



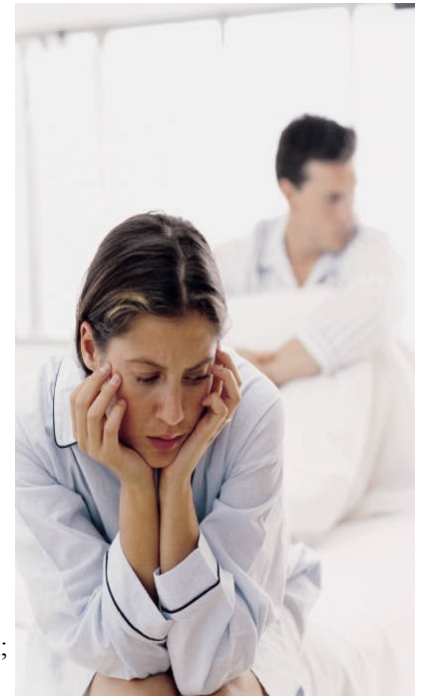
ARE YOU IN AN ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIP?

Yes, you may be a battered woman if you:

- are frightened of your partner's temper;
- are often compliant because you are afraid to hurt your partner's feelings or afraid of your partner's anger;
- have the urge to "rescue" your partner when your partner is troubled;
- find yourself apologizing to yourself or to others for your partner's behavior when you are treated badly;
- have been hit, kicked, shoved, or had things thrown at you by your partner when he or she was jealous or angry;
- make decisions about activities and friends according to what your partner wants or how your partner will react;
- drink heavily or use drugs;
- have been abused as a child or seen your mother abused.

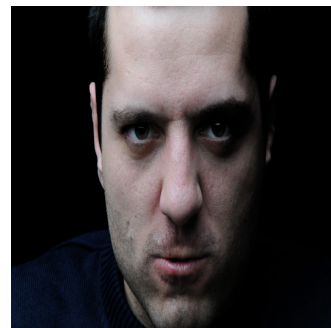
Yes, you may be a batterer if you:

- are very jealous;
- sulk silently when upset;
- have an explosive temper;
- criticize and put down your partner a lot;
- have difficulty expressing feelings;
- drink heavily or use drugs;
- believe that it is the male role to be in charge, or have contempt for women;
- are protective of your partner to the point of controlling;
- control your partner's behavior, money, and decisions;
- have broken things, thrown things at your partner, hit, shoved, or kicked your partner when angry;
- were abused as a child or witnessed abuse in your family of origin.



REASONS WOMEN STAY

- ... She **loves** him.
- ... She is emotionally **dependent** on the abuser, and/or the relationship.
- ... She is **isolated** from friends by the abuser, so feels she has nowhere to run.
- ... She experiences learned **helplessness**.
- ... She often believes his **excuses**, that she “deserves” the punishment, or the **alcohol** keeps him from knowing what he is doing.
- ... She may have no idea that services are available for her.
- ... The battering takes place in a short period of time. Afterwards, he may be quite gentle and loving, **promising** never to hit her again.
- ... She believes that if only she will “improve” and stop “making mistakes” that the battering will stop. She remains because of **guilt**.
- ... She was raised to believe in the all-importance of a good relationship with a man, and that good relationships are her responsibility, not his.
- ... She does not know that she has the right not to be beaten.
- ... She does not want any change in the relationship except not to be beaten.
- ... She may **fear** him, believing him to be omnipotent. Often **threats** are made against her such as he will kill her, and she may conclude that there is something wrong with her.
- ... Often the men are otherwise mild mannered, so her concerns are not taken seriously. Often he is only violent with her, and she may conclude that there is something wrong with her.
- ... She does not see herself as a battered woman. She may realize they have problems, but she does not see the major problems as abuse.
- ... She wants her **children** to be with her and their father.
- ... She believes the **myths** about domestic violence.





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IF YOU HAVE LEFT AN ABUSIVE MAN

Having left the violence of your home does not mean that all of your problems are over. The man that has recently and frequently abused you may react in several predictable ways. Knowing what he probably will do may have a beneficial effect on your ability to cope with his demands, intimidations and threats, and better enable you to make decisions without fear.

