

Healing from Domestic Violence



**Where there is breath, there is life.
Where there is life, there is hope.**

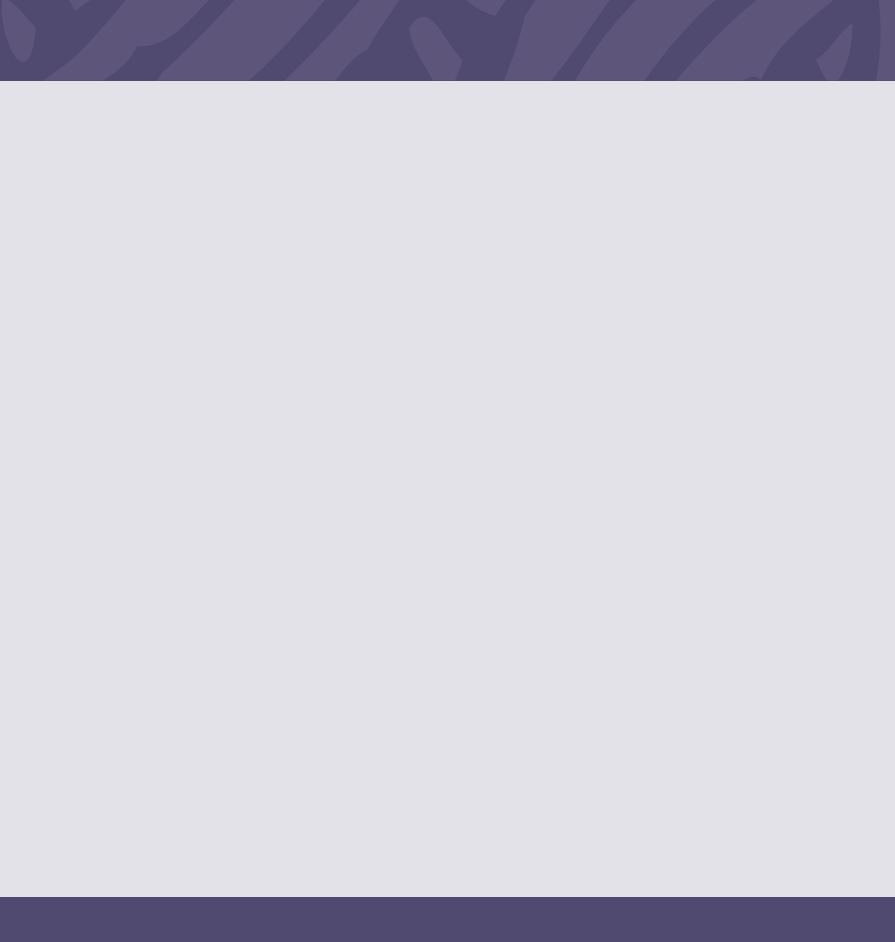


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Where there is breath, there is life

Your mind, body, and spirit are connected; each impacts the other. Being in an abusive relationship can affect your whole being. When one or more parts of yourself are harmed, all parts are harmed. By working on and restoring one part, all parts benefit.

When anyone experiences abuse, focused breathing can help the healing process.

Take a breath. When we focus on our breath, we can think more clearly, have more control of our actions or reactions, and restore our energy.

Low and slow: The stronger and most restorative breath comes from breathing low in the body, from below your belly button, rather than high in the chest. Your inhale should fill your belly and your exhale should be long and s-l-o-w.

Take three breaths. Stop. Relax your shoulders and neck. Sigh. Put one hand on your belly to remind you where the breath should come from. Inhale naturally, and exhale low and s-l-o-w. Release the tension, whatever it is.

Adapted from Norma Wong from Move to End Violence

Where there is life, there is hope

Hope is the life force that keeps us going. Hope can help you recover more easily from the trauma from an abusive relationship.

When you are abused, you can start to believe that is how life is supposed to be. You can begin to feel that you don't have any control over your options.

Regaining or maintaining control over your own thoughts, decisions, and actions can help to rebuild your sense of power and freedom from the domination and violence.

Begin to undo the harm or traumatic impact of the violence by the practice of slowing down - listen, think, speak, eat and walk slower. Make one decision at a time.

Practice Daily Self Care

The most important step you can take is to practice daily **self** care.

Kindness – Be compassionate with yourself.

Rest – Try to sleep 6 to 8 hours each night.

Breathe – Practice breathing deeply, low and s-l-o-w.

