

HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS & DATING VIOLENCE



EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW

info@yellowbrickhouse.org



 **yellowbrickhouse**
Rebuilding Lives
Empowering Abused Women & Children

IN THIS BOOK WE WILL TALK ABOUT...

1. What does abuse look like?
2. What do I do if I am being abused?
3. Stories from youth
4. What is a healthy relationship?
5. What do I do if I know someone who is being abused?
6. Surprising facts and statistics



This booklet is to help you understand what a healthy relationship is and what dating violence or abuse could look like.

WHAT IS DATING VIOLENCE?

Dating violence occurs when your partner tries to dominate and control you. for the purpose of gaining and maintaining power and control.

Abuse can take place in several forms including physical Abuse- Hitting, kicking, punching, spitting, etc. Emotional Abuse- Fear, guilt, shame, intimidation, etc. Sexual Abuse- Stalking and harassment, threats, insults, isolation from friends and family, controlling what you wear or who you socialize with, constantly texting to checkup on you, and unwanted touching.

WHAT IS ABUSE?

Any behavior or action that is used to scare, harm, threaten, control, intimidate, or injure another person.

DID YOU KNOW

Women aged 15 to 24 are five times more likely than women aged 25 years and older to have been physically or sexually assaulted by a non-intimate partner (Savage, 2021).

<http://canadianwomen.org/the-facts/gender-based-violence/>

The Power and Control wheel was originally created to highlight abusive behaviours towards women to emphasize that the root of violence against women originates from power and control. The wheel has also been adapted to reflect diverse cultural models, gender identities, and languages to capture a more comprehensive representation of power and control across various relationship dynamics.

Power is exerted over someone else as a way to control them, their behaviour, and their thoughts and feelings.

The outer rim represents violence which may be limited, but the threat is always present which allows an individual to maintain power and control.

Each piece of the wheel represents tactics that may be used in a relationship. The abuser may use one or a combination of tactics to maintain power and control. Sometimes abuse is unintentional; where individuals may not recognize that what they are doing is abusive.

<https://www.theduluthmodel.org/wheel-gallery/>

POWER & CONTROL



DOMESTIC ABUSE INTERVENTION PROGRAMS
202 East Superior Street
Duluth, Minnesota 55802
218-722-2781
www.theduluthmodel.org

DIFFERENT TYPES OF ABUSE

Abuse can happen to anyone regardless of gender, sexual identity, age, ethnic background, and economic level. It is NEVER okay for anyone to physically injure you. If someone cares about you, they will not hurt you.

PHYSICAL ABUSE

Physical Abuse is any intentional act causing injury or trauma to another person by way of bodily contact. This can include biting, choking, shaking, using a weapon or an object, throwing things, spitting, holding onto you, pinning you down, tying you up, locking you in a room, pushing, pulling, dragging, grabbing, slapping, punching or kicking.



THIS IS
NOT OKAY!

In 2022, the rate of police-reported dating violence in Canada was about nine times higher for teenage girls (500 victims per 100,000) than boys (57). (Sutton & Burczycka, 2024)

YOU ARE NOT ALONE

My best friend, Sonja, has been in a very controlling relationship with her girlfriend for a couple of years now. Sonja isn't even allowed to hang out with me as often anymore. And when she is allowed to get together with me, her girlfriend constantly texts to see what she is doing or who she's with. A few months ago, Sonja told me that her girlfriend hit her a few times, but insisted that she really didn't mean to and it was just in the heat of the moment. Sonja refuses to leave because she says it would break her girlfriend's heart. She's also afraid that if she does leave, no one will believe her story.

SEXUAL ABUSE

Consent is a mutual verbal, physical, and emotional agreement that happens without manipulation, threats, or head games. This is a whole body experience that requires paying attention to the other person’s physical and emotional cues, as well as their words. Yes means yes! Enthusiastic consent means that you are just as excited about someone else’s enjoyment as you are about your own enjoyment. This consent is continuous, meaning you can stop and change your mind at any time. Saying yes to one thing does not mean you have consented to anything else.

You should never have sex with someone because you feel like you owe it to them or because you think it will make them stay with you or love you more. If your partner cares about you, they will respect your wishes and reasons to wait.

Sexual abuse is abusive sexual behavior inflicted on a person by one or more people. This can include someone telling you how to dress, forcing you to be naked, unwanted sexual comments, calling you degrading names, unwanted touching or pressuring you to go farther than you are comfortable.

DID YOU KNOW...

