelters.org/help/ne>). Following a shelter, you may be moved into transitional housing where you can be further assisted with childcare and job training.

**When preparing to leave an abusive relationship**, ensure to pack the following if able; birth certificates and social security cards, citizenship or immigration documents (work permits, visas, passports, etc.), health insurance cards, financial documents (paystubs, account information, tax returns, etc.), and a list of phone numbers and/or addresses in case you cannot get to your own cell phone or address book.

### **Victim Assistance**

Including a trained team of prosecutors and staff to see you through the legal process of reporting, charging, and prosecution of abusers as well as issuing restraining and no contact orders, Victims' Assistance offers legal aid to survivors and victims of domestic violence.

The **Douglas County Domestic Violence Unit** can be reached at **(402) 444-3808** from **8:30 am to 4:30 pm Monday - Friday** (<https://countyattorney.douglascounty-ne.gov/domestic-violence-unit>).

Their team is available, trained, and willing to assist you with the process and answer questions regarding trials, outcomes, and your rights as a victim.

Works Cited

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**More Information**

Domestic Violence:

<https://www.acesdv.org/domestic-violence-graphics/domestic-violence-myths-and-misconceptions/>