Water – Drink water and stay hydrated throughout the day.

Support - If you are able, spend time with friends and family who accept and support you, and make you happy.

Spaciousness – Take five minutes a day to do something restorative for you (drink a cup of tea, take a quiet moment to think of something positive, or take a short walk.)

What Is Domestic Violence?

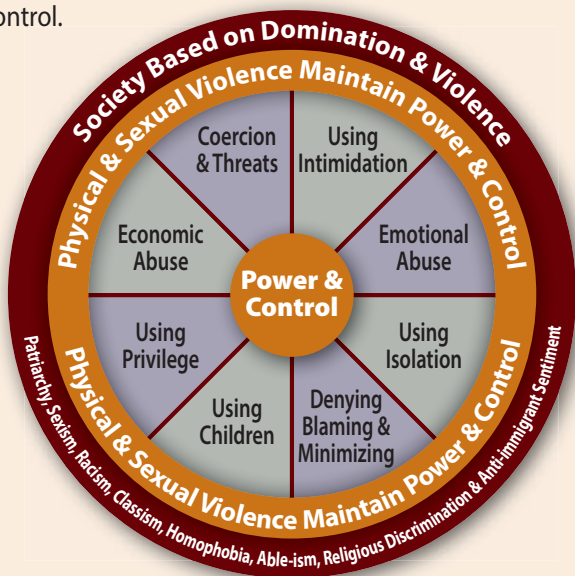
Domestic violence is a pattern of abusive behavior in a relationship that is used by one partner to take or keep power and control over the other partner.

Domestic violence can hurt our social and emotional well-being and our physical bodies. It harms our health, economic independence, and how we parent. It is not something that happens just once, and usually gets worse over time. Living in fear harms emotionally and physically. People who abuse are responsible for their behaviors. An abusive partner may deny what they did, make excuses for it, or blame what they did on you, stress or alcohol. People choose to be violent. Drugs, alcohol, or other people do not make them use violence.

By talking with someone and seeking support, for yourself and your children, you can begin to heal from the abuse.

Power & Control Wheel

Here's a way to think about domestic violence: the red ring shows the ways our society or culture supports control over another or abuse; the orange ring shows how people use threats of physical and sexual violence to keep power and control; and the inner sections are more subtle ways a partner can keep power and control.



Behaviors that Reinforce Threats of Violence

Using Fear: Makes you afraid with their voice, looks or actions. Destroys things, outs your sexual orientation or mental illness, contacts immigration.

Emotional Abuse: Puts down your feelings, rights or opinions, calls you names, always tells you you're wrong, ignores you, or yells.

Isolation: Keeps you away from your family, friends, work, or culture, blocks calls or e-mail, refuses assistive technology, or learning English.

Denying, Blaming, Minimizing: Denies what they did, blames you or tells you it wasn't too bad.

Using of Children: Threatens to take children, or leave the family, asks the children to watch you, or pushes you to be pregnant.

Using Privilege: Taking power over you just because they are male, or another identity like race, sexual orientation, religion, disability or immigration status.

Economic Control: Stops paying bills, won't let you work, messes with your job, stops working to try and control you.

Coercion/Threats: Says they will hurt you, themselves or someone else or harms your pets. Says they won't take care of your disability. Scares you with weapons, says they will out your immigration status, or out your sexual orientation or identity.

Safety Strategies

Decisions about your personal safety and the safety of any children in your care are difficult. You may have to consider risks of physical and emotional harm, the safety of children or family and friends, access to financial resources, religious beliefs, the loss of the relationship and risks involving arrest, detention or immigration status. You may have additional life challenges including lack of affordable housing, a physical or mental disability, or lack of immigration status.

Many individuals experiencing abuse continue to remain in contact with the person who is harming them. Many individuals remain in the relationship because leaving might make their lives more difficult, they may have no resources to leave, or there are positive aspects of the relationship. Many individuals evaluate their options for leaving based on whether they believe things will be better or worse for them and any children in their care.

You are an expert on your life. You are constantly evaluating the risks. No matter what the decision is regarding leaving or staying, an advocate with a community or tribal domestic violence program can assist in creating safety strategies that address basic needs and strategies to address any concerns or risks. Advocates understand that leaving the relationship is not always possible or is what an individual wants to do.