- Of the crimes covered by the 2019 General Social Survey (GSS) on Canadians’ Safety (Victimization), sexual assault was reported to police least often. In contrast to 36% of physical assaults and 47% of robberies, only 6% of sexual assaults came to the attention of police in 2019.
- Approximately 4.7 million women, 30% of all women 15 years of age and older, report that they have experienced sexual assault at least once since the age of 15. This is compared to 8% men (Statistics Canada, 2019).

<http://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-002-x/2024001/article/00006-eng.htm> (Cotter, 2021)

It is important to remember that a nice gesture means no strings attached. You should not feel like you owe that person anything and that person should not imply later that you owe them something, monetary, sexual, or otherwise.

Okay

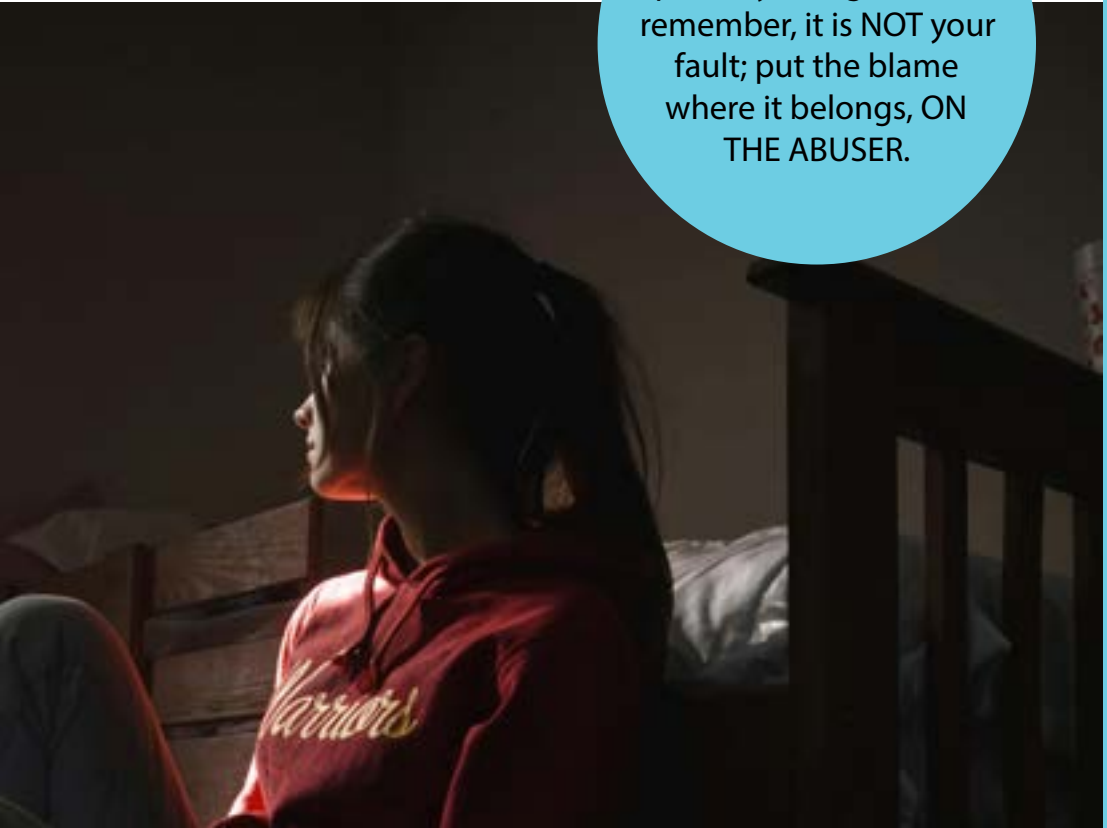


EMOTIONAL ABUSE

Emotional abuse is anything that someone says or does on purpose to make you feel badly about yourself. This can include but is not limited to: Ignoring your feelings, embarrassing you, putting you down, threatening you, manipulating you, criticizing or yelling at you, acting extremely jealous or possessive.

Calling someone degrading names is a form of emotional abuse. If your partner is calling you degrading names, they are not giving you the respect you deserve. Even if they say it in a joking way or tell you they don’t actually mean it, it is NOT okay.

If you think you are possibly being abused, remember, it is NOT your fault; put the blame where it belongs, ON THE ABUSER.



