



Intimate Partner Violence

Intimate partner violence (IPV) is a pattern of behaviour characterized by physical, sexual, psychological or, economic abuse in a relationship by one partner against another. This type of violence can take many forms, including physical assault, sexual assault, emotional abuse, and controlling behaviours. IPV can occur in any type of relationship, including dating relationships, married couples, and cohabiting couples. It can affect people of any gender, race, or socioeconomic status.

An intimate partner is someone with whom you have a close personal relationship, usually one that is romantic or sexual. This could be a current or former spouse or partner, a boyfriend or girlfriend, or someone you are currently dating or have previously dated.

COMMON SIGNS OF AN ABUSIVE PARTNER

Globally about 1 in 3 women worldwide have been subjected to either physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence in their lifetime.

Abusive partners often use a variety of tactics to exert power and control over their partners, and these behaviours can be difficult to recognize, especially if they are subtle or happen gradually. Here are some signs that may exhibited:

Threats of harm/self-harm



·He/She threatens to kill themselves or harm you if you leave them.

Verbal Abuse



·Such as name-calling, threats, or belittling their partner.

Physical Abuse



Such as hitting, pushing, or restraining their partner.

Blaming his/her partner



·Abusive people blame their partners for their own actions and making them feel guilty or ashamed.

Isolation



Abusive partners may prevent their partners from spending time with friends and family or limit their access to transportation.

Stalking



Stalking is the crime of illegally and persistently following and watching someone over a period of time. Stalking is a criminal offense in most jurisdictions and can result in penalties such as fines and imprisonment. Stalking particularly causes fear or distress as it involves:

- Following and monitoring an individual.
- Constantly calling or checking in on a partner's location and activities.
- Several unwanted calls SMS or WhatsApp messages.
- Unwanted visits or refusing to leave when asked to.

It is important to remember that not all abuse is physical; emotional and psychological abuse can be just as harmful. It is also worth noting that not everyone who is abused will exhibit visible signs of it, therefore, it is critical to trust and believe survivors when they disclose their experiences.

What You Might Feel or Think If You Are in an Abusive Relationship

Being in an abusive relationship may make you feel a wide range of emotions, including fear, shame, guilt, confusion, and isolation. Here are some signs you may notice if you are in an abusive relationship.



You are afraid of your partner.



You are constantly 'walking on eggshells' because of his/her mood swings.



He/she calls you names and threatens you and/or your children.



You downplay what happened after a violent episode.



He/she continuously criticises your family and friends and/or makes it difficult for you to see them or talk to them on your own.



You feel your partner is not violent, they do the mean things they do because they care.



You find it hard to get time on your own. When you do spend time away from him/her, they demand to know where you were and who you were always with.



Do you wonder if you are the one who is crazy? or do you keep questioning what you said or did?



You blame yourself for their outbursts – “If I had not gone out maybe....”
“I should not have shared my opinion and just gone along with their plan or thought”.

No matter what you do, another person's abusive behaviour is never your fault!



If you are still unsure whether you are in an abusive relationship, take a look at the cycle below



Calm

A period of relative peace. The abuser acts as if the incident never occurred and the abuse stops for a period.

This is the period where the abuser showers gifts, dinners, dates, holiday or grand gestures.



Reconciliation

The abuser shows remorse and apologizes, make promises to change, and the victim may forgive and want to believe that things will change.



Tension Building

This represents the period leading to the incident of violence. The phase that includes the 'walking on eggshells' feeling.



Incident

This is when the violent incidence occurs. It could be physical, sexual or emotional abuse.

Cycle of Violence

The cycle of violence never truly stops. With time the abuse gets more severe!

What Can You Do?

Remember that no one deserves to be abused, and leaving an abusive relationship is never easy and it's not your fault. It's important to know that there are resources and people who can help and support. As a survivor of intimate partner violence, you can take several steps to address the abuse. These may include:

Break The Silence

Your abuser weaponizes your silence and feelings of shame and guilt. They are capable of gaslighting you to think it was all your fault.

Gaslighting is any act of manipulation that causes someone to question their own sanity.

Their play becomes ineffective the moment you begin to speak up, speak out and break the cycle.

Refuse to take blames for what you are not responsible for.

Collect Evidence

The credibility of your complaints is usually met with injustice, and societal blackmail of longsuffering and patience. Hence, it is important to collect substantial evidence of these violent acts. Photos, videos, notes, messages, and medical reports are examples of evidence of the abuse. Be sure to keep them hidden and secure.

Taking Safety Measures

If you feel your life is at risk, it is important to take steps that will ensure your protection. The process of leaving an abusive partner may be risky and dangerous at times.

You should consider the following measures during your safety plan:

- Reach out to domestic violence helplines from a safe place. If you make these calls at home, be sure your abuser is not around.
- Pack an emergency bag and keep in a safe place.
- Be sure to also keep your personal and important documents safe as well (always have electronic copies as well)

Find a Support Network

The right support system will help you rise above the pains and trust issues you might have about speaking up. It is important to be able to confide in people and ask for help as they come in handy as potential witnesses. Preferably seek support from people who will give an objective view rather than a person who has close ties with you and your abuser.



If after reading this, you think that you are or might be living in an abusive relationship, you can reach out to us. We have a trained and experienced domestic violence team you can talk to.

You can also call the Lagos State Domestic and Sexual Violence Agency on:

080 00 333 333

Organisations To Reach Out To

Bimbo Odukoya Foundation

Bimbo Odukoya Foundation offers psychosocial support, counselling and therapy.

Address: 12, Industrial Estate, Ilupeju, Lagos State.

 @bimboodukoyafoundation

Website: www.pbofoundation.org

 @bimboodukoyafoundation

0803 580 0201

Centre for Women's Health and Information (CEWHIN)

CEWHIN provides free counselling, social support and referral services. We also offer psychosocial support to individuals in-person and through our GBV Tête-À-Tête mobile app.

Address: 34, McNeil Road by Akintoye Street, Sabo, Yaba. Lagos State.

Website: www.cewhin.com

Email: info@cewhin.com

0913 600 0347

0913 600 0349

 @cewhin  @cewhin  @cewhin_ng

Ireti Resource Centre

Offers confidential and judgement-free counselling services to women, survivors of sexual and gender-based violence. The Centre also hold a legal session for women and vulnerable groups to access pro-bono legal aid on issues related to their rights and well-being.

Address: No. 1, Idowu Anisere Bus -Stop, Governor's Road - Ikotun, Lagos

 @iretiresourcecenter

0700 333 3111

0701 194 8577

Lagos State Domestic and Sexual Violence Agency (DSVA)

DSVA Coordinates all domestic and sexual violence services in Lagos State. They offer crisis support, legal aid, and referral services. They also provide counselling, medical evaluation and care.

Address: Novel House, Plot 3, Block J, Otunba Jobi fele way. Alausa Ikeja.

Website: www.lagosdsva.org

 @lagosdsva  @lagosdsva

0800 033 3333

Tonia Bruised But Not Broken Foundation

Tonia Bruised But Not Broken offers a support group for survivors and psychological support.

Address: 15, Association Avenue, Ilupeju, Lagos State.

 @toniabruisedbutnotbroken

0809 898 7884

Centre for Women's Health and Information (CEWHIN)
34, McNeil Road by Akintoye Street, Sabo, Yaba. Lagos State.
Website: www.cewhin.com | Email Address: info@cewhin.com
Phone Number: 0907 418 7490
GBV Hotlines: 0913 600 0347 , 0913 600 0349



IN
SUPPORT
OF



**Spotlight
Initiative**
To eliminate violence
against women and girls



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