

Understanding Intimate Partner Violence



Intimate partner violence (IPV), also called domestic violence, is a serious issue that can occur in any relationship. It's a pattern of behavior used to gain or maintain power and control over a partner. This guide will help you identify the signs of IPV and understand its different forms.

Definition of Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)

Intimate Partner Violence, also known as domestic violence or relationship abuse, involves a pattern of behaviors used by one partner to maintain power and control over another in an intimate relationship. It encompasses physical violence, threats, emotional abuse, financial control, and manipulation.

The Signs of IPV

- **Physical Abuse:** Hitting, kicking, shoving, pushing, biting, strangling, or using weapons are all forms of physical abuse.
- **Sexual Abuse:** Any unwanted sexual contact, including forced intercourse, is sexual abuse.
- **Emotional Abuse:** This includes name-calling, put-downs, insults, threats, humiliation, and constant criticism. It can also involve isolating you from friends and family or making you feel like you're "walking on eggshells."
- **Financial Abuse:** Controlling your finances, taking money without permission, or preventing you from working are all forms of financial abuse.
- **Digital Abuse:** Stalking you online, monitoring your phone or social media, or controlling your online access are all forms of digital abuse.



Remember: IPV can be subtle and doesn't always involve physical violence. Often, it starts with controlling behaviors and emotional manipulation.



The Cycle of Violence

Many abusive relationships follow a predictable cycle:

- **Tension Building:** This is a period of escalating tension and arguments.
- **The Acute Incident:** This is a violent outburst, which can be physical, sexual, or emotional.
- **Honeymoon Phase:** The abuser apologizes, promises to change, and shows affection. This creates a false sense of hope and keeps the victim trapped.

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Understanding the Abuser

Abusers often come from backgrounds of violence themselves. They may have low self-esteem and use violence to feel powerful. It's important to remember that the victim is not to blame.

What To Do If You're Experiencing IPV



- **Develop a Safety Plan:** Think about escape routes, safe houses, and trusted contacts who can help.
- **Reach Out for Help:** Talk to a trusted friend, family member, or therapist, or call a domestic violence hotline.
- **Document the Abuse:** Keep a record of incidents, including dates, times, and details. This can be helpful if you need to seek legal protection.

Impact on Health and Well-being

Intimate Partner Violence can have health consequences: including injuries, mental health issues like anxiety and PTSD, chronic pain, and adverse outcomes for children exposed to violence. Recognizing the link between IPV and health outcomes is very important.

Remember: You are not alone. There are people who care about you and want to help.

Here are some resources:

- **National Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-799-7233**
(<https://www.thehotline.org/>)
- **TheHotline.org: <https://www.thehotline.org/search-our-resources/>**