

# Warning Signs of Abuse

Do you suspect that a friend, family member, or neighbour is being abused by their partner? Are you wondering what you can do? Don't know where to start?

Many people think that they should not get involved, or are not sure what to do. All Manitobans have a role to play in responding to domestic violence - it is everybody's business.

This brochure will explain how you can identify and help your neighbour, friend or family member who is at risk of abuse.

## Manitoba Domestic Violence Crisis Phone Line

Toll Free 1-877-977-0007

TTY 1-888-987-2829

**Always keep yourself safe and never get in the middle of an assault.**

**If the situation is an emergency call 911 or your local police/RCMP detachment if 911 is not available.**

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Abuse can happen in any intimate relationship whether it is a heterosexual or a gay/lesbian relationship. Both men and women can be victims of abuse and children are also affected by violence in the home.

Often it is a neighbour, friend or family member who notices the abuse and this person has a chance to help.

It is important that you know the warning signs for abuse.

It's not uncommon for people to think that abuse is only physical but abuse can take many forms.

Abuse can be:

**emotional** like name calling

**financial** like withholding money, property, debit cards

**spiritual** like cutting their partner off from their spiritual community

**psychological** like stalking

### Someone who is abusive might...

- put the other person down
- show jealousy and controlling behaviour (e.g. accuses partner of having affairs and 'looking' at other people, checks up on partner)
- act as if they own their partner and is superior to their partner and others in the home
- cut their partner off from family and friends
- monitor their partner's online activities, cellular phone usage, and may use GPS software to monitor their partner's location

### Someone who is being abused might...

- be afraid, seem sad and/or seem lonely
- make excuses for the other person or becomes aggressive or angry
- be nervous about speaking when their partner is there
- seem to be sick more often and misses work or school
- have frequent injuries, or what they may call "accidents"
- use excessive coping strategies (e.g. alcohol or drug misuse, over eating, gambling)

### The danger may be greater if the person behaving abusively...

- believes that their partner is ending the relationship and/or seeing someone else
- has access to their partner and the children
- has made threats to harm their partner, the children, pets and/or their property
- has access to weapons
- is obsessed with their (ex) partner and won't let them go (e.g. "If I can't have you, no one will.")
- appears depressed, has been diagnosed with depression and/or has gone through a major life event (job loss, separation)
- has hit or choked their partner in the past and/or has a history of abusing others
- blames partner for ruining their life
- doesn't seek support
- abuses drugs and/or alcohol

### The danger may be greater if the person being abused:

- is planning on ending the relationship or has just ended the relationship
- is in another relationship
- fears for their life and the children's safety or does not understand the risk that the (ex) partner presents
- is in a custody battle or has children from a previous relationship
- has no access to a phone
- faces other barriers like not speaking English/French, is a newcomer to Canada or lives in an isolated area

The Family Violence Consortium of Manitoba is a gathering of organizations who support families in many different ways across the province.

A Women's Place: Domestic Violence Support & Legal Services  
Nor'west Co-Op Community Health Centre Inc.  
Alpha House Project  
Brandon Access/Exchange Service  
Eastman Crisis Centre (Agape House)  
Fort Garry Women's Resource Centre  
Ikwe-Widdjitiwin Inc.  
Interlake Women's Resource Centre  
L'Entre-Temps Des Franco-Manitobaines  
Lakeshore Women's Resource Centre  
Ma Mawi-Wi-Chi-Itata Centre Inc.  
MAPS (Men Are Part of the Solution)  
North End Women's Centre  
Nova House Inc.  
Osborne House  
Parkland Crisis Centre  
Pluri-Elles (Manitoba) Inc.  
Portage Family Abuse Prevention Centre  
Samaritan House Ministries  
Snow Lake Centre on Family Violence  
South Central Committee on Family Violence  
Survivors Hope Crisis Centre Inc.  
Swan Valley Crisis Centre  
The Laurel Centre Inc.  
The Men's Resource Centre (The Laurel Centre)  
The Pas Committee for  
Women in Crisis (Aurora House)  
Thompson Crisis Centre  
Wahbung Abinoonjiiage  
Winnipeg Children's Access Agency Inc.  
Women in Second Stage Housing  
The Women's Resource Centre  
University of Manitoba Couples Counselling  
Women's Safe Haven/Resource Service  
YMCA of Brandon (Manitoba)  
YMCA Westman Women's Shelter

For more information and resources go to:  
<http://www.gov.mb.ca/fs/fvpp/index.html>

## Support Starting Points

You may feel that relationship issues are none of your business, but it could be a matter of life and death.

Domestic violence is everyone's business. Your neighbour, friend or family member may feel too ashamed to ask for help.

**You don't know what to say...**

*Saying you care and are concerned about them is a good start.*

**You feel like this is none of your business...**

*It could be a matter of life or death. Stopping violence is everyone's business.*

**You think the person being abused doesn't really want to leave the situation...**

*Your friend might not have had the support or information needed to move forward.*

**You believe that if the person being abused really wanted help they would ask for it...**

*This person could be frightened and is ashamed to ask for your help.*

**It's not serious enough to involve the police...**

*Police are trained to respond and can utilize resources to help everyone involved.*

**You think that their situation is a private matter...**

*It isn't when someone is being hurt.*

**You may fear that you'll make things worse, but doing nothing could make things worse.**

## But what if...

... the person being abused gets angry at you?

*They might, but the person will know you care and you're willing listen.*

... talking about it makes things worse?

*Doing nothing allows things to get worse.*

... both of the people involved are your friends?

*One friend is being abused and lives in fear.*

... the violence turns on you or your family?

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

## Words of Support

Let your person know what you've seen and that you care about them

Tell them that you believe them and that the abuse is not their fault

Encourage them to plan for their safety and to not confront their partner if they are planning to leave

### How to support someone being abused:

- Offer to help with the children
- Help find community resources such as the local women's shelter
- Encourage them to pack a small bag with important papers and possessions and let them store them at your house

# Neighbours & Families Friends

A guide on helping people in abusive relationships