CYBER ABUSE

Cyber abuse is the use of technology to harass, threaten, harm, or embarrass you. Someone may use email, websites, text messaging, GPS tracking, videos, blogs, or any other type of technology to post demeaning messages about you online, upload or repost embarrassing photos without your permission, spread gossip or rumors about you, or track your whereabouts. While others have the right to post online, they should not be doing so in ways that are hateful, hurtful, or that infringe on your rights.

While boys (24%) and girls (25%) aged 12 to 17 years were equally likely to experience cybervictimization, non-binary youth had a significantly higher risk. Over half (52%) of youth who reported a gender other than man or woman said that they were cybervictimimized in the past year. [\(Statistics Canada, 2019\)](#)

Recent Canadian data show 99.6% of teens aged 15 to 19 years old have used the Internet in the past three months, 92% use social media regularly and 93% of teens aged 14 to 17 reported having their own smartphone. [\(Schimmele et al., 2021\)](#)



60% of young people have witnessed online bullying. Most do not intervene. www.dosomething.org

SOCIAL ABUSE

Any behavior or action directed at you that makes you feel embarrassed, scared, sad, degraded, neglected, 'less than,' etc., in front of other people. Social abuse controls a situation in a way that makes you feel isolated or alienated from the people around you, including your friends and family. You begin to believe that your partner is the only person who supports you and this increases your dependency on your partner. Jealousy doesn't equal love or caring. It is usually due to insecurities or someone trying to have power or control over you.



STALKING

Stalking is unwanted or obsessive attention by an individual or group toward you that makes you feel uncomfortable or unsafe. Stalking behaviors are related to harassment and intimidation and may include: constantly sending text messages or calling you, following you, obsessively emailing you

Social media sites make it easy for people you don't know to access information about you! Try to keep your address, phone number, date of birth, etc. off of these sites to protect yourself from people who may not have such good intentions.

If you feel scared, worried, or angered by someone's behavior then you do not have to put up with it!

Teens who experience dating violence — particularly when their victimizations go untreated — may be at increased risk for a range of negative outcomes, including involvement in further intimate partner violence as adults. ([CDC, 2023](#))

It is still abuse if... there has not been any physical violence? Many individuals are emotionally and verbally assaulted. This can be as equally frightening and is often more confusing to try to understand.

FINANCIAL ABUSE

When someone is controlling your finances, not allowing you to work, making you hand over your pay cheques, or stealing/hiding your credit cards, that is called Economic Abuse.

SPIRITUAL ABUSE

Spiritual abuse refers to using someone's religious beliefs as a means of abuse. If someone is making fun of your religion, belittling your religion, not allowing you to practice your religion, or using religion to justify hurting you it is not okay.



Kids who are involved as both victims and perpetrators of bullying are at the highest risk for suicide (Holt et al, 2015, Suicide Prevention Resource Center, n.d.)

Among Canadians who experienced childhood victimization, fewer than 1 in 10 (7.7%) youth before the age of 15 reported experiences of abuse to police or child protection services. (Heidinger, 2018)

SIGNS OF AN UNHEALTHY RELATIONSHIP

- Have a bad temper?
- Accuse you of lying?
- May say things like “If you really loved me you would...”?
- Make fun of other people and enjoy humor that embarrasses you or others?
- Disapprove of how you spend your money or how you dress?
- Refuse to discuss their feelings and then blow up when you push the subject?
- Call you offensive or derogatory names (words like bitch, whore, slut) or insult your intelligence?
- Blame you for their actions or mistakes?

If you answered “yes” to any of these, it is possible that you are in an unhealthy relationship.



SIGNS OF A HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP

- You feel good about yourself.
- A healthy relationship should give your self-esteem a boost
- Mutual respect
- You trust your partner and your partner trusts you.
- You feel supported and you support your partner in return.
- Your partner should support you
- You are treated as an equal.
- You retain your individuality. You do not have to give up your identity to be part of a relationship.
- You encourage one another’s personal growth
- Good communication and being open for discussion



IF YOU’RE BEING ABUSED THERE IS HELP!

- Make sure you are safe (both immediately and long term)
- Find someone you trust and tell them what is happening. Friends are great to confide in, but it’s important to talk to someone who can help you access the resources you need, e.g. a parent, teacher, guidance counselor, coach, etc.
- If you have been physically attacked, don’t wait for medical attention, to call the police.
- Don’t isolate yourself from your friends and family, even if you feel like you have nowhere to turn or you are embarrassed.
- Don’t rely on yourself alone to get out of the situation



DEALBREAKERS

Deal breakers are something that you absolutely would not put up with in a relationship. Deal breakers could be small things or big things. It may be something that is important to you but not important to your best friend. While lots of things influence your personal choices – family, friends, religion, media – you have the right to decide what’s important to you. YOU are the only one who lives with the results.

eg. I would leave my partner if... he/she/ they ever called me ‘stupid’.

