



# Crime Prevention Week

November 1<sup>st</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup>, 2019

*Crime Prevention is Everyone's Responsibility*



## Responding to Relationship Violence

Statistics on the prevalence of violence against women vary, but the consequences for individuals, families and communities are devastating. Violence against women is not a private issue. It is a community issue affecting the health and well-being of not only the victim and her abuser, but also everyone around them. Violence against women happens in all ethnic, religious and racial communities, at every income group, at every age, and to women across all education levels. Violence is not limited to physical abuse, it can include sexual abuse, emotional or verbal abuse, financial abuse, spiritual abuse, or criminal harassment/stalking.

### How to Help Someone Experiencing Abuse

Knowing or thinking someone you care about is in a violent relationship can be difficult. Every situation is different and the individuals involved are different too. Here are some ways to help someone you care about who is experiencing relationship violence:

Set up a time to talk. Make sure the location will be safe and provide privacy, free of distractions or interruptions.

Let her know you're concerned about her safety. Be honest. Tell her about times when you were worried about her. Help her understand that abuse is wrong. She may not respond right away, or she may get defensive or deny the abuse. Let her know you want to help and will be there to support her in whatever decision she makes.

Be supportive. Listen. Keep in mind that it may be very hard for her to talk about the abuse. Tell her that she is not alone, and that people want to help. If she wants help, ask her what you can do.

Offer specific help. You might say you are willing to just listen, to help her with child-care, or to provide transportation, for example.

Don't place shame, blame, or guilt on her. Don't say, "You just need to leave." Instead, say something like, "I get scared thinking about what might happen to you." Tell her you understand that her situation is very difficult.

Encourage her to talk to someone who can help. Offer to help her find a local domestic violence agency. Offer to go with her to the agency, the police, or court.

If she decides to stay, continue to be supportive. She may decide to stay in the relationship, or she may leave and then go back many times. It may be hard for you to understand, but people stay in abusive relationships for many reasons. Be supportive, no matter what she decides to do.

Help her make a safety plan. Safety planning might include packing important items and helping her find a "safe" word. This is a code word she can use to let you know she is in danger without an abuser knowing. It might also include agreeing on a place to meet her if she has to leave in a hurry.

If she decides to leave, continue to offer help. Even though the relationship was abusive, she may feel sad and lonely once it is over. She may also need help getting services from agencies or community groups.





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Warning Signs		High Risk Warning Signs
Calls her names, makes jokes at her expense, or humiliates her in private or in front of others.		He has threatened to harm or kill her if she leaves him.
Tells her what to wear or criticizes how she dresses.		He threatens to kill himself.
He checks up on her all the time, even when at work.		He has a history of abuse with others or has used physical violence in his current relationship.
He tries to keep her away from friends and family.		He has access to weapons.
He shows up unexpectedly, when not invited or welcomed at social events.		He threatens to harm her children, her pet, or her property.
She is apologetic and makes excuses for his behaviour.		He is experiencing major life changes (i.e. job, separation, health).
She is nervous talking when he is present.		He misuses drugs or alcohol.
She seems to be sick more often or misses work.		She faces obstacles to leaving the relationship (i.e. language barrier, lack of citizenship, isolation, lack of support system).
She makes excuses at the last minute about why she can't meet you or she tries to avoid you.		
She tries to cover bruises or makes excuses for injuries.		She has just separated from him or planning to leave.
She appears sad, afraid and withdrawn.		She is in a custody battle, or he has access to her children.

## Help is Available

Getting support is the key to addressing violence in intimate relationships. Often, waiting for the problem to lead to contact with police is not a solution. Women experience violence in their relationships; family members, friends or neighbours who believe they know someone is experiencing violence, need to know there are resources available. Many organizations provide women the support they need to help prevent violence, escape from violent situations and recover if they become victims of violence.

If you or someone you know is in immediate danger, call 9-1-1, or your local police emergency number.

### VictimLink BC

1-800-563-0808 or [www.victimlinkbc.ca](http://www.victimlinkbc.ca)

Free and confidential services are available 24 hours

a day, 7 days a week in over 110 languages, providing crisis and referral information to victims of crime.

### Ministry of Public Safety & Solicitor General – Victims and Witnesses of Crime and Violence

[www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/justice/criminal-justice/victims-of-crime](http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/justice/criminal-justice/victims-of-crime)

A website that provides information to victims and witnesses of crime, violence, or abuse.

### SherterSafe

[www.sheltersafe.ca](http://www.sheltersafe.ca)

An online resource to assist women and their children connect to the nearest shelter or transition house that can offer safety, hope and support.

### Victim Services Directory

[www.justice.gc.ca/eng/cj-jp/victims-victimes/vsd-rsv/index.html](http://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/cj-jp/victims-victimes/vsd-rsv/index.html)

Created by the Policy Centre for Victim Issues of the Department of Justice Canada to help victims and individuals locate services for victims of crime across Canada.