

YOU ARE NOT ALONE

For Victims

24 Hour Crisis Line: (812) 336-0846

Do you need to cover your tracks?

<http://middlewayhouse.org/coveryourtracks.pdf>

The information provided here is designed to help victims of domestic violence recognize options open to them. It is not intended to render any professional advice, legal, psychological, or otherwise. Individuals must consult competent, licensed professionals to receive advice appropriate to their circumstances. Here are the questions that are answered here:

- What do you need to consider first?
- What can you say to the children?
- What happens after an arrest is made?
- What are protective, restraining and no contact orders?
- How do you find legal assistance?
- What is the cycle of violence?
- How do you recognize the beginning of physical abuse?
- How can you respond to these signs?
- Has he changed or is it just wishful thinking?
- How to recognize abusive personalities?
- What are your individuals rights in intimate relationships?



What do you need to consider first?

Are you in a safe place?

If you have been a victim of violence the first thing you need to consider is your own safety. Even if the abuser is in police custody, he or she may be released in 12 hours. You may want to stay with your friends or family. If that's not possible, or if it puts your loved ones in danger, contact Middle Way House at (812) 336-0846. We can tell you about options for safe housing, community resources, counseling, legal advocates, and support groups. If you do not live in South Central Indiana, you can contact the [National Domestic Violence Hotline](#) for services in your area at 1-800-799-7233.

Do you have a safety plan?

Here are some things to think about and arrange when creating a safety plan for yourself:

- Plan what to do before a violent incident occurs. Leave the room or the home if your partner becomes violent. Have an escape route planned to get out of the house.
- Maintain close contact with family, friends, and neighbors. Establish a code in case an emergency arises (i.e. If you call and use an agreed upon word that signals you are in danger).

- Know where a safe place is and arrange with a trusted person for transportation to get you there. Call the police if necessary and learn other emergency numbers to call. If you have injuries, go directly to the hospital.
- If you work outside the home, give your employer basic information and instructions not to tell your partner of your plans and to call the police if he comes to your workplace. Leave instructions with your children's school, day care, or baby-sitter that you are the only person who will pick the children up. Make it clear that the children are never to leave with anyone but you.
- Keep a suitcase packed. You can leave it with someone so that your partner won't find it.
- Keep copies of all important records with a friend or family member. Birth certificates, social security cards, immunization records, insurance policies, car titles, bank account records, blank checks, mortgage information, health insurance cards, etc.
- Keep a set of car keys hidden, preferably outside somewhere, or in a magnetic case on the car. If you leave by car, lock the car doors as soon as you get in.
- Take steps to increase your financial self-reliance. Establish your own checking account, one separate from that of your partner. Establish credit in your own name, if you can do so safely. Try to establish an emergency fund and add to it whenever possible.

Do you realize you are not responsible for the violence?

Violence is a choice. The person using violence is the person who chose it. That person is responsible for the choice. You do not deserve to be abused. You do not deserve to be hurt even if you argue, complain, or refuse to do something your partner wants you to do. It is not your fault even if you were drinking, using drugs or even if you made a big mistake.

- There is nothing you can do that would justify abuse.
- You did not ask to be abused when you chose your partner.
- You have a right to be safe.

What can you say to your children?

It's important to talk.

If your children have witnessed the abuse or if your partner has been taken to jail, it is important to talk to your children about what is going on. Even young children need to hear your explanation and be reassured about everyone's safety. Older children especially need help understanding the dynamics of what has happened.

Most children seek the same reassurances at first. You can start by talking about the things in this list.

- "It's not your fault." Nothing a child can do should trigger abuse, even if you were fighting about

the children, it is not their fault.

- "Mommy loves you." Don't get too upset to state this, even if you think it's obvious. The kids will be very frightened. They need to hear this.
- "I know this was scary." Acknowledge that they may be frightened and tell them you are there to take care of them.
- "I know this is confusing." Acknowledge their feelings and don't be afraid to admit some of yours. It is normal to be scared and confused by violence.
- "We can figure this out." You won't have all the answers but you can agree to work together to figure it out.

