

Perinatal Best Practices @ your fingertips

What is domestic or partner abuse?

Domestic or partner abuse can be physical, verbal, emotional, sexual, financial, economic or a combination of these.

Who is in abusive relationships?

Abusive relationships occur in every age group, race, culture, and social class. Physical abuse has been shown to begin or become worse during pregnancy. Each year, one to two million women are victims of partner abuse.

What are some signs that a relationship is abusive?

Abuse is about control. It often starts with small controlling behaviors and, over time, the partner controls everything. Here are some common examples of behaviors designed to control you:

- Isolates you from your family and friends
- Threatens or scares you
- Tells you that you are worthless or stupid
- Calls you names
- Keeps you from getting or keeping a job
- Controls your income and all of the money in the relationship
- Throws objects at you
- Threatens to hurt you
- Hits, pushes, or punches you
- Forces you to have sex

Won't it get better?

Partners who are abusive are not able to change their behavior just by wishing to do so. The abuser may quit abusing for a short while. In fact, in the cycle of violence, the abuser may indicate there will never be abuse again and will act very kind and attentive. However, the abusive behavior will return, often worse than before.

If I know someone in an abusive relationship, what should I do?

You need to let the person in the abusive relationship know:

- She is NOT to blame
- Domestic or partner violence is a crime
- She does not deserve to be treated this way
- There are safe places to go for help
- Tell the woman to

CALL 1-(800) 799-SAFE or 1-800-787-3224

to learn about safe places and about ways to increase safety for her and her children