

Warning Signs of Abuse

You may suspect abuse is happening to a neighbour, friend or family member, but do not know what to do or how to talk about it. You may worry about making the situation worse. By understanding the warning signs and risk factors of woman abuse, you can help. If you recognize some of these warning signs, it may be time to take action.

He acts like he is superior and of more value than others in his home

She seems sad, lonely, withdrawn and is afraid.

She uses drugs or alcohol to cope.

He is convinced she is seeing someone else

He blames her for ruining his life

He doesn't seek support

He watches her actions, listens to her telephone conversations, reads her emails and follows her

He has trouble keeping a job

He takes drugs or drinks every day

He has no respect for the law

She faces other obstacles (e.g. she does not speak English, is not yet a legal resident of Canada, lives in a remote area)

She has no friends or family

Signs of High Risk

He has access to her and her children.

He has access to weapons

He has a history of abuse with her or others

He has threatened to harm or kill her if she leaves him: He says "If I can't have you, no one will."

He threatens to harm her children, her pets or her property

He has threatened to kill himself

He has hit her, choked her

He is going through major life changes (e.g. job, separation, depression)

She has just separated or is planning to leave

She fears for her life and for her children's safety or she cannot see her risk

She is in a custody battle, or has children from a previous relationship

She is involved in another relationship

She has unexplained injuries

She has no access to a phone

Ways To Talk To Men Who Are Abusive

Sometimes people around an abusive man overlook his behaviour and only focus on supporting the abused woman. At other times, people may sympathize with the abusive man, which may inadvertently escalate his abuse. Talking to an abusive man is an important part of preventing woman abuse, but it needs to be done carefully. Abusive behaviour won't go away on its own. There are services to help him in his community.

For a global list of abuse hotlines, shelters, and women's organizations in over 80 languages, go to:
www.hotpeachpages.net

Signs of Abuse

He puts her down

He does all the talking and dominates the conversation

He checks up on her all the time, even at work

He tries to suggest he is the victim and acts depressed

He tries to keep her away from you

He acts as if he owns her

He lies to make himself look good or exaggerates his good qualities

She may be apologetic and makes excuses for his behaviour or becomes aggressive and angry

She is nervous talking when he's there

She seems to be sick more often and misses work

She tries to cover her bruises

She makes excuses at the last minute about why she can't meet you or she tries to avoid you on the street

What You Can Do When Recognizing the Warning Signs

Choose the right time and place to have a full discussion.

Approach him when he is calm.

Be direct and clear about what you have seen.

Tell him that his behaviour is his responsibility.

Avoid making judgmental comments about him as a person. Don't validate his attempt to blame others for his behaviour.

Inform him that his behaviour needs to stop.

Don't try to force him to change or to seek help.

Tell him that you are concerned for the safety of his partner and children.

Never argue with him about his abusive actions.

Recognize that confrontational, argumentative approaches may make the situation worse and put her at higher risk.

If He Denies The Abuse...

Men who are abusive will often minimize the impact and deny that they have done anything wrong. They may state that it isn't that bad or blame the victim for their actions. This type of behaviour deflects his own responsibility for his actions.

Keep your conversation focused on your concerns for his family's safety and well-being and reiterate that abuse is never an answer.

Keep the lines of communication open and look for opportunities to help him find support.

Some Concerns You May Have About Whether You Should Help

Points of Concern

Points to Consider

You feel it's none of your business

It could be a matter of life or death. Violence is everyone's business

You don't know what to say

Saying you care and are concerned is a good start

You might make things worse

Doing nothing could make things worse

It's not serious enough to involve the police

Police are trained to respond and utilize other resources

You are afraid his violence will turn to you or your family

Speak to him alone. Let the police know if you receive threats.

Points of Concern

Points to Consider

You think she doesn't really want to leave because she keeps going back to him

She may not have had the support she needed

You are afraid he will become angry with you

Maybe, but it gives you the chance to offer your help

You feel that both partners are your friends

One friend is being abusive and the other lives in fear

You believe that if he wanted help or wanted to change his behaviour, he would ask for help

He may be too ashamed to ask for help

You think it is a private matter

It isn't when someone is being hurt



How to talk to Men who are Abusive



We are all touched by the impact of domestic violence and have a personal responsibility to help end it. Recognizing it is the first step.

Take the warning signs seriously.

For further information, visit:

www.JocelynCoupal.com

Everyone in the community has a role to play in helping to end domestic violence. You can reach out to organizations in your community that support abused women and those that can help abusers.

"Don't let domestic violence walk away."