You can talk about the police without scaring the children.

After a domestic arrest, some victims are very angry. It's natural to express these feelings with emotional statements like "I hope they keep him locked up forever." However, if children are concerned about your partner, especially if he or she is their parent, this kind of statement can frighten them.

It's important to let the children know the facts. Unless a suspect has an unusual criminal history, he or she can bond out of jail in 12 hours*. If that is frightening to the children, be sure and tell them how you plan to be in a safe place by then. Include them in your basic safety plan.

You don't have to make the children afraid of the police. One thing you could say is that the police just want to tell Daddy not to hurt Mommy any more. If you are filing a protective order, you may also be able to say you don't want Daddy in jail, you just want to tell him he shouldn't hurt you anymore. If he ignores this warning and has to go to jail, it is his fault, not yours or your children's.

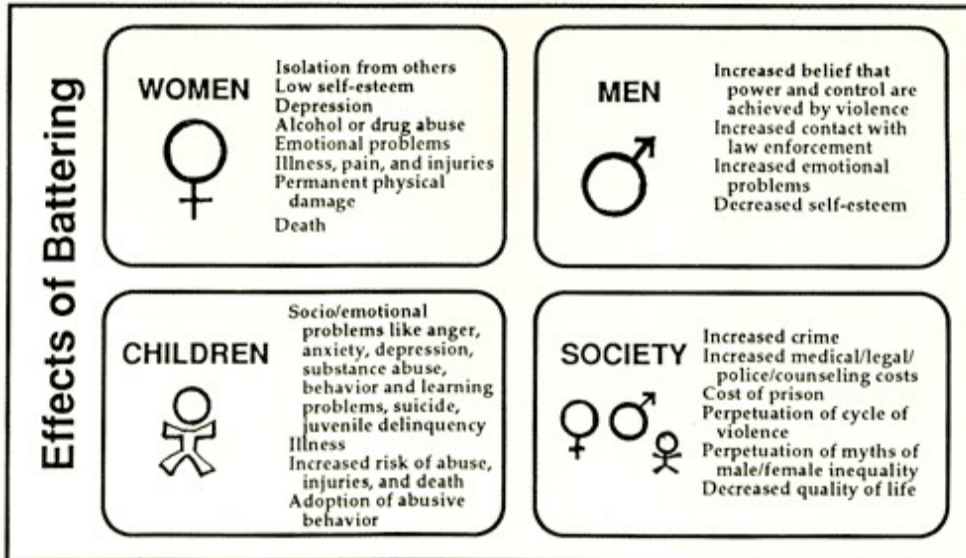
*The length of time varies from place to place.

Questions to ask yourself. Some questions that may help you begin thinking about your relationship:

- What do I gain by staying in a violent home?
- What do my children gain by growing up in a violent home?
- What do I have to lose by leaving? What do the children have to lose by leaving?
- What price am I paying for "peace"? How long have I been paying it?
- Are my children paying the price? How will it affect them five years from now?
- Is the price too high?
- Without change, what will I be like five years from now?
- What will I look like five years from now?
- Who can I talk to about my concerns?
- What do I want?
- What am I willing to do to get it?
- What do I need to stay safe and protect my children if I decide to leave?

All abuse is humiliating and degrading. It makes us feel as though we are somehow bad or inferior. We

hide these feelings, even from ourselves, because they are so painful. Many people have remained alone and isolated in shame, believing there was something wrong with them. But by sharing loving support, we begin to name our abuse. If you do this, you will discover that you are not alone, you are not a bad person. You can begin to recognize what you have endured and know that you have survived. You are strong, you are of worth, and you can stand tall with your head held high.



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What happens after an arrest has been made?

