

# ACTIONS TO TAKE

The **first** step in breaking a violent pattern in a relationship is to tell someone. You may call anonymously just to talk or you may want to visit with a caseworker for a longer conversation. Services are available to **anyone** in an abusive relationship. Call 1-800-897-LINK for more information.

The **second** step in breaking the violent pattern is to ensure your safety. You need to recognize signs of impending danger so you can get out of a violent incident **before it occurs**.

**Plan for a quick exit. Here are some steps:**

- Pack a suitcase to store with a friend or neighbor. Include a change of clothing for you and your children, toilet articles, extra keys to your home and car.
- Keep special items in an easy-to-locate but safe place so that you can take them with you on short notice. These items should include medicine, ID, cash/check book, social security cards, savings account book and credit cards.
- Know where you will go to escape violence.
- Call the police. Physical abuse is a crime, even if you are living with the abuser. Legal involvement is frequently the only way that you can be sure that the abuser will get the help that he or she needs.

For information in your area:  
1-800-897-LINK or 211

**No one deserves to be  
beaten or threatened.**

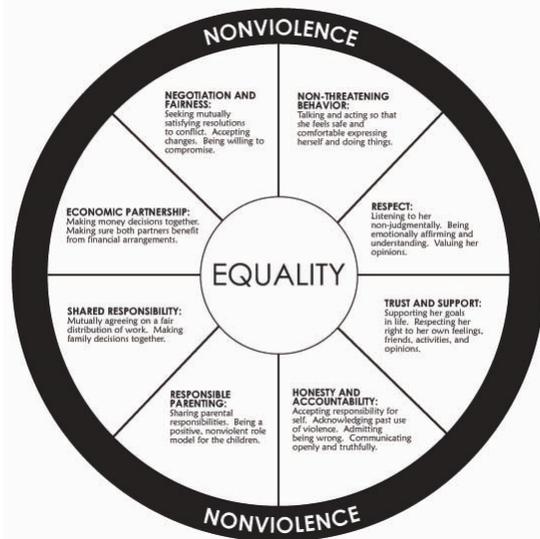
**No excuses justify  
abusive behavior.**

**There are laws to protect you.  
There are places to get help.**

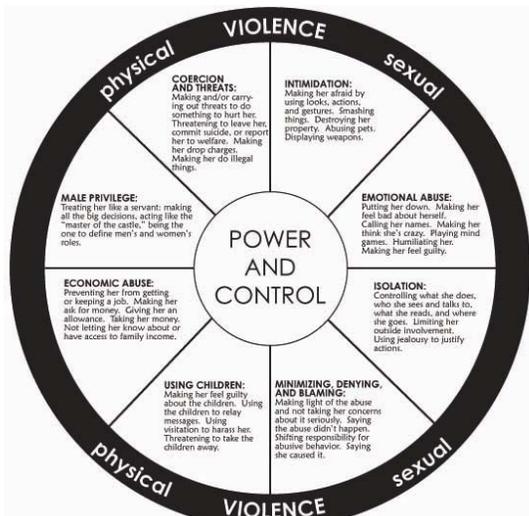
## Is this your situation?

1. Does your intimate partner act one way at home and another way when out in public?
2. Was your intimate partner physically or psychologically abused as a child, or observe abuse between their parents?
3. Does the person lose his or her temper frequently and more easily than seems necessary?
4. Does the person threaten you?
5. Does the person spend a lot of time with guns or other weapons?
6. Does the person commit acts of violence against objects or pets rather than people? Is your property destroyed?
7. Does the person limit your involvement outside the home? Is there jealousy of significant other people in your life?
8. Does the person become angry when you do not listen to his or her advice?
9. Does the person make you feel guilty, humiliated?
10. Do you try to avoid making your partner angry?
11. Do you feel responsible for the person's behavior?
12. Do you think or feel you are being controlled?

Nonviolent behavior is possible through a more balanced relationship.



Abuse or violence within a close relationship is an intentional act used to gain control over another person. Physical abuse supports other kinds of violence; it is only one part of a whole system of abusive tactics.



## The Cycle of Abuse

For many couples, violent incidents follow a predictable pattern.

**First phase:** In this **TENSION-BUILDING** phase the abuser gets edgy and tense. Almost any subject, such as housework or money, may cause tension to build up. Verbal abuse, insults, and criticism increases. Shoving begins.

**Second phase:** **VIOLENCE** erupts as the abuser throws objects at his or her partner, nits, slaps, kicks, chokes, abuses him or her sexually, or uses weapons. Once the attack starts, there's little the victim can do to stop it; there generally are no witnesses.

**Third phase:** The **OPEN WINDOW** occurs just after the acute battering episode and just before the honeymoon phase. This is the time when women exhibit the most help-seeking and reality behavior. This time offers a crucial opportunity for successful intervention in the lives of battered women and positive steps toward breaking the cycle of violence.

**Fourth phase:** The abuser apologizes and promises to change this is known as the **HONEYMOON** phase. The abuser may be so charming that the victim believe that the violence will not happen again. The victim may think that the danger has passed and the relationship can be saved. From this point the cycle repeats.

