

UPLIFT GIRLS+WOMEN:  
BREAK THE SILENCE



Let’s unite to end domestic & gender-based violence!

Women and girls are intelligent, caring, loving, and fierce humans! We nurture the next generation—through birthing, raising, and taking care of people. We are also much more than our care work. We provide leadership. We are at the center of things going well in the world. Society is set-up to not value women and girls and actively disempowers us. Despite this, we care for ourselves, each other, and even those who oppress us. If it wasn't for our labor, the world would not function. South Asian and Indo-Caribbean women and girls in the U.S., in particular, do the work of rebuilding home. We sustain our families inside and outside the home. When we are respected as powerful people, everyone and every living thing flourishes.

WOMEN+ GIRLS ARE  
RESILIENT & POWERFUL



People deserve relationships that are loving and affirming, not controlling, violent or neglectful.

We need to break the silence!  
We need to believe, support, and empower survivors.  
We need to change the culture in our community that perpetuates violence against girls and women.

“My parents were in a domestic violent relationship but when my parents separated, my siblings and I were better off because we didn't have to live in a violent/abusive household.”

- Survivor, 19, Bangladeshi

ENDING DOMESTIC & GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Emotional abuse occurs when someone seeks to control by:

- ★ Name calling, insulting
- ★ Blaming you for everything
- ★ Extreme jealousy
- ★ Threatening
- ★ Shaming, humiliating
- ★ Isolation (limiting communication/contact with family or friends)
- ★ Controlling what you do and where you go
- ★ Stalking

We often believe that emotional abuse is not as harmful or serious as physical abuse, but that is not true. Emotional abuse have psychological and health effects and should be taken just as seriously as physical abuse.

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FINANCIAL  
ABUSE



Any behavior that maintains power and control over money and resources. For example:

- ★ Causing physical harm or injury that would prevent you from going to work
- ★ Harassment at your workplace
- ★ Controlling how much money is used and how it is spent
- ★ Controlling your access to the bank
- ★ Forbidding you to work, get an education, or get a promotion/higher wage
- ★ Refusing to file your immigration papers

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SEXUAL ABUSE

Sexual abuse is about power and includes any sexual behavior performed without your consent such as:

- ★ Forcing you to have sex with other people (also known as human sex trafficking)
- ★ Conducting sexual activity when you are not fully aware or are afraid to say no
- ★ Hurting you physically during sex
- ★ Forcing you to have sex without protection
- ★ Preventing access to or destroying birth control

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WHAT IS DOMESTIC & GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE?

Violence exists in society—wars, colonization, poverty, and inequality. Violence corrupts our relationships. Domestic violence is repeated violent, aggressive, or neglectful behaviors by one partner or people living in the same place to maintain power and control over others.

Domestic violence affects people of any class, race, age, sexual orientation, religion or gender. It affects people who are married, living together, or are dating. Anyone can experience abuse, but gender-based violence mostly impacts women and girls.

This violence includes behaviors that physically harm, cause fear, prevent someone from doing what they wish, or force them to behave in ways they do not want.

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PHYSICAL ABUSE

Causing harm to your physical well-being is physical abuse and may include:

- ★ Hitting
- ★ Slapping
- ★ Punching
- ★ Kicking
- ★ Burning
- ★ Choking
- ★ Strangling
- ★ Damaging personal property
- ★ Refusing medical care
- ★ Controlling your medication
- ★ Forcing you to use drugs or alcohol

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All of this keep women oppressed and allows for **domestic and gender-based violence** to exist! It's not right and it's not okay.

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- ★ Not go to school or work because of marriage and family?
- ★ Just deal with their unhappy relationship to keep the family together?
- ★ Keep quiet about problems in the relationship because it is a personal, family issue?
- ★ Be mainly responsible for taking care of the house work?
- ★ Be home before dark?
- ★ Not wear showy clothes?
- ★ Deal with street harassment?
- ★ Have unwanted sex?
- ★ Have children even if they don't want to?

DO YOU THINK GIRLS +  
WOMEN SHOULD...

