

SA/DVCC Care Package



WOMEN'S COLLEGE HOSPITAL
Healthcare | REVOLUTIONIZED

Table of Contents

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE	3
SAFETY PLAN	5
CARING FOR YOURSELF	7
HOW TO IMPROVE YOUR SLEEP	9
STRATEGIES TO HELP MANAGE FLASHBACKS, INTENSE ANXIETY, AND/OR PANIC	10
A WORD TO FRIENDS AND FAMILY	11
IMPORTANT NUMBERS 24-HOUR ACCESS AND RESOURCES	12

Domestic Violence

Abuse can happen to anyone. No one should have to live in fear of someone they love. The SA/DVCC recognizes that it can be difficult to reach out for support– we are glad you came. This package will go over some useful information to assist you in coping with domestic violence.

Domestic violence and intimate partner violence (IPV) are terms used to describe violence that occurs between two people in an intimate relationship. IPV occurs in all countries, regardless of social, economic, religious, or cultural status. It occurs in heterosexual, same-sex and trans relationships.

It is defined as the intentional use of tactics to gain and maintain power and control over the thoughts, beliefs and conduct of an intimate partner. The term partner may be defined as a current or former girlfriend, boyfriend, spouse or common-law person.

Tactics used to gain control in IPV create fear, isolation and the entrapment of one partner. The majority of non-fatal intimate partner victimizations occur at home.

IMMIGRATION

If you do not have legal status in Canada, you can obtain legal advice. If you have status, then you cannot be deported, even if your sponsor is your partner.

EXAMPLES OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Physical: hitting, pushing, strangulation (choking), punching, kicking

Emotional: negative name calling, putting you down, using children to make you feel guilty, minimizing or denying the abuse or blaming you for the abuse

Sexual: any sexual contact without consent

Financial: not allowing you to work, making you ask for money

Coercion and threats: threatening to leave you or to commit suicide

Dominance: treating you like a servant, making all the 'big' decisions without you

POSSIBLE IMPACTS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Living in a constant cycle of violence can cause more than black eyes and broken bones. Injuries that do not result in disabilities will eventually heal. However, the psychological impact of the violence has long-term effects. These effects can manifest themselves in either psychological or physiological ways. If you have any concerns about your physical or mental health, please seek help from a health professional.

The following list gives some examples of health effects that have been associated with abuse:

- Low self-esteem
- Stress
- Eating disorders
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Insomnia
- Headaches
- Chronic pain
- Gastrointestinal problems
- Hypertension
- Substance abuse
- Fractures, soft tissue injuries
- Self-harm, suicide, overdose, homicide
- Infertility
- Sexually transmitted infections/pelvic inflammatory disease

Safety Plan

If you have left the relationship:

- Change your phone number and screen calls
- Save and document all contacts, messages, injuries or other incidents involving the abuser
- Change locks, if the abuser has a key
- Avoid staying alone
- Plan how to get away if confronted by an abusive partner
- If you have to meet your partner, do it in a public place
- Vary your routine
- Notify school and work contacts
- Call a shelter for battered women

Remember, you have the right to live without fear and violence.

SAFETY PACKING LIST

If you leave the relationship or are thinking of leaving, you should take important papers and documents with you to enable you to apply for benefits or take legal action.

Identification for yourself and your children:

- Birth certificates
- Social security cards
(or numbers written on paper if you can't find the cards)
- Driver's license
- Photo identification or passports
- Welfare benefits card

Important papers:

- Marriage/divorce certificate
- Custody orders
- Legal protection or restraining orders
- Health insurance papers and medical cards

- Insurance policies
- Medical records for all family members
- Children's school records
- Investment papers/records and account numbers
(pay stubs for self and partner)
- Immigration papers/ work permits
- Rental agreement/lease or house deed
- Car title, registration, and insurance information
- Records of police reports you have filed or other evidence of abuse
(photos, medical records)

Money and other ways to get by:

- Cash
- Credit cards
- ATM card
- Checkbook and bankbook (with deposit slips)
- Jewelry or small objects you can sell

Keys:

- House
- Car
- Safety deposit box or post office box

Ways to communicate:

- Phone calling card*
- Cellphone*
- Address book

Medications:

- At least one month's supply for all medicines you and your children are taking
- A copy of any prescriptions

Things to help you cope:

- Pictures
- Keepsakes
- Children's small toys or books

* Don't share a calling card or cellphone plan with an abuser, because they can be used to find you. And if you already have a shared card or phone plan, try not to use them after you've left.

Caring For Yourself

HOW YOU MAY BE FEELING

If you have experienced sexual violence/sexual assault/intimate partner violence, you may be surprised by your emotional reactions. You may have a range of emotional reactions or be surprised by how calm you feel. There is no right or wrong way to feel; the emotions you are experiencing are the right ones for you.

