

THE DENVER CENTER FOR CRIME VICTIMS



SAFETY TIPS --DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Domestic violence is the physical or emotional mistreatment of you by your companion. It can involve physical contact - slapping, hitting, punching, pushing, kicking or any action that is intended to injure you. It can involve the use of a weapon - stick, knife, gun or any heavy object. Emotional abuse can involve threats to harm you, family members, friends, pets or possessions; deprivation of money, sleep or affection; harassment at work or at home; or any behavior that causes you, the victim, emotional pain. Physical and emotional abuse is done to punish, dominate or control the victim.

Does your spouse or companion...

- ◆ "Track" all of your time -- want to know where you go and with whom?
- ◆ Constantly accuse you of being unfaithful?
- ◆ Discourage your relationships with family and friends?
- ◆ Criticize you for little things?
- ◆ Anger easily when drinking or using drugs?
- ◆ Control all finances and force you to account in detail for what you spend?
- ◆ Humiliate you in front of others?
- ◆ Destroy personal property or sentimental items?
- ◆ Hit, punch, slap, kick, or bite you or the children?
- ◆ Use or threaten to use a weapon against you?
- ◆ Threaten to hurt you or the children?
- ◆ Force you to have sex against your will?

If you find yourself saying yes to any of these -- it's time to get help to prevent further abuse.

Things you can do:

- ◆ **Talk to someone.** Part of the abuser's power comes from secrecy. Victims are often ashamed to let anyone know about intimate family problems. Go to someone you trust -- a friend, family member or neighbor -- or call a domestic violence hotline to talk to a counselor. Seek help through counseling or a support group.
- ◆ **Plan ahead and know what you will do if you if you decide to leave your home.** Have phone numbers for shelters easily accessible. Let trusted neighbors, family and friends know of your situation and safety plan. Put aside clothing, extra keys, money, choose a place to go, decide how you will get there, and put important papers together in a place where you can get them quickly:
 1. Driver's license, birth certificates, social security cards, passport.
 2. Your children's birth certificates, social security cards and health and school records.
 3. Photos, sentimental items.
 4. Money, checkbook, bank books, credit cards.
 5. Medications and prescriptions.
 6. Car registration, insurance cards.
 7. Divorce papers, restraining orders and other important legal papers.

- ◆ **If it is safe, try to get rid of weapons in the home.**

If you are presently being abused:

- ◆ **Don't hesitate to call the police - 911.** Domestic violence is a CRIME!
- ◆ **Leave your living situation or have someone come and stay with you.** Call a crisis hotline and go to a battered women's shelter. If you believe that you and your children are in danger -- leave immediately. Make sure friends and relatives, including children, know not to tell your abuser your address or telephone number. Check with the telephone company to learn options to keep you safe, such as "line blocking" and *57 to trace threatening calls.
- ◆ **If you have physical injuries, get medical attention from your doctor or a hospital emergency room.** Ask the staff to photograph your injuries and keep detailed records for use in legal action.
- ◆ **Contact a lawyer or Project Safeguard to obtain a restraining order.**

**You have the right to be treated with respect and
have safe relationships with people who value you!**

SUPPORT IS AVAILABLE

Numbers to call for assistance:

Denver Police Department.....Non-Emergency.....(720) 913-2000
Emergency Only.....911
Denver Shelters: SafeHouse 24-hour crisis line(303) 318-9989
Brandon Center.....(303) 620-9190