- (1) One of his first efforts to locate you may be to go to your friends and family members. Depending on his relationship with them, he may either threaten them or attempt to gain their sympathy. If they do not know where you are, only that you are safe and well, they cannot be frightened into giving that information. If he uses the sympathy line, his story may be such a distortion of what really happened that they may try to persuade you to return to him and try again.
- (2) If he does make contact with you, he will probably first try a great apology line including promises of new behaviors, gifts, things for the house and children, or anything that he thinks you will believe and will bring you back within his sphere of dominance.
- (3) The next pattern of behavior is generally one of threats and attempts to intimidate. This will often include threats to kill you or “put out a contract on you,” take the children or get custody of them himself. The wisest answer here is to remind him that he alone is responsible for his actions and results of those actions, and refuse to listen to further threats.
- (4) The next step is the counseling/religion step. He may suddenly become a “Christian” and attend church activities in a most obvious manner. He may begin making the rounds of counseling services trying to find a counselor that will call you and tell you that you should go back home and help him sort out problems. Unless a man is willing to go to one counselor and continue counseling whether or not you come back, he has not accepted the responsibility of his behavior.
- (5) If the above four steps have not worked, there are others he may try, including crying and begging, particularly in a public situation so that you are embarrassed and appear to be hardhearted, harassment by phone calls, mail or e-mail, legal frustrations, and showing up at your work.
- (6) One of the most powerful threats is that he will not let you have your children. **YOU DO HAVE RIGHTS, AND THERE ARE LAWS TO PROTECT THOSE RIGHTS. SEEK LEGAL (ATTORNEY) CONSULTATION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.** Until a court has determined temporary custody of your children, both biological parents have equal custodial rights.



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HOW CAN YOU RECOGNIZE A POTENTIAL BATTERER?

The following characteristics might help you identify a potential batterer. They are definitive signs; seek appropriate assistance as indicated. **Do not ignore threats of violence.**

- Does he report having been physically or psychologically abused as a child?
- Was the man's mother battered by his father?
- Does he play with guns and use them to protect himself against other people?
- Does he lose his temper frequently and more easily than seems necessary?
- Does he commit acts of violence against objects and things rather than people?
- Does he drink alcohol excessively?
- Does he use drugs?
- Does he take medications?
- Does he display an unusual amount of jealousy when you are with him? Is he jealous of other significant people in your life?
- Does he expect you to spend all of your free time with him or to keep him informed of your whereabouts?
- Does he become enraged when you do not listen to his advice?
- Does he appear to have a dual personality?
- Is there a sense of overkill in his cruelty or in his kindness?
- Do you get a sense of fear when he becomes angry with you? Does **not** making him angry become an important part of your behavior?
- Does he have rigid ideas of what people should do that are determined by male or female sex-role stereotypes?
- Do you think or feel you are being battered? If so, the probability is high that you are being battered and should seek help now.



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Personalized Safety Plan

Source: A Framework For Understanding: The Nature and Dynamics of Domestic Violence. The Missouri Coalition Against Domestic Violence. pp.23-26.

Safety plans may help you anticipate the dangers you may face. Just as abusers continually shift their tactics of power and control, your safety plan is an adaptable tool to help keep you safe in your ever changing situation.

▸ WHEN TO USE A SAFETY PLAN

Safety plans can be made for a variety of situations:

dealing with an emergency, such as when you are threatened with a physical assault or an assault has occurred; for continuing to live with or to date a partner who has been abusive; or for protecting yourself after you have ended a relationship with an abusive partner.

▸ USE WHAT YOU ALREADY KNOW

If you are a woman who has been abused, you probably know more about safety planning and risk assessment than you might realize. Being in a relationship with an abusive partner—and surviving—requires considerable skill and resourcefulness. Any time you do or say something as a way to protect yourself or your children, you are assessing risk and enacting a safety plan. You do it all the time; it's just not always a conscious process.

▸ THINK IT THROUGH

It can be a helpful safety strategy to evaluate risks and make safety plans in a more intentional way. Whether you are currently with your partner or have ended the relationship,

and whether you choose to use available services or to involve the police, there are certain things that are helpful to consider in planning for your future safety.

▸ BE AWARE OF DANGERS

If you are planning to leave your partner or already have left, be aware that batterers often escalate their violence during times of separation, increasing your risk for harm, including serious and life-threatening injury. Making a separation safety plan can help reduce the risks to you and your children.

▸ EVALUATE YOUR OPTIONS

Only you can judge who it's safe to tell about your situation and who to ask for help. Sometimes, people who don't have good information about domestic violence respond to women who have been abused in ways that aren't helpful, even when they mean well. On the other hand, you might feel comfortable asking for help from someone you know. It's your decision.

