



MALE survivors

When men experience domestic violence, they often do not want to report the violence or seek help. The fact is, men can be victims of domestic violence and help is needed in order to stop the cycle.

MEN CAN BE ABUSED BY THEIR SPOUSE AND/OR PARTNER

Abuse is about a wrongful use of power to gain what you want. It is not limited to males over females. It can be anyone of any gender identification (including non-binary) over anyone of any gender identification. Abuse can be physical, emotional, verbal, financial, sexual, or spiritual/cultural.

The cycle of violence is the same regardless of the gender of the victim or the person causing harm:

1. Tension building
2. An abusive episode
3. Honeymoon stage

The tactics people who cause harm use can be the same regardless of the gender of the victim or the person causing harm:

- Violence
- Coercion
- Threats
- Intimidation
- Isolation
- Economic abuse

Male and non-binary survivors stay in the abusive relationship for some of the same reasons female survivors do:

- Fear the children will be taken
- Lack of economic resources
- Believing divorce is wrong
- Believing their love will make the person causing harm change
- Fear of being alone

When the person causing harm is a female, some survivors will remain in the relationship because of the added social stigma of being abused by a woman. Abuse is often blamed on addictions and mental illness. These are separate problems, but can all contribute to the violence.

Male survivors come from all socio-economic statuses, races, ages, sexual orientations, and ethnic backgrounds. They can often become depressed and/or suicidal due to isolation and feel further isolated due to a perceived lack of access to appropriate support systems.

WHY MEN ARE NOT RECOGNIZED AS VICTIMS

Research continues to demonstrate the majority of survivors are female. Since men do not report domestic violence due to stigma, the statistics might not accurately reflect the incidence.

Men who do come forward are often labeled by society as “wimps” or “weak” and ridiculed. Society has taught males that “real men” solve their own problems and do not admit when they need help. They are taught to “take it like a man”—creating a sense they should remain in the abusive relationship.

Due to the physical size difference, men are less likely to be injured by a female abuser. Men may experience a “double shame”—the stigma of being attacked and society’s belief that a “real man” should be able to handle his woman.

Another reason men are sometimes not believed is society does not want to believe females are capable of violence. Females have been portrayed as the kind, caring sex for many years.

Additional barriers exist for men in same-sex relationships. They may fear being “outed” if they report the abuse.

MALE SURVIVORS OFTEN COPE BY:

- Going into another room or locking themselves in a safe place
- Leaving and going to family and friends
- Sleeping in their car or garage
- Covering up or making excuses for the person causing harm

SOME THINGS MALE SURVIVORS CAN DO:

- Keep a written record of the abuse
- Make a police report
- Seek medical treatment
- Seek services from a domestic violence program



Alternatives Incorporated recognizes male and non-binary individuals also experience abuse. The agency provides equal housing and non-residential services for male and non-binary survivors of domestic and sexual violence as we do for female survivors.



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