

Don't believe everything you read and hear about domestic violence. It's not all true!

MYTHS

1. Domestic violence does not affect many people. **False.** It affects approximately one million people in the U.S. every year, and 85% of victims are women.
2. Domestic violence is just a momentary loss of temper. **False.** The abuser makes a conscious decision to abuse. Loss of temper is a tool to enforce control through fear, and it is part of a pattern of abuse.
3. Drinking or drug abuse causes domestic violence. **False.** Some abusers make alcohol and drugs an excuse for violent behavior. While there is a correlation between substance abuse and domestic violence, one does not cause the other. However, substance abuse does lower inhibitions and may increase the frequency and severity of abuse.
4. If the abuser is truly sorry and promises to reform, the abuse will stop. **False.** Remorse and begging for forgiveness are manipulative methods used by abusers to control their victims. Abusers rarely stop abusing; in fact, the abuse will almost always get worse as time goes on.
5. Victims have personalities that seek out and encourage abuse. **False.** There is no set of personality traits that universally describes all victims of domestic violence. It's the abuser who is responsible for the abuse, not the victim.

TRUTHS

Battering is not a mental illness or an anger management issue, but a learned behavioral choice. People who use physical force do so to maintain power and control in relationships. Many abusers grew up in homes where they were abused or witnessed abuse. **If you think you are a victim of domestic violence, remember:**

- (1) You are not alone.
- (2) It is not your fault.
- (3) Help is available.



WHERE TO GET HELP

For immediate assistance	Dial 9-1-1
Maryland 2-1-1	Dial 2-1-1
Family Crisis Center of Prince George's County	301-731-1203
Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence	800-MDHELPS (800-634-3577)
Prince George's County Sheriff's Office Domestic Violence Unit	301-780-8408
Prince George's County Police Dept. Domestic Violence Unit	301-772-4433
Prince George's Hospital Center Domestic Violence/Sexual Assault Center	301-618-3154
Still I Rise, Inc.	301-868-4903
House of Ruth (24-hour hotline)	410-889-RUTH (410-889-7884)
Community Advocates for Family and Youth (CAFY)	301-390-4092
Prince George's County Health Dept. Domestic Violence Coordinator	301-883-7873



Rushern J. Baker, III
County Executive



**ANYONE
CAN BE A
VICTIM OF
DOMESTIC
VIOLENCE**

SEEK help by talking to a trusted friend, relative, counselor, health care provider or clergy member.

STOP THE SILENCE

DEFINITION

Domestic and Intimate Partner Violence are behaviors used by one person in a relationship to control the other person. Partners may be married, dating, co-habituating, domestic partners or in a civil union.

ANYONE CAN BE A VICTIM!

Victims can be of any age, sex, race, culture, religion, education, socioeconomic or marital status.

WHAT DOES ABUSE LOOK LIKE?

Abusive behavior is not always just physical or verbal ... it can take on many forms. The abuser misuses power and control that often results in the victim's reduced ability to make choices and live free of fear and intimidation.



DOES YOUR PARTNER...?

Tease you in hurtful ways in public and in private?

Make or carry out threats to hurt you?

Threaten to leave you?

Threaten to harm himself or herself?

If so, this is coercive and threatening behavior.

Prevent you from getting a job or from making your own money?

Limit your access to family income?

If so, this is economic abuse.

Treat you like a servant, including making all of the big decisions?

Act like the "master of the castle," including determining each person's role in the home?

If so, this is the use of personal privilege.

Make you feel guilty about your children?

Use your children to relay messages between the two of you?

Use visitations with your children to harass you?

Threaten to take your children away?

If so, this is the use of children for power and control.

Make light of the abuse and not take your concerns about it serious?

Tell you they did not or do not abuse you?

Shift the responsibility of the abuse to you and say it is your fault it happens?

If so, this is minimizing, denying and blaming.

Control what you do, who you see and who you talk to?

Control what you read and where you go, limiting all of your outside involvement?

If so, this is the use of isolation.



Avoid you or give you the silent treatment?

If so, this is emotional withholding.

Put you down?

Make you feel bad about yourself?

Call you names; play mind games with you; try to make you think you are crazy?

Humiliate you, and make you feel guilty about it?

If so, this is emotional abuse, which is just as harmful as physical abuse.

Use looks, actions, and gestures to scare you?

Destroy your property and smash your things?

Display weapons?

Abuse your pets?

If so, this is the use of intimidation.

Push, hit, slap, or punch you with a closed fist?

If so, this is physical abuse.

If any of these scenarios seem familiar to you, **YOU SHOULD SEEK ASSISTANCE.**