The important thing is for you to identify all the people who might be willing and able to help you. Make a list of their phone numbers and attach it to your safety plan for easy reference.

▸ PLAN AHEAD

You don't have to wait for an emergency to ask for help. In fact, it's a good idea to talk to people who can help before there's a crisis. Find out what they are willing and able to do for you. That way, you'll know in advance if you have a place to stay, a source of financial assistance or a safe person to keep copies of important papers.

▸ **REDUCE YOUR RISK**

No woman has control over her partner's violence, but women can and do find ways to reduce their risk of harm. The following safety plan is a tool to help you identify and evaluate your options and assist you in creating a personalized plan to reduce your risk when confronted with the threat of harm or with actual harm. Use what applies or change it to reflect your particular situation. **Your safety plan does not need to be written down, though you may choose to.** There's no right or wrong way to develop a safety plan. Make it your own, and review it regularly to make changes as needed.

▸ **SAFETY DURING A VIOLENT INCIDENT**

I will use my judgment and intuition. If I think my partner and I are going to argue, I will try to move to a space that is lowest risk, such as _____ . (Often bathrooms, garages, kitchens, areas near weapons or rooms without an outside exit are most dangerous.)

If the situation is serious, I can give my partner what he wants to try to calm him

down. I have the right to protect myself until I/we are out of danger.

▸ **SAFETY IF STAYING**

I can tell _____ about the violence and request they call the police if they hear noises coming from my home.

I can teach my children how to use the telephone or autodial to contact the police and fire departments and/or how to contact a safe neighbor for help. I will make sure my children know our address.

If I have a programmable phone, I can program emergency numbers.

I will use _____ as the code word with my children or my friends so they will call for help if needed.

If I have to leave my home, I will go to _____. If I cannot go there, I can go to _____.

The domestic violence program hotline number is _____. I can call it if I need shelter or someone to talk with.

▸ **SAFETY IF LEAVING**

Preparing to leave

I will call a domestic violence program to get help making my plans. The hotline number for the nearest program is _____.

I will leave money and an extra set of keys with _____.

_____ so I can leave quickly.

I will leave extra clothes with _____.

I can open a post office box and have personal mail and bills (credit cards, cell phone, etc.) sent there.

I will ask _____ and _____

to see who would be able to let me stay with them or lend me some money.

I can increase my independence by opening a bank account and getting credit cards in my own name; by taking classes or getting job skills; and/or by getting copies of all the important papers and documents I might need and keeping them with _____.

I can rehearse my escape plan and, if appropriate, practice it with my children.

If it's not safe to talk openly, I will use _____ as the code word or signal to my children that we are leaving, or to my family or friends that we are coming.

▸ SAFETY AT HOME

If my partner and I are no longer living together

I can, or ask my landlord to, change the locks on my doors and windows.

I can, or ask my landlord to, replace wooden doors with metal ones.

I can, or ask my landlord to, install security systems, including additional locks, window bars, poles to wedge against doors, etc.

I can keep my purse and car keys ready and put them _____ so I can leave quickly.

Items to consider taking if leaving

The following items may be helpful to have if you decide to leave, but remember that almost all of these items are replaceable.

Identification for myself

My and my children's birth certificates

My and my children's Social Security cards

School and vaccination records

Money, checkbook, bankbooks, ATM cards

Credit cards

Medication and medical supplies

Keys—house, car, work

Driver's license, car registration

Insurance papers

Public assistance ID/Medicaid cards

Passports, green cards, work permits

Divorce or separation papers

Lease, rental agreement or house deed

Car/mortgage payment book

Children's toys, security blankets, stuffed animals

Sentimental items, photos

My personalized safety plan (if written down)

I can buy rope ladders to be used for escape from second-floor windows.

I can install smoke detectors and put fire extinguishers on each floor in my home.

I can provide my onsite property manager

and/or trusted neighbors with a picture of my

partner and ask them to notify the police if they

see him near my home.

▶ **AT WORK**

I can inform my boss, the security supervisor and the employee assistance program, if available, about my situation. The number of the EAP office is _____.

I can ask _____ to screen my calls and visitors at work.

When leaving work, I can _____.

If there's trouble when traveling to and from work, I can _____.

▶ **SAFETY IN PUBLIC OR IF BEING STALKED**

If I suspect I am in imminent danger, I will locate a safe place for myself (police stations, residences of family or friends, domestic violence shelters, local churches, public areas etc.).