You may feel that what has happened to you is your fault. Please know that this is not the case, you do not hold any blame in this occurrence. You did not make this happen or deserve this.

It is hard to think clearly when you have been subjected to trauma. You may find yourself doing things you would not expect yourself to do. This can be a confusing and overwhelming time. It takes time and energy to heal after you have been assaulted; you may not feel better right away. Be patient with yourself and give yourself the time you need to figure out how this experience has affected you.

You may find yourself experiencing a range of physical and emotional reactions, including:

- A feeling of being lost, alone or out of touch
- A feeling that no one understands what you have experienced or are currently experiencing
- Feeling confused or the inability to think clearly
- A change in eating habits and/or nausea
- Fatigue that may be sudden or sporadic
- Changes in your sleeping patterns
- Headaches and tension
- A feeling of grief and loss
- Reliving the experience in the form of thoughts and/or flashbacks

- A change in the way you feel about intimacy
- A feeling of discomfort when close to or touched by others
- An inability to trust others
- Feelings of fear, such as a fear of being alone or going out at night
- A feeling of being nervous or anxious

It is important to understand the emotions you are feeling are part of the healing process. These reactions can help you understand how the experience has affected you. Taking the time to understand these reactions is an important part of the recovery process. It is important to take care of yourself, to seek out support, and to get answers to any questions you may still have after reading this information.

There are also 24-hour crisis support lines offered in various languages that you can call if you need immediate or after-hours support.

How to Improve Your Sleep

THE FOLLOWING SUGGESTIONS MAY HELP IMPROVE YOUR SLEEP:

1. Exercise during the day, preferably in the late afternoon before dinner. Aerobic exercise (20 minutes or more) is better, but 45 minutes to an hour of brisk walking is helpful.
2. Try to keep a consistent schedule of when you go to sleep and wake up, even if you are tired in the morning.
3. Do not try to make yourself sleep. If you are not able to fall asleep after 20-30 minutes in bed, try to engage in a relaxing activity. Return to bed when you are sleepy.
4. Avoid heavy meals before bedtime or going to bed hungry (a small snack before bedtime may be helpful).
5. Avoid drinking alcohol before bedtime.
6. Have quiet time during the last hour or two of the day. Avoid vigorous physical or mental activity during this time.
7. Reduce caffeine and nicotine consumption as much as possible. If you must have caffeine, have it early in the day.
8. Develop a sleep ritual before bedtime. This is an activity or routine you do every night before you get into bed.
9. Try to avoid napping during the day.
10. Do not let yourself be afraid of not sleeping. Work on accepting the nights when you are unable to sleep. The less you fight, resist or fear sleeplessness the more likely it will be to go away.
11. Talk about feelings, emotions and thoughts with a support person. They can be a friend, family member or counsellor. Getting more emotional support and expressing your feelings can help improve your sleep.

Be gentle with yourself. Remember that everyone's healing journey looks different and it is important to try these suggestions at a pace that works best for you.

Strategies to Help Manage Flashbacks, Intense Anxiety, and/or Panic

1. Find a calm and quiet space.
2. Breathe deep breaths through your nose. This increases the air flow to your lungs and helps to reduce your heart rate and panic reaction. Exhale through your mouth.
3. Do not try to control or fight your reactions. Accept them and let them pass, reminding yourself the panic is not dangerous and will pass.

The following suggestions are referred to as “grounding techniques”:

1. Confide in someone and, if you feel comfortable, tell them how you feel.
2. Move around or engage in physical activity.
3. Focus on simple objects around you. Some people find it helpful to go through a sequence identifying **five things they can see, five things they can hear and five things they can smell**, and repeat the process until the panic subsides.
4. Touch the floor and physical objects around you. These actions can help ground you when you’re experiencing intense emotions. Try planting your feet on the floor and remind yourself of the current time and date. Breathe slowly and regularly through your nose to prevent hyperventilating.
5. Use positive self-talk along with slow breathing.
6. Ask yourself, “What is the most supportive thing I could do for myself right now?”

Try different strategies when you feel nervous, anxious or upset. Over time, you’ll start to learn what strategies work best for you.

A Word to Friends and Family

After a friend, family member or partner has been abused, they may experience strong and conflicting emotions, some of which you may also experience. You may find yourself feeling:

- Angry at what has happened to your loved one;
- Helplessness and confusion as to how you can be of help to them;
- Sadness and grief;
- Discomfort in your relationship with your loved one;
- Upset and frustrated with the changes in your relationship with the assaulted person.

It is important that you know that after a person has been abused, they may experience overwhelming emotional and physical reactions. Here are some suggestions as to how you can be supportive:

- Listen to them without judgment;
- Support their decisions;
- Help them find the resources and support they may need;
- Recognize your feelings separate from theirs;
- Realize your own limitations, take time out for self care;
- Avoid asking “why” questions and reinforce the fact that the sexual assault was not their fault;
- Be patient with them;
- Acknowledge and validate whatever they are feeling and their need to express those feelings, avoid telling them how you think they should be reacting.