Here are some things that usually happen after an arrest

- In many counties, there is a minimum time a batterer is held without bond.
- In Monroe County, the suspect is held for 12 hours after a domestic battery
- The police make a report and turn it over to the prosecutor. Someone in the prosecutor's office will actually make the decision on whether or not to file charges.
- Once charges are filled someone from the victim's assistance department in the prosecutor's office will contact you for an appointment. At this appointment, you will be told how they plan to prosecute the case. You will have a chance to say what you hope to see happen.
- Some cases are dismissed. You cannot drop charges to dismiss the case, but the state can dismiss if the prosecutor doesn't think the case is strong enough.
- Some cases end with a plea agreement. Most victims like this because they don't have to go to the court. With a plea agreement the abuser pleads guilty in return for a specific jail time, probation, and counseling. Often the victims can have a say in these arguments.
- Occasionally a case goes to trial. If that happens a judge or jury decides whether the suspect is guilty or not. The judge will often let the victim speak at the sentencing to say what he or she wants to happen.

Get involved in the system

Although it can be very confusing and often a little frightening, the criminal justice system is supposed to be for your benefit. The case is more likely to turn out the way you want it to if you get involved in the process. If you want someone to go through the process with you, or if you believe the system is against you, call a Middle Way legal advocate at 812/333-7404 ext 213 or an organization that serves survivors of domestic violence in your area for help.

Some things you might need to know

- "No drop policy". Monroe County in Indiana has a "no drop policy." That means the victim cannot drop charges. There are no exceptions to this rule.
- Restitution. Included in some sentences is "restitution." That means the abuser has to financially repay you for actual damages he or she caused. The prosecutor needs copies of these bills as soon as possible. Medical expenses or repair bills for property damage can be included in the restitution.
- Victim compensation. If a report was made within 48 hours of the crime, you can apply for financial compensation from the state's Victim of Violent Crime fund. These funds can give you financial assistance, especially for counseling or medical bills. Ask the victim's assistance staff at your local prosecutor's office or the Middle Way legal advocate for an application.

What are protective, restraining, and no contact orders?

A Protective Order is a civil order and means that the respondent (abuser) is ordered NOT to:

- physically hurt the petitioner (victim)
- threaten to physically hurt the petitioner
- damage the petitioner's property
- harass the petitioner
- disturb the petitioner's peace

A Restraining Order is also a civil order and is very similar to a Protective Order. The difference is that a Restraining Order is used only in divorce cases, but all of the above mentioned rules apply to the respondent (abuser). The restraining order is only in effect until the divorce is final.

A No Contact Order is a criminal order. The defendant (abuser) is ordered by a judge to have no contact with the complaining witness in person, by phone or letter, through friends or family or in any other way while s/he is released pending trial. At the bottom of most No Contact Orders there is a clause directing any law enforcement officer having probable cause to believe the defendant (abuser) is in violation of the order to arrest the defendant for the violation and have the defendant brought before the next session of Court.

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How do you find legal assistance?

If you cannot afford an attorney, and reside in Monroe County, the following agencies may be able to provide legal assistance at no cost to those who qualify:

Legal Service Organization (LSO)

Tel: (812) 339-7668 or 1-800-822-4774 Calls about divorces are accepted Wed. 9:00am - 11:00am. Calls about protective orders are accepted Mon., Wed., and Fri., 9:00am-11:00am.

Protective Order Project (POP)

Tel: (812) 855-9229 Part of I.U. law school; only open when I.U. is open - Free processing of protective orders

Community Legal Clinic (CLC)

Tel: (812) 855-9229 Part of I.U. law school; Only open when I.U. is open - Can provide free representation for divorces, restraining orders, etc.

What is the Cycle of Violence?

Honeymoon Phase

During the Honeymoon Phase, the couple will stay together; they will be very happy, loving, and confident that things will work out. The woman forgives her partner. The woman believes that this is how her partner really is. Her partner really believes that he will never abuse her again. The partner apologizes, makes excuses and tries to make up for what's happened. The partner promises to change, to quit drinking or taking drugs, to get counseling, etc.

Tension Building Phase

During the Tension Building Phase, the abusive partner increases verbal and psychological harassment. Severe brutality may be threatened. The woman, fearing her partner will batter her attempts to control the external forces that upset him. She tries to control her own anger and to wait out the storm. She feels like she is walking on eggshells. The constant tension becomes unbearable.