I can document my partner's actions and keep it in a safe place. This may include taking photos of destroyed property/vandalism, saving answering machine messages, keeping letters/notes, etc.

I can change my patterns—avoid stores, restaurants, banks, doctor's appointments, self-service laundries and other places where my partner might find me.

I can tell _____ and _____ about the situation and provide them with a photo or description of my partner and any

possible vehicles he may drive. I can ask them to call the police if they believe my children or I are in danger.

When I am out of the house, I will try not to travel alone and will try to stay in public areas.

▶ **WITH AN ORDER OF PROTECTION**

I will keep my protection order _____.

(Always keep it on or near your person.)

I will give copies of my protection order to the local police or sheriff and to departments in towns where I visit friends and family.

I will give copies to my employer, my religious advisor, my closest friend, my children's school and daycare center and _____.

If my partner destroys my order or if I lose it, I can get another copy from the court that issued it.

If my partner violates the order, I can call the police and report a violation, contact my attorney, call my domestic violence program advocate, and/or advise the court of the violation.

I can call a domestic violence program if I have questions about how to enforce an order or if I have problems getting it enforced.

▶ **PROTECTING MY CHILDREN**

I can teach developmentally appropriate safety strategies to my children.

I can teach my children how to make a collect call to me if they are concerned about their safety.

I can teach my children how to use the telephone or autodial option to contact the police and fire departments and how to contact a safe neighbor for help. I will make sure they know our address.

▸ **SAFETY AND TECHNOLOGY**

Each day there are advances in technology. I can ask someone familiar with technology or domestic violence about the ways that my partner may monitor me.
 I will use a computer that my partner doesn't have access to when I look for help, a new place to live, etc. It may be safest to use a computer at a public library, Internet café, community center or _____.

I can ask my friends and family to be careful about who they give my e-mail address to and to use the Bcc: option when copying me in on e-mail.

When making or receiving private calls, I will not use a cell phone that I share with my partner because my partner may have access to cell phone billing records and phone logs and may have enabled settings on my phone that allow him to track my whereabouts. My local domestic violence shelter may have a donated

cell phone I can use.
 I will ask the court systems, post office and other government agencies how they protect or publish

I can tell my children's caretakers who has permission to pick them up and make sure caretakers know how to recognize those people.

I will give the people who take care of my children copies of custody and protection orders, as well as emergency numbers.

my records and request that they seal or restrict access to my files to help protect my safety.

▸ **MY EMOTIONAL HEALTH**

If I am feeling down, lonely or confused, I can call _____ or the domestic violence hotline

_____.
 If I have left my partner and am considering returning, I will call _____ or spend time with

_____ before I make a decision.

I can attend support groups, workshops or classes at the local domestic violence program or _____ so I can build a support system, learn skills or get information.

I will look at how and when I drink alcohol or use other drugs. If I am going to drink or use other drugs, I will do it in a place where people are committed to my safety.

▸ **KEEP YOUR PLAN IN A SAFE PLACE**

Only you can decide if it is safe to have a written safety plan. If you decide to keep a written safety plan, make sure to find a place to keep it where your partner won't find it; maybe you can ask a

friend to keep a copy for you. Whether it's safe to write down your plan or not, it's still important to make one.

▸ **WHAT CAN A DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PROGRAM DO FOR ME?**

Local domestic violence programs are a vital resource, providing free and confidential assistance to women victimized by domestic violence and their children. They provide emergency safety services, such as shelter and 24-hour crisis hotlines. But you don't have to stay in a shelter to get help from a program. Most also provide a full range of non-residential services to women who have been battered. Domestic violence program advocates have accurate

information about domestic violence and are experienced in providing assistance to women who have been battered and their children. They understand the criminal justice, family court and social service systems, and they are familiar with other community resources that might be useful to you. In addition to giving you good information, advocates often can accompany you to court, to the police station or to social services offices. They can provide you with practical and emotional support. Getting help from someone who has experience working with survivors of domestic violence and who knows how to work with the different systems can make things a lot easier for you.

This personalized safety plan was adapted from ones developed by AWARE in St. Louis, the Office of the City Attorney, San Diego, the National Center for Victims of Crime Stalking Resource Center and the National Network to End Domestic Violence Safety Net.

**NATIONAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HOTLINE
800-799-SAFE (7233)
Toll-free, 24-hour crisis intervention
and referrals to domestic violence
programs in your area**