Adapted from: *Sexual Assault: Information for Families* by Victoria Women's Sexual Assault Centre and *Caring for a Friend or Family Member Following Sexual Assault* by Sexual Assault Program, Women's Health Care Centre, Peterborough Regional Health Centre

Important Numbers

24-Hour Access and Resources

Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence Care Centre (SADVCC) at Women’s College Hospital.....416-323-6040

Our office is open Monday to Friday 8 a.m.-4 p.m.
A nurse is available 24 hours/day for emergency visits.

Toronto Rape Crisis Centre416-597-8808

Provides 24/7 crisis counselling over the phone. Counsellors also answer emails.
Monday-Friday 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Open to all genders. Online chat feature available.
crisis@trccmwar.ca

Assaulted Women’s Help Line416-863-0511

Provides 24/7 crisis counselling over the phone to women in 154 languages.
AWHL is the access point for violence against women shelters.
Use of a TTY line also available for deaf women.
www.awhl.org

Bay Centre for Birth Control416-351-3700

Femaide.....1-877-336-2433

Provides 24/7 over-the-phone crisis counselling for French-speaking women.
www.femaide.ca

Distress Centre416-408-4357

Provides 24/7 over-the-phone counselling for people in emotional distress or suicide prevention.

Gerstein Centre.....416-929-5200

Provides crisis support for adults living in Toronto with mental health problems.
Open to all genders.
www.gersteincentre.org

Police (Emergency)	911
Police (Non-emergency)	416-808-2222
Victim Support Line	416-314-2447
Can connect you with the Victim Witness Assistance Program nearest you.	
To Access a Shelter	416-397-5637
Emergency Welfare	416-392-8623
If you are not on welfare, you are entitled to emergency assistance if your health or welfare is in danger. You can get two weeks worth of assistance before your regular application is processed and without going through the usual hoops.	
Wen-do Women’s Self Defence	416-929-3636
A 15-hour course that covers a wide variety of physical and verbal self-defence techniques and awareness and avoidance of threatening situations, and discussions on violence against women. Classes are taught by women, for women and girls.	
www.wendo.ca	
Barbra Schlifer Clinic	416-323-9149
Provides counselling, legal information, interpreters and referral services for women who have been physically or sexually abused.	
www.schliferclinic.com	
Rent-Geared-To-Income Subsidy	416-338-8888
(Application Support Centre) or 416-338-4766 (Central Intake)	
Provides one-stop housing solutions for people looking for affordable housing in Toronto. Priority is given to those who are currently dealing with domestic violence.	
www.housingconnections.ca (City of Toronto website)	
Your Choice	www.yourchoice.to
Resource guide created by Toronto Police Services that provides information on sexual assault investigations, possible outcomes and the criminal court process.	
Ontario Provincial Sexual Assault/Domestic Violence Navigation Line	1-855-NAV-SADV (628-7238)
www.sadvtreatmentcentres.ca	

- Victim Services Program of Toronto** **416-808-7066**
www.victimservicestoronto.com
- Male Survivors of Sexual Abuse Line** **1-866-887-0015**
 A 24/7 multilingual support service for male survivors of sexual abuse, both recent and historical.
- Talk4Healing** **1-855-554-4325**
 We offer 24/7 help, support and resources for Indigenous women, by Indigenous women, all across Ontario.
www.beendigen.com
- TransLifeline** **1-877-330-6366**
 Trans Lifeline is a peer support and crisis hotline non-profit organization serving transgender people by offering phone support and microgrants.
www.translifeline.org
- KidsHelpPhone** **1-800-668-6868**
 Kids Help Phone is Canada's only 24/7 e-mental health service offering free, confidential support to young people in English and French.
www.kidshelpphone.ca
- Human Trafficking Hotline** **1-833-900-1010**
 The Canadian Human Trafficking Hotline is a confidential, multilingual service, operating 24/7 to connect victims and survivors with social services, law enforcement, and emergency services, as well as receive tips from the public.
www.canadianhumantraffickinghotline.ca
- Ganawishkadawe Centre for Wise Practices in Indigenous Health**
 Ganawishkadawe—The Heart of the Fire is The Centre for Wise Practices in Indigenous Health (GCWP-IH) is situated within Women's College Hospital and is a place for education, clinical care and Indigenous scholarship where we are committed to the health and well-being of all First Nations, Inuit, and Métis individuals, families, and communities across the territories.
www.indigenoushealth.womenscollegehospital.ca

Notes



76 Grenville Street
Ground Floor, in the AACU
Toronto, ON M5S 1B2
T. 416-323-6040

womenscollegehospital.ca