

- Domestic violence is the number one cause of emergency room visits by women.
- In homes where domestic violence occurs, children are abused at a rate 1,500 percent higher than the national average.
- Women are most likely to be killed when attempting to leave the abuser. In fact, they're at a 75 percent higher risk than those who stay.
- A child's exposure to the father abusing the mother is the strongest risk factor for transmitting violent behavior from one generation to the next.

These statistics are frightening and they are only some of the statistics. What is also frightening is that abuse still remains to a large degree hidden. The victim stays silent because of fear and shame and the abuser wants his behavior hidden.

Abuse shapes and defines society, the lives of victims, and the lives of abusers. Society has developed an acceptability of abuse. The media, entertainment, and sports industries all reinforce this acceptability. We can more easily address war crimes or assaults in our streets than those same types of crimes perpetrated in our homes.

Statistics gathered from Women's Rural Advocacy Programs, U.S. Department of Justice and National Domestic Violence Hotline

What if I am in a violent relationship?

Many people who are experiencing relationship violence have been isolated from others by their abuser. You may begin to believe that you deserve the abuse or that the situation is hopeless. This is perfectly normal and natural, but **the abuse is NOT your fault**. You may recognize some of the behaviors below; these are done in an effort to gain power and control over your life. (Please note that the power and control wheel assumes a "traditional" heterosexual female being abused, but the same actions apply regardless of the sex or gender of the abuser and the abused.)



If you are experiencing relationship violence:

1. You are not alone. One of the key things an abuser tries to do is isolate you. You are not alone and can seek help from many sources.
2. Finding social support is vital. If you are not comfortable speaking to a friend/family member, or to anyone face to face, you can call the Domestic Abuse Project of Delaware County at 610-565-4590 or visit their website at <http://dapdc.org/> or the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-7233.
3. Create a safety plan. You can work with an advocate (such as someone from the Domestic Abuse Project of Delaware County), a friend/family member, or on your own to create a safety plan. The National Domestic Violence Hotline has an excellent resource for [safety planning](#).
4. Remember that you know your relationship best; do not allow others to convince you to go against your instincts about what is safest for you.

It is important to consider [reporting](#) the abuse. You can choose to report the assault anonymously or formally.

Reaching out to others and seeking support can be a huge help in recovering from the effects of relationship violence. In addition to contacting a friend or family member for support, consider contacting:

1. The Colwyn Police Department at 484-494-4900
2. The Domestic Abuse Project of Delaware County at 610-565-4590

Volunteers or staff from the Delaware County Domestic Violence Centers can help you with understanding Protection From Abuse Orders if you would like to explore that possibility, as well as in creating a safety plan.

What happens next?

As a result of the abuse, you may find that you need more than the social support of friends or family. This is completely normal and you should not hesitate to seek **counseling** from others.