

# Domestic Violence and Abuse

## What is Domestic Violence?

Domestic violence as a pattern of abusive in a relationship that is used by one person to gain or maintain power and control over another person and has several different forms:

- Physical
- Verbal/Emotional
- Sexual
- Economic/Financial
- Psychological Abuse

**Physical Abuse:** Hitting, slapping, shoving, grabbing, pinching, biting, hair pulling, etc are types of physical abuse. This type of abuse also includes denying a partner medical care or forcing alcohol and/or drug use upon him or her.

**Verbal/Emotional Abuse:** Undermining an individual's sense of self-worth and/or self-esteem is abusive. This may include, but is not limited to constant criticism, diminishing one's abilities, name-calling, or damaging one's relationship with his or her children.

**Sexual Abuse:** Coercing or attempting to force any sexual contact or behavior without consent. Sexual abuse includes, but is certainly not limited to, marital rape, attacks on sexual parts of the body, forcing sex after physical violence has occurred, or treating one in a sexually demeaning manner.

**Economic/Financial Abuse:** Is defined as making or attempting to make an individual financially dependent by maintaining total control over financial resources, withholding one's access to money, or forbidding one's attendance at school or employment.

**Psychological Abuse:** Elements of psychological abuse include - but are not limited to - causing fear by intimidation; threatening physical harm to self, partner, children, or partner's family or friends; destruction of pets and property; and forcing isolation from family, friends, or school and/or work.

## **Sexual Violence:**

**Sexual assault** is any type of sexual contact or behavior that occurs without the explicit consent of the recipient. Falling under the definition of sexual assault are sexual activities as forced sexual intercourse, forcible sodomy, child molestation, incest, fondling, and attempted rape.

## **Dating Violence:**

- Dating Violence committed by a person who is or has been in a social relationship of a romantic or intimate nature with the victim is dating violence. The existence of such a relationship shall be determined based on a consideration of the following factors:
- the length of the relationship
- the type of relationship
- the frequency of interaction between the persons involved in the relationship

## **Stalking:**

Stalking is a pattern of repeated and unwanted attention, harassment, contact, or any other course of conduct directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to feel fear. Stalking can include:

- Repeated, unwanted, intrusive, and frightening communications from the perpetrator by phone, mail, and/or email.
- Repeatedly leaving or sending victim unwanted items, presents, or flowers.
- Following or lying in wait for the victim at places such as home, school, work, or recreation place.
- Making direct or indirect threats to harm the victim, the victim's children, relatives, friends, or pets.

- Damaging or threatening to damage the victim's property.
- Harassing victim through the internet.
- Posting information or spreading rumors about the victim on the internet, in a public place, or by word of mouth.
- Obtaining personal information about the victim by accessing public records, using internet search services, hiring private investigators, going through the victim's garbage, following the victim, contacting victim's friends, family work, or neighbors, etc.

**Resources:**

[www.ovw.usdoj.gov/domviolence.htm](http://www.ovw.usdoj.gov/domviolence.htm)

[www.fresno.courts.ca.gov](http://www.fresno.courts.ca.gov)