



Signs of Intimate Partner Violence

And Guidance in the Event You Recognize Someone in Danger

Sometimes Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)-related health issues are physically visible and obvious, but often signs of abuse can be more difficult to detect. The following information was developed to help you identify signs of IPV, and guidance for how to respond appropriately.

Signs of IPV in Someone You Know:

Look for changes in behavior such as increased isolation, anxiety, or depression. There could be signs of physical injuries or frequent, unexplained absences. Someone impacted by IPV might also exhibit a change in self-esteem or become unusually fearful or submissive around their partner. They may become more isolated, or show signs of having limited access to money. You may notice damage to their home or property. They may express feelings of self-blame, that the abuse is somehow deserved or a fear of outside intervention.

What to Do if You Recognize Signs of IPV

- Find a way to start a conversation.
- Approach the person gently and privately, expressing your concern without judgment.
- Offer support and let them know resources are available, such as hotlines or counseling services.
- Encourage them to seek help, but respect their choices and timing.
- Maintaining their confidentiality and being patient is crucial.
- Avoid pressuring them to leave the relationship; instead, empower them to make their own decisions.
- Continue to offer support and check in regularly.
- Listen empathetically and without judgment, affirming their feelings and experiences.
- Offer practical help, such as assisting with finding resources or creating a safety plan.
- Reassure them that they have your support, regardless of their choices.

Watching someone experience abuse is challenging, especially if that person is someone you know and love. Knowing how to have conversations that empower survivors to make their own decisions is one of the most important ways you can help someone in an abusive relationship reach a safer place. Conversations with a survivor about their situation can be hard: they may not want to discuss the abuse they're experiencing for any number of reasons, including fear, shame, or even concern for their partner who has abusive behavior. Keep in mind that there are countless reasons why people stay in abusive relationships, and leaving can be an especially dangerous period of time for them.

If you suspect someone you know is in an abusive situation and you need additional resources and support, reach out to the EAP or visit the National Domestic Violence Hotline website: thehotline.org for assistance.