Risk of Dangerousness

Will your partner continue to hurt you and any children in your care? While there is no way to predict behavior, the following are warning signs of increased dangerousness in a relationship and those **factors in red** are warning signs of increased risk of death:

1. History of domestic violence including **forced sex** or **attempted strangulation** or **physical abuse during pregnancy**
2. Threats to kill you or any children or others (parents, friends)
3. Threats of suicide by the abuser
4. **Recent separation** from the relationship or separation from employment
5. Obsessive, controlling or coercive behavior – monitoring everything you do and everywhere you go, **extreme possessiveness** and **stalking**
6. Prior police contact- for domestic violence or other criminal behavior
7. Alcohol or drug use by the abuser

If any of the above factors are present, immediately talk to an advocate about your safety. A combination of these factors increases the likelihood of death. However, even if none of these factors are present, it does not mean you are safe – if you are worried about your safety, do not hesitate to get assistance.

Domestic Violence and Families

You may have children, step-children, younger siblings, or extended family you care for and who may have been hurt by domestic violence. Children need a strong and loving connection with a parent or other caregiver to help them heal and stay safe. Everything you do to protect and support them is important for their health, safety, and future.

Stick to a routine as much as possible. Domestic violence hurts a child's sense of safety and security. Help them know what to think about, where you will be and when you'll be back. Make sure they are getting enough sleep, physical exercise, and healthy foods.

Understand how important you are in your children's lives. Try hard everyday to protect them, be firm, loving, and understanding. Be there to listen, and know their needs. You are helping them grow up strong and healthy.

Stay connected to emotional support. Connect to safe and supportive places and people outside of the home. Things like school, faith-based activities, sports, arts, club activities, or after-school programs can be helpful. Stay in touch with family and friends. You can sometimes find counseling or support groups for children, youth and yourself - contact your community or tribal domestic violence program to find out what they can do.

Take care of yourself. Your physical, emotional, mental and spiritual health helps your children. When you take care of yourself, you have more energy to truly enjoy them and be there for them.

Be positive. Children do better in life when they feel good about themselves. Build their skills through play, chores, school, and other activities. Tell them what they are doing well, why they are fabulous and how much you love them. Give them hugs and other healthy touches that they like, when they like it. Give them rewards and help them know what is right instead of punishing them. Try not to call them names or use guilt or shame.

Your child may be having a hard time because of the violence. Ask for help when you need, and know that there is hope, healing and strength within reach.

For a booklet with more information on *Resilient Families*, go to www.engagingvoices.org or ask your advocate.

Housing Needs

Community and tribal domestic violence programs may have short-term emergency housing and some programs may have access to rental assistance funds, transitional housing units, and/or long-term housing.

Short-term Housing - Emergency Shelters

Cost and Facilities: Shelters are time limited. No fees are charged to stay. Most have shared bedrooms with other survivors, kitchens, common areas, and/or bathrooms. Families share a room together.

Children: Shelters are equipped for children, but parents should bring a child's favorite toys or security objects (stuffed animal, blanket). Many shelters do not have childcare; parents are responsible for taking care of their own children.

Accessibility: No one may be denied services because of a disability or Deaf identity. All shelters must allow service dogs. Individuals with a disability can request reasonable accommodations to policies for a disability-related need.

Pets: Some shelters will accept pets or have arrangements with local animal shelters or animal advocacy groups.

Services: Shelters usually have emergency food, clothing and toiletries. Some shelters may have counseling or support groups for adults, youth, and children.

Confidentiality: Privacy is important. The identity of other residents at the shelter and their circumstances are asked to be kept private.

Civil & Criminal Orders of Protection

The civil and criminal legal systems have two types of orders. You do not need to choose either as an option in your situation. A community or tribal domestic violence program advocate may be able to assist with this process.

Civil Protection Orders (CPO)- There is no cost to file a petition for a protection order and you do not need an attorney. The paperwork for a civil protection order is available at your local court clerk's office. You can also fill out the form at www.idaholegalaid.org under the Self-Help Petitions. The Idaho Domestic Violence Advice Line is also a resource available to help you understand civil protection orders - 1-877-500-2980.

Criminal No Contact Orders (NCO)- If there is an ongoing criminal case, the judge will usually sign a no contact order requiring that the person using the violence (the defendant in a case) stay away from and not harass the person experiencing the violence. The person experiencing the violence can ask the court to modify or terminate an order. NCOs are only valid as long as a case is ongoing (so if the charges are dropped, the order would be dropped, too).