YOU CAN HELP!

Remember...Show patience, love, and understanding if you suspect your friend is being abused.- Tell them it is NOT their fault.

DO’S

- Respect their privacy, don’t gossip.
- Tell them where to get help and offer to go with them.
- Tell them they don’t deserve to be hurt.
- Listen to your friend without judging them.
- Help them recognize the abuse and tell them it is not okay.

DON’TS

- Don’t insult their partner – they may still love them.
- Don’t try to deal with the abuser yourself.
- Don’t place ultimatums on the victim – i.e. I won’t be your friend if you stay with your partner. Your friend is reaching out to ask you for help by talking about it.

WHY DO PEOPLE STAY?

It can be hard for someone to leave an abusive relationship and they may have many reasons that they want to stay or feel that they should stay. It is important not to judge friends or family who are in an abusive relationship.

Remember... it’s not their fault and something as simple as a friendship could help them get out.
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SIGNS A FRIEND IS BEING ABUSED

- Unexplained bruises, broken bones, sprains, or marks.
- Excessive guilt or shame for no apparent reason.
- Secrecy or withdrawal from friends and family.
- They aren’t allowed to go out without their partner.
- Avoidance of school or social events with excuses that don’t seem to make sense.
- Their partner is constantly checking in on them, calling them or texting them.

PEOPLE MAY STAY BECAUSE...

- They fear their partner
- They blame themselves
- They don’t recognize it’s abuse
- They think it’s going to get better
- They think they can’t do any better
- Others don’t acknowledge the abuse
- They feel lucky to be with their Partner
- They are experiencing low self-esteem
- They think they’ll never find anyone else
- They can’t support themselves financially
- They are isolated from friends, family, support system

www.yellowbrickhouse.org
24-hour crisis line 1-800-263-3247 (text or call)

IS IT ABUSE?

1

Tim was unimpressed when he saw his girlfriend talking to other guys at a party. He demanded that they leave and when she refused, he grabbed her by the wrist and pulled her out anyways. This is an example of:

- | | |
|-------------------|----------------------------|
| A) Physical Abuse | B) Emotional Abuse |
| C) Sexual Abuse | D) Physical & Social Abuse |

2

Lauren makes fun of her partner for going to church on Sundays and special occasions. Sometimes Lauren forces her partner to stay home to hang out with her instead. This is an example of:

- | | |
|--------------------|--------------------------------|
| A) Emotional Abuse | B) Cyber & Emotional Abuse |
| C) Social Abuse | D) Emotional & Spiritual Abuse |

3

Corey and Tina have been living together and are saving for a house. Tina gets a monthly allowance, which is controlled by Corey. She also needs to keep all of her receipts to account for how her allowance is being spent. This is an example of:

- | | |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| A) Emotional Abuse | B) Social Abuse |
| C) Economic & Social Abuse | D) Emotional & Spiritual Abuse |

4

Sandra gets extremely jealous when her partner talks to other girls. When they do so, she threatens to leave them if they continue to socialize with others. This is an example of:

- | | |
|--------------------|-----------------------------|
| A) Physical Abuse | B) Emotional & Social Abuse |
| C) Emotional Abuse | D) Cyber Abuse |

5

Tony found out that his friend had posted a story about his traumatic childhood experience on Facebook without his knowing or consent. This is an example of:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------|
| A) Cyber Abuse & Social Abuse | B) Emotional Abuse |
| C) Cyber Abuse | D) Social Abuse |

6

Kristy and Mike are in a committed relationship. Often times Mike forces Kristy to have sex with him, even if she says she’s tired or not in the mood. This is an example of:

- | | |
|--------------------|-----------------------------|
| A) Emotional Abuse | B) Social Abuse |
| C) Sexual Abuse | D) Emotional & Sexual Abuse |

IF YOU THINK **YOU**
MAY BE DISPLAYING
ABUSIVE BEHAVIORS
IT IS BETTER TO RECOGNIZE
THAT YOU HAVE A
PROBLEM
AND **TALK TO SOMEONE**
YOU TRUST THAN IT IS TO
GO ON HURTING PEOPLE

Quiz answers: 1-D 2-D 3-A 4-B 5-C 6-c

CREATING A SAFETY PLAN

You may need this information for yourself or a friend – it's always important to stay safe.