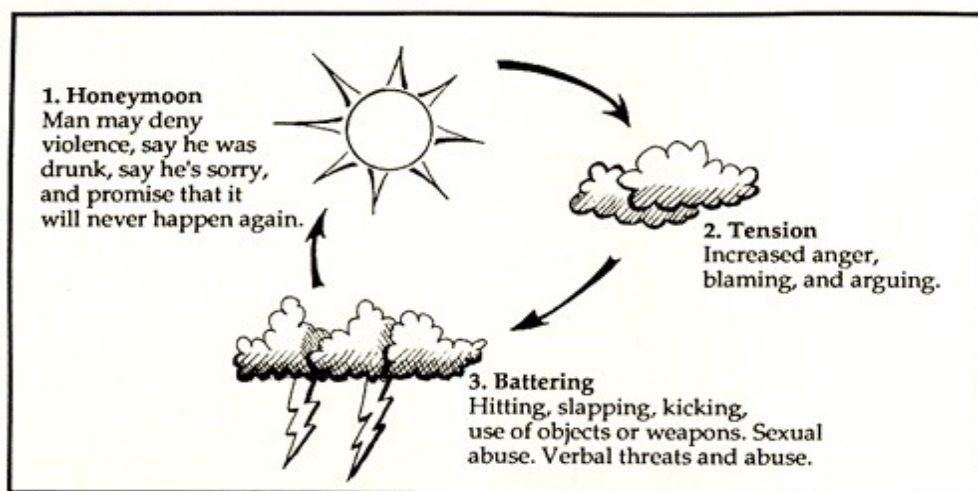
Battering Phase

The Battering Phase can be triggered by almost anything - a word, a gesture, a mistake, some external

event. The physical assault almost always occurs in private. In long-term battering, some times a woman will trigger the battering incident to get it over with. This is NOT causing the violence. The battering phase can include physical, sexual, and verbal abuse over and above the usual violence such as degradation, put downs, pushing, shoving, confinement, punching, rape and murder.

This cycle of abuse will continue until there is an effective intervention or the victim leaves the abusive partner - in such a way that the danger will not follow her.

The Cycle of Violence



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How do you recognize the beginning of physical abuse?

Here are some signs that may signal the onset of physical abuse in an intimate relationship:

Threats of Violence

This could include any threat of physical force meant to frighten and control the woman. Statements like "I'll shut your mouth up", "I'll kill you", or "I'll break your neck." Most people do not threaten their mates, but a batterer will try to excuse threats by saying, "everybody talks like that."

Breaking or Striking Objects

This behavior is used as a punishment and to terrorize the woman into submission. Abusers may beat on the table with their fists or throw objects. Not only is this behavior a sign of extreme emotional immaturity, but there is the potential for great danger when people think they have the "right" to punish or frighten another person.

Any Force During an Argument

This may involve holding a woman down, physically restraining her from leaving the room, and pushing or shoving. The abuser may hold the woman against the wall and say, "you're going to listen to me!"

Past Battering

Abusers may admit they have hit their partner in the past, but in each instance their partner made them do it. A woman may hear from relatives, ex-spouses or ex-girlfriends that the person is abusive. Batterers will beat any woman they're with if the woman is with the abuser long enough for the violence to begin. Situational circumstances do not cause a person's abusive personality.

The Legal Definition of Battery

is touching someone in rude or insolent manner. If it hurts you, if you're unwilling, it is a crime.

How can you respond to these signs?

If you are experiencing these things or have other questions, talk to people who are familiar with the problem. If they don't understand, find someone who does such as an advocate at Middle Way House or the local domestic violence organization in your area. Don't let anyone discredit how you feel! If you are walking on eggshells, or you have to be very careful about what you say or do, this could be the warning sign that you are involved with a batterer.

If he abused a former partner, do not believe that things will be different for you. Most batterers are violent with all their girlfriends or wives-this is how they deal with intimate relationships. It is not unusual to be in potentially violent relationship a long time before recognizing it. Talking can help. Each year, hundreds of victims in our service area seek help to escape violent relationships. You are not alone. Don't let anyone convince you otherwise.

How to recognize abusive personalities?

