

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.

Signs of Abuse

Things to look out for; signs it may be time to take action

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

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She seems sad, lonely, withdrawn and is afraid.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 going through major life changes (e.g. job, separation, depression)

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

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

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

JocelynCoupal

www.JocelynCoupal.com

Brochure design © Nic Smallwood

Ways to Support Her

Here are some of the ways you can help when you recognize the warning signs of abuse:



Talk to her about what you see and assure her that you are concerned. Tell her you believe her and that it is not her fault.

Encourage her not to confront her partner if she is planning to leave. Her safety must be protected.

Offer to provide childcare while she seeks help.

Offer your home as a safe haven to her, her children and pets. If she accepts your offer, do not let her partner in.

Encourage her to pack a small bag with important items and keep it stored at your home in case she needs it.

Know that you or she can call the Assaulted Women's Helpline, your local shelter, or, in an emergency, the police.

If She Denies The Abuse...

Assure her she can talk to you any time.

Don't become angry or frustrated with her decisions. It is important to understand that she may be afraid or not ready to take the next steps.

Try to understand why she might be having difficulty getting help. She may feel ashamed.

Offer to go with her if she needs additional information or support.

If she has children, let her know gently that you are concerned about her and her children's safety and emotional well-being. She may be more willing to recognize her situation if she recognizes her children may also be in danger.

Here are some concerns you may have about whether you should help:

Overcoming Your Hesitation to Help

Points of Concern	Points to Consider	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 think she doesn't really want to leave because she keeps coming back.	She may not have had the support she needed.
You don't know what to say.	Saying you care and are concerned is a good start.	You are afraid she will become angry with you.	Maybe, but she will know you care.
You might make things worse.	Doing nothing could make things worse.	You feel that both partners are your friends.	One friend is being abused and lives in fear.
It's not serious enough to involve the police.	Police are trained to respond and utilize other resources.	You believe that if she wanted help, she would ask for it.	She may be too afraid ashamed to ask for help.
You are afraid his violence will turn to you or your family.	Speak to her alone. Let the police know if you receive threats.	You think it is a private matter.	It isn't when someone is being hurt.

How You Can Identify and Help Women at Risk of Abuse



"Don't let domestic violence walk away."

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.