

Signs of Abuse in Relationships

“**ABUSE IS MORE THAN JUST PHYSICAL VIOLENCE**”

Physical

- Your partner threatens to harm you or your loved ones, including children and/or pets.
- Your partner kicks, punches, hits, pinches, slaps, shakes, pushes you, or threatens to do so.
- Your partner threatens you with a weapon.
- Your partner tries to control what, when, and how you dress, eat, drink, sleep, rest, work-out, or use substances.
- Your partner controls when, with whom, and how often you access appointments for healthcare services (like check-ups or emergency room visits), dental care, or personal grooming (like haircare, nailcare, or footcare services).
- Your partner kicks you out of your shared spaces when they're upset.
- Your partner damages your belongings when they're upset.

When someone experiencing intimate partner violence attempts to leave, violent behaviours like stalking almost always escalate because the abuser is trying to regain control. The majority of intimate partner homicides occur when an abuser murders the person being abused because they left the relationship or tried to leave.

Most people who have been abused by their partners are still in contact with abusers, sometimes by choice and otherwise, out of necessity, especially where there are major shared commitments like work, children, co-ownership of property, or shared social circles.

In Renfrew County, women have died as a result of violence by their partners, mostly men.

Your partner's abusive behaviour is ***not your fault*** and you ***DO NOT*** deserve it.

Your loved ones, including your children, family, and pets, **deserve safety**.

You deserve support and safety.

It is dangerous to sit alone with your pain and fear. Give yourself permission to get help and then tell someone whom you trust about the violence you are experiencing.

You will know who to talk to because these are the people in your life who make you feel seen and heard; they're the people in your life who show-up for you, even when things are hard.

Sexual

- Your partner makes you feel scared while having sex or being intimate with them.
- Your partner threatens you or makes you feel guilty if you refuse to have sex or be intimate with them.
- Your partner initiates sexual acts in ways that make you feel uncomfortable or embarrassed.
- Your partner threatens to expose your sex life to other people.
- Your partner accuses you of having affairs.

Financial & Legal

- Your partner tries to control how, when, and on what you spend money. Your partner may have sole access to your bank account, credit, and tax information.
- Your partner may also have sole access to the lease/ownership and insurance information about your shared property (like vehicles or real estate).
- Your partner might try to keep you uninformed about legal proceedings affecting your relationship (like custody arrangements, fines, disputes with neighbours, police charges, or court appearances).

Social

- Your partner tries to control who you speak to, when, and how. Your partner may try to isolate you from family and friends.
- Your partner tries to embarrass you in front of other people or threatens to expose parts of your life that you are self-conscious about.
- Your partner tells you no one else would want you.

Mental & Emotional

- Your partner tries to make you feel stupid or worthless.
- Your partner puts-down your ideas or tries to convince you you're wrong about a situation that's on your mind.
- Your partner blames you for everything that goes wrong in the relationship.
- Your partner threatens to take your children if you leave.
- Your partner threatens to hurt or kill themselves if you leave.

Where there is abuse in relationships, there is increased risk of serious injury and death, especially if:

- Your partner has already seriously injured you over the course of your relationship.
- You are thinking of leaving or have recently left your partner *“If I can't have you, no one can”*.
- Your partner threatens to kill you, themselves, or your loved ones *“I can't live without you”*.
- Your partner is acting depressed, jealous, and/or controlling *“You belong to me”*.
- You are isolated because of your partner's behaviour *“They don't like it when I go out”; “They'll be mad if they see us talking”*.
- Your partner has access to weapons.
- Your partner has recently been subject to legal orders, like a restraining order, peace bond, bail conditions, or child custody and access orders.