Many women are interested in ways they can predict whether they are about to become involved with someone who will be physically abusive. Below are list of behaviors that are seen in people who beat their girlfriends or wives. If the person has several of these behaviors (say three or more) there is a strong potential for physical violence. The more signs a person has, the more likely the person is a batterer. In some cases, a batterer may have only a couple of behaviors that the woman can recognize, but they are very exaggerated. The behaviors become more severe and serve to dominate and control the woman.

Jealousy

Abusers usually say that jealousy is a sign of love. Jealousy has nothing to do with love; it is a sign of possessiveness and lack of trust. Abusers tend to question their partners about everyone they talk to, accuse them of flirting when they are carrying on a normal conversation, or be jealous of time spent with family, friends, or children. As the jealousy progresses, the abuser may call frequently during the day or drop by unexpectedly. The abuser may refuse to let his wife or girlfriend work for fear she'll meet someone else. He may check her mileage or ask friends to watch her.

Controlling Behavior

Batterers will say this behavior demonstrates concern for the woman's safety, or a desire for her to use her time better, or make good decisions. The abuser may be angry if the woman is "late" coming back from the store or an appointment. As this behavior gets worse, the abuser may not let the women make personal decisions about the house, her clothing or going to church. She may have to ask permission to leave the house or room or use the phone. Maintaining absolute control over money is another typical sign of an abusive personality.

Quick Involvement

Many battered women date or know their abuser for less than six months before they are married, engaged, or living together. The abuser comes on like a whirlwind, claiming "you're the only person I could ever talk to" or "I've never felt loved like this by anyone". The abuser pressures the woman to commit to the relationship, making her feel guilty for "letting him down" if she wants to slow things down or break-off the relationship.

Unrealistic Expectations

Abusive people will expect their partner to meet all their needs. The abuser expects the woman to be the perfect wife, mother, and lover. The abuser will say things like "if you love me, I'm all you need - you're all I need".

Isolation

The abusive person tries to cut his victim off from all resources. If she has male friends, she's a "whore"; if she has female friends, she's a "lesbian"; if she's close to family, she's "tied to the apron strings." The abuser accuses people who are the woman's support of "causing trouble". The abuser may want to live in the country without a phone. The abuser may not let her use a car or have one that is reliable.

Blames Others for Problems

If the abuser is chronically unemployed, someone else is always doing the abuser wrong or is out to get him. The abuser makes mistakes and then blames the woman for upsetting him or keeping him from concentrating. He tells the woman she is at fault for almost anything that goes wrong.

Blames Partner for Feelings

An abuser claims his girlfriend or wife is responsible for everything he feels and uses it to manipulate her. For example, an abuser may say "you make me mad" or "you're hurting me by not doing what I want you to do" or "I can't help being angry." Claims like "you make me happy" or "you control how I feel," are harder to catch.

Hypersensitivity

Abusers are easily insulted and claim their feelings are "hurt" when really they're mad. The abuser takes the slightest setbacks as personal attacks. The abuser will "rant and rave" about the injustice of things that have happened, things that are really just part of living. Things like being asked to work overtime, getting a traffic ticket, or being asked to help with chores.

Cruelty to Animals or Children

An abuser may punish animals or children brutally or be insensitive to their pain or suffering. The abuser may expect children to be capable of doing things that are beyond their ability, like whipping a two year old for wetting a diaper. He may tease children or younger brothers and sisters until they cry. Sixty percent of the men who abuse the woman they are with also beat their children. The abuser may not want children to eat at the table or expect the children to stay in their room all evening while he is at home.

Playful Use of Force in Sex

An abuser may like to throw the woman down and hold her down during sex. The abuser may want to act out fantasies during sex where the woman is helpless. The abuser is letting the woman know that the idea of rape is exciting. The abuser may show a little concern about whether the woman wants to have sex and uses sulking or anger to manipulate her into compliance. The abuser may start having sex with the woman when she is sleeping, or demand sex when she is ill or tired.

