

End the Violence.

Experts estimate that up to three million women are physically abused by their husbands or boyfriends each year. While women also batter men, men are more likely to be the perpetrators in the most severe cases.

The good news: domestic violence is better reported than it used to be. The criminal justice system is responding more positively and productively so more services and resources are available to help people who suffer. Studies on domestic violence show that one-third to two-thirds of batterers do reform with help.

When long-standing domestic violence is involved, both partners in a couple should get individual help before entering therapy together. The violence must stop first. Victims need to address the trauma they've experienced while perpetrators learn why they act violently and how they can stop. Later the couple can consider reconciliation. When children are involved, family therapy can be helpful too.

Put your safety as well as your family's safety first. Get help today.

Most health insurance policies cover the service of MFTs so long as the services are "medically necessary." This typically includes coverage for face-to-face sessions for a diagnosable mental health problem. Such coverage may be limited. Please contact your health insurance company for detailed information about the coverage available to you and your family.



California Association of
Marriage and Family Therapists

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LIVING WITHOUT VIOLENCE:

How to End Physical, Sexual, and
Psychological Abuse



Brought to you by the
California Association of
Marriage and Family Therapists



OFFERING EXTRA SUPPORT

About Marriage and Family Therapists

Marriage and Family Therapists (MFTs) are relationship experts. They work with individuals, couples, families, children, adolescents, and the elderly, providing support and perspective as patients struggle with life's challenges.

Licensed by the State of California, MFTs are psychotherapists who are uniquely trained and credentialed to assess, diagnose, and treat a wide range of issues so individuals achieve more adequate, satisfying and productive relationships and social adjustment.

The California Association of Marriage and Family Therapists (CAMFT) is an independent statewide non-profit organization made up of over 29,000 mental health professionals. CAMFT is dedicated to advancing marriage and family therapy as a healing art, science, and mental health profession. In fact, CAMFT sponsors TherapistFinder.com™ so Californians can gain access to qualified local experts who can help.



Seeking a Marriage and Family Therapist or other mental health professional to assist with life's difficulties is a sign of courage and a step in the right direction. Always ask about a therapist's special areas of expertise (e.g. grief counseling, children's issues, relationship counseling) before you engage in therapy to ensure it's the right fit for you.

TherapistFinder™ is a California-wide interactive, online directory that is user-friendly and searchable by name, location, and area of expertise. It's your introduction to one or more qualified psychotherapists who hold a California license.



WHAT IS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE?

Domestic violence includes physical abuse (pushing, hitting, choking, use of weapons, slapping, physical force); sexual abuse (any unwanted sexual intimacy forced on one person by another); and psychological abuse (threats, isolation, verbal abuse). It's against the law.

ARE YOU IN AN ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIP?

Many abusers and victims don't realize they are in an abusive situation. They might even hide it from themselves by rationalizing, minimizing, or denying their experience. Ask yourself:

- Are you afraid of your partner?
- Has your partner ever hit, slapped, choked or pushed you?
- Is your partner very good to you most of the time, but sometimes very cruel or scary?
- Are you sure you're not being abused because you fight back or you feel you deserve what you get?
- Are you afraid to ask for help because you are afraid no one will understand?

It can feel scary to leave a relationship or try to change it, but if you answered yes to any of these questions, it's time to seek help.

WHY BATTERERS DO IT

While some abusers pre-plan cruel, purposeful violence, most battery is more impulsive. The batterer may have been abused as a child, have difficulty managing intense emotions or have a drug or alcohol abuse problem. No matter what the reason, battery is never acceptable. Remember, you deserve better.

WHAT YOU CAN DO RIGHT NOW

- Have a safety plan if you are a victim.** Your plan should include possible escape routes and a home of a friend or shelter address where you can go to feel safe. Pack a survival kit with a change of clothes, credit cards, medicines and papers that show jointly owned assets, among other things.

Avoid arguments in areas with potential weapons (such as the kitchen or garage). Start an individual savings account and send statements to a trusted relative or friend.

- Learn the number of the domestic abuse hotline in your community.** Contact it for information on resources and legal rights. Hotline advocates are trained to intervene, advise, and assist in a crisis so you stay safe.

- Stop the violence if you are a perpetrator.** You can learn to control your anger by recognizing its early warning signs before you lose control. Taking a "time-out" with your partner is one constructive way to manage anger. You can save your relationship if you learn new and healthy ways to cope with feelings.

- Find the right therapist.** Depending on your specific needs, seek someone who specializes in helping either perpetrators or victims of domestic violence. Use short telephone interviews to shop for a good fit with potential therapists. Ask about fees, availability, and if they accept your health insurance.