RESOURCES

**Immediate Services: Domestic Violence Organizations** (provides counseling, temporary housing, legal services, and more):

- ★ **Safe Horizon**  
Spanish • Bangla  
800.621.HOPE (4673) [www.safehorizon.org](http://www.safehorizon.org)
- ★ **Sakhi for South Asian Women**  
Bangla • Hindi • Urdu  
212.868.6741 <http://www.sakhi.org>
- ★ **Sanctuary for Families**  
Spanish • Bangla  
212.349.6009 <https://sanctuaryforfamilies.org>
- ★ **Turning Point for Women and Families**  
Bangla • Hindi • Urdu  
718.262.8722 <http://tpny.org>
- ★ **Womankind** 888.888.7702  
Hindi • Nepali • Urdu  
<https://www.iamwomankind.org/our-services>

**Changing the Culture** (work in the community to end gender-based violence):

- ★ **Desis Rising Up and Moving (DRUM)**  
Bangla • Hindi • Nepali • Punjabi • Urdu  
718.205.3036 <http://www.drumnyc.org/>



# I THINK I AM IN AN ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIP: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## I am scared about my safety. How can I make sure I am safe?

Your safety is very important. Keep this palm card somewhere where the abuser cannot find it and contact the organizations under **Resources** from a place where your abuser won't find out or a phone/computer that they cannot track.

Additionally, consider safety planning. Have a backpack with money, clothes, canned/dry food, ID, papers, medication, and anything else you may need. Remember, when you're in danger you may not be able to think clearly, so having a safety plan is important.

Determine a place where you can stay in case of an emergency.

## What will happen to my kids?

In our community, sometimes we feel like if we separate from our abusive partner or family members, then that will somehow harm our children. However, children who grow up in an abusive home deal with more stress and learn that abuse is normal. They are more likely to repeat the cycle of violence and face abuse in their relationships or become abusers themselves. Children in abusive households are harmed by witnessing abuse and are further harmed by experiencing it directly. Leaving the situation teaches your children that they should not take abuse, and also saves your children from abuse.

## What should I do?

Talk to someone about what you are dealing with—it can be with a friend, colleague, family member, neighbor, religious advisor or someone else you trust. Sometimes we are used to being abused or treated badly. It's not our fault.

Support is available. You can contact one of the organizations listed in the **Resources** section. You do not have to make any decisions, but it is important to talk to someone about what you are dealing with.



All illustrations by Sidrah Khan

## Where can I go?

The organizations under **Resources** may be able to intervene and resolve the situation. If that does not work, there are temporary shelters available for people going through what you are dealing with. Ask about them when you call the call the organizations in the **Resources** section. You can also stay at a neighbor's, family's, or friend's house.

## What will people think?

We are often told that leaving our marriage is shameful. Sometimes we don't feel comfortable talking about the problems we are dealing with within our family because we feel it is private and if we share then other people will judge us. It is important to know that you should only think about what you and your children need and not what other people think. When we think that leaving a harmful or violent situation is shameful or even talking about it, it only keeps us in dangerous situations and is not good for anyone involved. Do not isolate, reach out to a community organization! There are people here for you.

## How can I support myself?

If you call the organizations under **Resources**, they can connect you to legal support so that you can get the money you need to support yourself and your children. Depending on your legal status, you may be eligible for low-rent housing and food stamps. These organizations may also help you with finding a job.

## I don't have papers. What can I do?

You do not have to live in an abusive relationship for papers. Irregardless of your immigration status, you can get support. An option is u-visa. Please contact the organizations under **Resources** for more information.

## What kind of help can I get? Can I get support?

There are organizations that provide counseling. You will be supported in figuring out what you need to do. Organizations can also provide you a lawyer so that you can get custody, a restraining order, or financial support. These organizations may also be able to provide you with temporary or low-cost housing. More than anything, you may be able to build a network of people who have gone through similar things and care about you.

## What will happen to him? Should I just wait and see...?

Waiting to see if he improves continues to put your kids and you in danger. Reaching out can help you figure out what best makes sense for you. There are organizations under **Resources** that can help you decide what makes sense for you and your family.

## Can I save this relationship because I have kids?

Your children and you deserve to live in a healthy environment, that means a household free of domestic abuse. People in a domestic abusive relationship cannot rationalize with the abuser because of the nature of the relationship. Your kids will feel less stress and have less anxiety and depression if they are not living in an abusive household.

## Will people know what happened?

Organizations that provide domestic violence support have to protect your confidentiality. That means your information and identity will not be revealed just because you reached out for support.