It is important to tell someone who you can trust and who can help you be safe. That could be a parent, teacher, coach, guidance counselor, group leader.

Create a list of important phone numbers to have with you at all times (police, hotline, friend, physician, shelter).

Have a place to go if you can't return home.

Leave extra money, car keys, and copies of documents with someone you trust.

If you are ever in a situation where you fear for your immediate safety or the safety of a friend, call 911.

Who are your
safe people?

What are your
important #s?

Where are
your safe
places?

Who can you
leave your
important
items with?

STORIES OF REAL ABUSE

I have been dating Matt for about a year now. I think I really love him, but sometimes he calls me names and mean things like “stupid” or “slut”. I’ve been telling him that it makes me feel bad but he keeps insisting that he is only joking around and I need to learn to lighten up. Now it’s just easier to put up with it than to argue. And anyways, maybe he is kidding. It just hurts my feelings and makes me feel like he doesn’t really care about me.

David and I have been going out for about 6 months now and we are great together! Recently, David said he wants to have sex with me. I love him a lot, but I’m just not ready to take our relationship to the next level. When I explained this to him, he seemed okay with it, but now when we are kissing and cuddling, he always tries to push past my personal boundaries and gets really mad when I stop him. Now he has started to threaten that he will leave me if I don’t sleep with him. I don’t want to lose him, so I am starting to think that even though it makes me feel uncomfortable, maybe I should just sleep with him so that he stays.

My boyfriend and I dated for almost two years. A year into our relationship, I sexted him a naked picture of myself. A few months after that we started fighting. I told him I wasn’t happy anymore and I was breaking up with him. He wasn’t happy, but he seemed to understand. A few days later I went to school and was met by a group of girls laughing and pointing at me. This “greeting” continued as I made my way to class. One guy even yelled “slut” at me; I didn’t even know him! It turns out that my ex boyfriend had sent the photo to everyone in the school as payback. I told my principal what was going on, but she responded with a look that said “maybe you wouldn’t be in this position if you didn’t send that naked photo”. It’s not like I sent naked photos to anyone - he was my boyfriend! I have no idea what to do.

Department of Justice Family Violence Youth Initiative Youth Site: www.justice.gc.ca/eng/cj-jp/fv-vf/fvy-vfj/index.html
Native Youth Sexual Health Network: www.nativeyouthsexualhealth.com/resources.html
Love: The Good, The Bad and The Ugly: www.abuseisnotlove.com/en-us/
Ontario Coalition of Rape Crisis Centres: www.sexualassaultsupport.ca/
Victim Services of York Region: www.victimservices-york.org/
The Faythe Project: www.thefaytheproject.wordpress.com
Rainbow health Ontario: www.rainbowhealthontario.ca/
Canadian Mental Health Association: www.cmha.ca
Kids Help Phone 1-800-668-6868: www.kidshelpphone.ca
Sandgate Women’s Shelter: www.sandgate.ca
Abuse is NOT love: www.loveisnotabuse.com
Break the Cycle: www.breakthecycle.org
Teens Health: www.kidshealth.org/teen
That’s NOT cool: www.thatnotcool.com
Vitanova Foundation: www.vitanova.ca
Love is Respect: www.loveisrespect.org
White Ribbon: www.whiteribbon.ca/?lng=en



HOW YOU CAN HELP

There are several ways you can support the work of Yellow Brick House:

DONATION

Your financial contribution will directly impact the work of Yellow Brick House.

Please consider making a tax deductible donation.

www.yellowbrickhouse.org

905.709.0900

info@yellowbrickhouse.org

VOLUNTEER

Volunteers are at the heart of what we do at Yellow Brick House. We rely heavily on community members to support our program delivery, participate in fundraising initiatives and raise awareness about the issue of domestic violence. For additional information, please contact us at supporter@yellowbrickhouse.org or 905.709.0900

TAKE ACTION

Visit our website to learn more about what we do and how you can make a difference. Visit us online at www.yellowbrickhouse.org

CONTACT US

24/7 Crisis and Support Line
1.800.263.3247 (call or text)

52 West Beaver Creek Road, Unit 4
Richmond Hill, ON L4B 1L9

Administrative Office
Tel: 905.709.0900
Toll Free: 1.800.263.2231
Fax: 905.709.1308
info@yellowbrickhouse.org

For information about events, programs and other volunteer
opportunities: www.yellowbrickhouse.org

@yellowbrickhouse #breakTheSilence

