

How you can help

Most people know someone, or of someone, who is a victim of domestic violence. It may be someone in your family, a church member or a colleague in the work place.

- Be alert to possible signs of domestic violence in your workplace; co-workers who are increasingly late or absent, unable to concentrate on their work, attempting to cover bruises or are just distracted and withdrawn.
- Neighbours, friends or family members may have isolated themselves feeling that the abuse is their fault.
- Encourage your friend, co-worker or family member to talk to you and assure them that they can trust you and that you will believe them.
- Do not be judgmental and let them know they do not have to stay in an abusive relationship.
- Suggest they obtain a Protective Order.

**Encourage them to call
The Crisis Centre on
328-0922 for advice and
assistance.**

**The Crisis Centre has several
brochures on Domestic Violence
which you may find useful. Please
call the Centre on 328-0922 or go
to our website at
www.bahamascrisiscentre.org
and download the brochures.**

Understanding Why Women Stay in Abusive Relationships

When we hear of an incident of domestic violence, particularly if it is physical, we often ask **"Why did she stay"?** Many women stay in abusive relationships because they feel they have no choice.

They are afraid that they will not be able to support themselves or their children. They are afraid that friends or family will think that they have failed.

- **Fear**
 - fear of leaving
 - fear of staying
 - fear of reprisal
 - fear for her life
- **Financial dependence**
 - Difficulty finding work to support herself and family
 - few or out-dated job skills
- **Isolation**
 - unaware of legal rights
 - lack of support
- **Physical illness**
 - coping with the situation drains energy
- **Emotional dependence**
 - may still love partner, especially in the "honeymoon period"
- **Social Pressures and Shame**
 - may feel she is responsible for the success or failure of marriage
 - may have been pressured by parents, community, church to try and hold on



I Know Someone Who Is Being Abused

What Can I Do?



The Crisis Centre
P.O.Box EE-17910
Nassau, Bahamas
24-Hour Hotline
(242) 328-9022
(242) 322-4999
Fax: (242) 328-7824

Email: bahamascrisiscentre@yahoo.com
www.bahamascrisiscentre.org

If you know someone who is experiencing abuse

It can be very distressing to suspect or know someone you know, a family member, a friend, a colleague in the work place or a neighbour, is being abused.

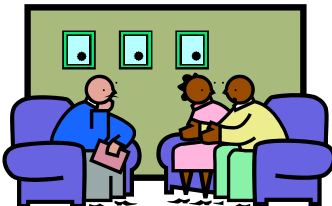
There may be a feeling of helplessness that you cannot do anything to assist.

If the person is an adult, you cannot **force** them to make a report to the Police or to talk to someone, but you can **encourage** them to do so. Many victims of violence feel that nothing can be done to change their situation so the first step is to let them know that there is help available.

The Crisis Centre is there for counselling and practical advice. Some victims of violence do not feel comfortable coming to the Centre to meet with a counselor right away. Many prefer to talk over the telephone and, over time, become ready to meet a counselor face to face. Either way, victims of violence can be given helpful and important information to assist them in making safe decisions.

You, as a friend or relative, can also help in this process by offering support, by listening and by offering to accompany the victim to the Police Station or to the Crisis Centre.

It is important to recognize the signs of domestic violence.



Signs of Domestic Violence

Domestic Violence is more than the normal arguments and rows that take place in relationships. Millions of women are physically, sexually, or emotionally abused every year by someone they know and love, their boyfriend, their husband or partner. It happens to women of all ages, races, religions, sexual orientations and income levels. Men can also be the victims of domestic violence. Domestic Violence includes:

- Hitting
- Slapping
- Pushing
- Cursing
- Controlling
- Threatening to kill
- Denying freedom
- Withholding money
- Forcing Sexual activity against the partner's will
- Putting down in private or public
- Isolating from family members and friends
- Threatening to commit suicide
- Intimidating with weapons such as guns or knives.

If you see signs of abuse in someone you know, such as bruises, cuts or other injuries, there is a strong chance that abuse has occurred. If you feel that a friend or neighbour is isolating him or herself, missing days at work, refusing to talk to anybody, it is important for you to reach out as offer to assist in anyway you can. **If you witness a violent incident, call the Police immediately.**

A Safety Plan for Leaving

It is important that anyone who is planning to leave an abusive relationship, does so keeping in mind safety precautions.

They should:

- Tell someone they trust about the abuse
- If they have to see a doctor or go to the hospital as a result of abuse, They should tell the doctor exactly what happened and ask him or her to document the incident in the notes. If they go to the police or to court, this evidence could be very useful.
- If they have to leave suddenly, they should make sure they have ready:
 - Birth certificates
 - Any medication and health insurance papers
 - Cheque and/or savings books
 - Passports
 - Pay slips
 - Any court papers
 - Any cash available.

It is a good idea to have packed a bag in advance with extra clothes for themselves and their children, some of their children's favourite toys, a spare set of house and car keys.

**ANYONE IN AN ABUSIVE
RELATIONSHIP, CAN CALL THE
CRISIS CENTRE
ON 328-0922 OR 322-4999**

**ANYONE IN IMMEDIATE DANGER
SHOULD CALL THE POLICE ON
911, 919**