Immigration - If you do not have immigration status, contact an attorney, Catholic Charities or someone who is licensed (beware of scammers) to better understand the implications of your immigration status. Heightened immigration enforcement policies have increased the fear to contact law enforcement and could have unintended consequences.

Overview of Service Providers

There are different types of community service providers or governmental organizations that assist individuals experiencing domestic violence.

Each of these professions has different roles, ethical guidelines, and confidentiality requirements. When working with these individuals, it is important to **ask them to explain their role and their limits of confidentiality.**

- Domestic violence advocates employed by community and tribal domestic violence programs.
- Mental health professionals (licensed counselors or social workers) in private practice or employed by a domestic violence program.
- Victim witness coordinators employed by law enforcement or prosecutors.
- Domestic violence court coordinators employed by the court system.
- Civil attorneys in private practice or with Idaho Legal Aid Services, or a criminal prosecutor employed by the city or county government.
- Culturally specific or issue specific organizations may provide access and resources specific to an individual's culture/ethnicity or other identity.
- Disability advocacy organizations may provide assistive technology or resources specific to an individual's disability.

Overview of Domestic Violence Program Services

Domestic violence programs generally provide these services:

Provides Information. Understands your rights and options, how to heal from trauma, and the sociopolitical root causes of violence.

Safety Planning. Identifies individualized flexible strategies to increase safety.

Builds Skills. Creates opportunities to learn skills for coping, dealing with strong feelings, problem solving, parenting, and accessing resources.

Encouragement. Offers understanding, respect and embraces diverse cultural realities and lived experiences.

Supportive Counseling. Provides counseling or support groups for you as well as for youth and children to better understand and heal from the trauma.

Increases Access to Community Resources. Connects you to government benefits, court processes, child protective services, assistive technology for individuals with disabilities, health care, reproductive health needs, immigration relief, housing, employment resources, and more.

Increases Social Support and Community Connections. Maintains or finds family, social, and community support networks.

Promote Social Change. Promotes behaviors or social norms to end violence against girls and women and people who are gender oppressed.

Why Gender Violence Happens

Gender violence is a problem in our society that affects all communities. Gender violence can include domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, and sex trafficking. While everyone is hurt by gender violence - girls, women and people who are gender oppressed are hurt by abuse and rape the most.

Gender violence is a common occurrence because of our cultural beliefs and what we consider to be “normal” or “acceptable.” In our culture, men are given more value and power than any other gender. This leads to high rates of gender violence.

Gender violence does not happen in isolation. Gender violence is supported by larger forces or **systemic oppressions**, like patriarchy, which takes power over and harms girls and women. Systemic oppressions are the ways in which history, culture, beliefs, institutional practices and policies interact to keep a ranking or power over others.

Our society ranks or values human beings based on identities, like gender, race, national origin, class, sexuality, ability, immigration or refugee status. Ranking human beings supports the **power and privileges** that some groups of people have to keep power over others.

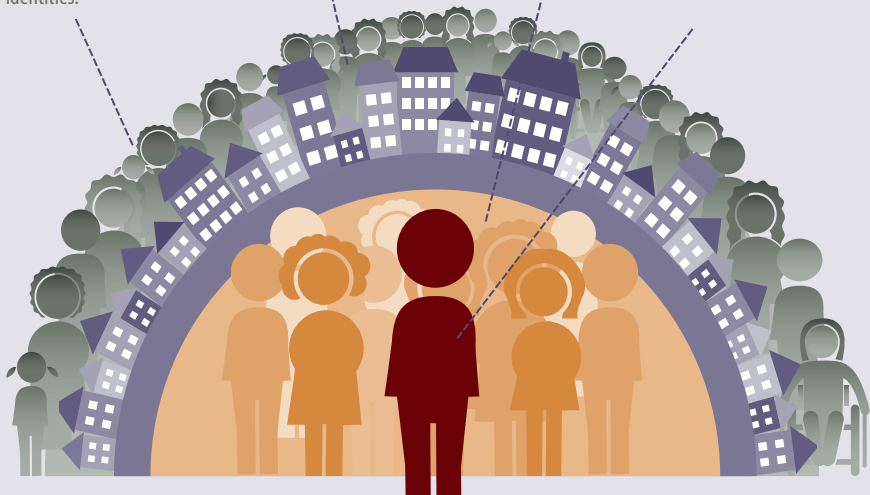
Individuals do not act in isolation, but are influenced by other people, social structures, and our society

Systemic Oppressions like Patriarchy – Large forces which dominate and harm groups of people based on gender and other identities.

