

## WHAT WE SHOULD KNOW



### SPOUSAL ABUSE

"Spousal abuse" refers to the violence or mistreatment that a woman or a man may experience at the hands of a marital, common-law or same-sex partner.

Spousal abuse may happen at any time during a relationship or after it has ended.

There are many different forms of spousal abuse, and a person may be subjected to more than one form.

**Abusive partners may use a number of different tactics to try to exert power and control over their victim. Abuse is a misuse of power and a violation of trust.**

**Physical abuse** may consist of just one incident or it may happen repeatedly. It includes

- using physical force in a way that injures someone - or puts them at risk of being injured- including beating, hitting, shaking, pushing, choking, biting, burning, kicking etc.
- assaulting with a weapon.
- Other forms of physical abuse may include, for example, rough handling, confinement, or any dangerous or harmful use of force or restraint.

**Sexual abuse/exploitation** includes

- all forms of sexual assault, sexual harassment or sexual exploitation
- forcing someone to participate in unwanted, unsafe or degrading sexual activity
- using ridicule or other tactics to try to denigrate
- control or limit their sexuality or reproductive choices

**Emotional abuse** includes verbal attacks, such as yelling, screaming and name-calling. Using criticism, verbal threats, social isolation, intimidation or exploitation to dominate another person are other forms of emotional abuse.

Criminal harassment or "stalking" may include threatening a person or their loved ones, damaging their possessions, or harming their pets.

**Economic/financial abuse** includes stealing from or defrauding a partner. Withholding money that is necessary to buy food or medical treatment, manipulating or exploiting a person for financial gain, denying them access to financial resources, or preventing them from working (or controlling their choice of occupation) are also forms of economic abuse.

**Spiritual abuse** includes using a person's religious or spiritual beliefs to manipulate, dominate or control them. It may include preventing someone from engaging in spiritual or religious practices, or ridiculing their beliefs.

**The abuse may happen once, or it may occur in a repeated and escalating pattern over a period of months or years. The abuse may change form over time.**



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