



What is Domestic Violence?

“That’s not normal.” I blurted out those three little words to a friend who sat across from me at a coffee shop. We were casually sipping lattes and talking about our college homework when the conversation turned to the topic of her new boyfriend. She began to tell me about how passionate he was and how grand his gestures of love were after a fight. She told me a little bit about their fights ~ how he would use his words to scare her and how he would hit her. I knew something was terribly wrong. My friend was experiencing domestic violence. According to the *National Coalition Against Domestic Violence*, **around 20 people per minute are physically abused by an intimate partner.** That equals about 10 million people per year! Domestic violence isn’t just physical abuse. It is sexual, verbal, emotional, and physical violence. The abuser who’s exerting their power over someone in a close relationship with them may withhold finances or basic necessities, use sex, physical violence, emotional manipulation, or verbal threats to gain the main thing they want: control.

Here are some common signs of domestic violence:

- 1) Your partner hurts you by hitting, kicking, punching, or choking you
- 2) Exhibits paranoia about your disloyalty and may question you about cheating
- 3) Uses their words and actions to make you feel as if you’re worthless
- 4) Uses the threat of violence towards you, a loved one, or themselves to get what they want
- 5) Pressures you into sexual activity
- 6) Controls your money, your housing, your food, and who you interact with
- 7) Makes you feel isolated from your friends and family

My friend eventually left the abusive relationship. I drove her somewhere safe while he was at work. To this day, I am so grateful that I recognized the signs of domestic violence and knew who to call to get her help when she was ready. It is important to know and recognize the signs of domestic violence and it is important to know that there are resources available to help those

in abusive relationships. These relationships may feel impossible to escape, but there are people in our communities who are trained to help and have the resources that one needs to break free. In Binghamton, NY, *Rise* is a nonprofit that offers shelter, advocacy, and counseling. *Crime Victims Assistance Center (CVAC)* is another organization that offers counseling, advocacy, and support to victims of violence and their families. Both organizations have resources for safety planning that can help someone in an abusive situation escape, and they both have hotlines to call in times of crisis. There is also a **national hotline for victims of domestic violence**. Whether you're just trying to help a friend or trying to get out of an unhealthy relationship, there are people that care and can help you.

National Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-799-7233

Rise Shelter: 1-877-754-4340 <http://rise-ny.org/>

CVAC Crisis Line: (607) 722-4256 <http://www.cvac.us/>



If you need someone to talk to more about this, or you'd like more information about who we are and what we do, contact us at the number below. *We are here for you!* We are here to listen to you without any judgement and to offer you confidential support.

Call or text us at 607-205-8506



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