Government, Religious, and Community Structures – May educate and enforce oppression and dominance.

Families, Friends, and Peers – Influences us to accept discrimination (i.e. sexism), inequity (i.e. strict gender roles) or oppression.

Individuals – May choose to use violence that is fueled and supported by a dynamic system of power and dominance.



Towards Thriving

Here are some of the ways you can move from surviving to thriving:

Spaciousness. Breathing, making time for quiet reflection or meditation, or being in nature are all ways to increase your awareness to see things for what they are in that very moment.

Strong Social Network. Being around caring, supportive people is important in times of difficulty. While talking with a loved one, family member, or friend will not make troubles go away, it allows you to share your feelings, gain support, receive positive feedback, and come up with possible solutions.

Being Optimistic. Staying positive can be difficult, but maintaining a hopeful outlook is an important part of resiliency. Positive thinking does not mean ignoring the problem. It means understanding that setbacks are only in that moment and that you have the skills needed to address challenges.

One Small Action. Decide on an area of life that is important to you and take one small action. Think about the challenges you might face and be ready with a plan. Small steps can renew hope!

Sense of Purpose in Your Life. Get involved in your community, stay connected to or explore spirituality, celebrate traditions and culture, or participate in activities that are meaningful to you.

Towards Liberation

Many women and people who are gender oppressed who are abused or raped want to get involved in their communities to end gender violence. Here are ways to make a difference in your community:

- Express your experiences through art, photography, or dance.
- Learn more about feminism - the belief in social, economic and political equity across genders. Read authors like bell hooks or watch Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's TED Talk "We Should All be Feminists."
- Advocate for gender equity. Idaho can and should do better. In a recent national study by the Institute for Women's Policy Research, "Status of Women in the States: 2015", Idaho ranked 50th overall on the status of women.
- Join the Idaho Coalition Against Sexual & Domestic Violence and receive regular newsletters on ways to be involved in creating communities where gender violence is no longer a common occurrence. Go to www.engagingvoices.org.

Glossary

Assistive Technology - Tools people with disabilities use for functions that would otherwise be difficult or impossible to perform.

Coercion - Forcing someone to do something by using force or threats.

Empowerment - Practice of increasing self-awareness, raising consciousness and building confidence.

Equity - Everyone receives what they need rather than the same (equality) to thrive by taking into account the lived experience of individuals.

Liberation - No longer being controlled or dominated by an outside force.

Oppression - Exercise of power and domination over another.

Patriarchy - Social system in which power is held by men and withholds opportunity from women.

Restorative - Renewing strength, health, and consciousness.

Social Norm - Behaviors and beliefs that are valued and supported in a society.

Systemic Oppression - Oppression is built into institutions like government and education systems and gives power and positions of dominance to some groups of people over other groups of people. Systems of oppression are built around what are understood to be “norms” in our societies.

State and National Hotlines

Idaho Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-669-3176. Answered 24/7 and provides free, confidential assistance.

National Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-799-SAFE (7233) or 1-800-787-3224 (TTY line for Deaf/hearing impaired). Free, confidential assistance 24/7 to victims of domestic violence. Multilingual and may connect you with a local program that can provide assistance.

Casa de Esperanza Helpline: 1-651-772-1611 or www.casadeesperanza.org. A 24-hour Spanish bilingual domestic violence helpline as well as an online resource directory to find organizations that are equipped to assist individuals.

National Human Trafficking Resource Center: 1-888-373-7888 or www.traffickingresourcecenter.org. Available to answer calls from anywhere in the country, 24/7. More than 200 languages.

RAINN (Rape, Abuse, Incest National Network): 1-800-656-HOPE (4673) or www.rainn.org. Free, confidential assistance 24/7 to victims of sexual assault. This hotline will connect you with a local program that can provide assistance. RAINN is multilingual via phone and the RAINN website has a “chat” feature that you can use to talk with an advocate.

This handbook provides information about domestic violence and the services that are available in our communities. We encourage you to go through this handbook with a community advocate with a domestic violence program.

A list of Idaho's community and tribal domestic violence programs can be found at www.engagingvoices.org under "Members" beneath the "About" tab.

If you would like to speak to someone about options or learn about services available in your area, please call the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-SAFE (7233) or the Idaho Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-699-3176 for assistance or a referral to your local program.



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