Rigid Sex Roles

Abusers expect a woman to serve them. This may mean staying at home to create the right environment for him and being responsible for menial tasks. The abuser expects absolute obedience, even when he tells her to do things that are wrong or criminal. The abuser sees women as inferior to man; he believes she is stupid and unable to be a whole person without a relationship.

Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde

Many women are confused by their abuser's "sudden" changes in mood. They may think the abuser has some special mental problem because one minute the abuser is nice and the next the abuser is exploding. Explosiveness and moodiness are typical of people who beat their partners. These behaviors are related to other characteristics like hypersensitivity.

Verbal Abuse

In addition to saying things that are meant to be cruel and hurtful, abusers use things like cursing, tone of voice, mimicking, and constant repetition to degrade and harass their partners.

Past Battering

This is a big warning sign. If your partner tells you of past violence in an intimate relationship, chances are the blame for the violence will be put on the victim: "_____ made me do it", "had it coming", "started it", etc. If someone who knows your partner tells you of past abusive behaviors, you should take it very seriously because intimate partner violence is not situational. Sooner or later, the abuse will surface in your relationship too.

Threats of Violence

Some abusers never have to touch you to have you in their control. They may threaten to kill you, break your neck, slap the smile off your face, or some such thing. This is not normal conversation in intimate relationships. Do not believe your partner when you're told "everybody talks like that". People who really love you will not want you to be afraid of them.

Breaking or Striking Objects

This behavior may be used as a punishment when your partner purposefully breaks something you cherish. It also can be used to terrorize you to achieve submission. Behaviors may include beating on the table, throwing objects around, slamming doors, punching the wall. Like threats of violence, these are not normal behaviors. They are meant to frighten you and they should.

Any Use of Force During an Argument

Keeping you from leaving the room, holding you in place, pushing or shoving, ramming a finger into your chest while making a point are all ways abusers maintain control of their partners.

You May Be in Danger If:

- You have a feeling or intuition (clear or vague!) that your partner is going to hurt you.
- Your partner threatens to kill you, himself, the children, other people or pets.
- Your partner's abuse and threats escalate or change for the worse: his behavior grows more violent, sexually brutal, humiliating, reckless, scary or bizarre.
- Your partner has weapons, or he has used or threatened to use weapons against you or others.
- Your partner is abusing drugs like alcohol, cocaine, sleeping pills, marijuana, etc. As drug use continues your partner seems more suspicious, jealous, paranoid, controlling, and abusive.
- Your partner follows you, checks up on you, accuses you of having affairs, and wants to control your every move. He says things like, "If I can't have you, no one will".
- Your partner voices suspicions or fears that you are leaving him, and he wants to stop you.
- Your partner physically or sexually abuses you so severely or brutally that you believe he may kill you.
- You think seriously about killing or hiring someone to kill your partner.
- You are imagining committing suicide.
- Your partner says he doesn't remember what he did, or claims that what happened did not happen.
- Your already depressed or violent partner experiences a big loss. For example, a job loss, the death of a friend or relative, an illness.
- Your partner physically or sexually abuses a child or attacks you physically while you are pregnant.
- Your partner has a history of arrests for criminal activity and he doesn't seem to fear further arrests.
- Your partner fears that you will expose a secret such as his illegal activity.
- Your partner is depressed or has a history of depression or other serious emotional illness.

What are your individual rights in an intimate relationship?

You have the right to:

- Share equally with your partner in all decisions and responsibilities related to your relationship, children, home and finances.
- Grow and explore your potential without feeling guilty, selfish or afraid.
- Have friendships with both women and men outside of your relationship with your partner.
- Express your opinions and have them given the same respect and consideration as those of your partner.
- Have and express your sexual needs and desires without feeling like you are selfish, demanding, or aggressive.
- Have your emotional, physical and intellectual needs be as important as the needs of your partner.
- Expect your partner to give at least 50 percent to resolve difficulties in your relationship.
- Hold your partner responsible for his behavior rather than assuming that responsibility yourself.
- NEVER be physically attacked or psychologically degraded by your partner and the right to terminate the relationship if either occurs.
- Expect significant behavioral changes rather than apologies and promises from your partner if a single abusive or battering incident occurs.