

## What Is Domestic Violence?

Domestic violence is abusive behaviour by one person against another, usually in the home or in a close relationship. Abuse can include violent actions like hitting, punching and slapping, but doesn't have to be physical. It can include verbal and emotional abuse. It can also involve sexual assault. There are different types of domestic violence:

**Physical abuse** is the most visible and may be defined as any act which results in non-accidental trauma, physical injury or death. Physical abuse includes:

- Hitting, beating or punching
- Kicking, choking, biting or burning
- Stabbing, shooting or using other weapons violently
- Destroying property or possessions
- Throwing something that could hurt someone
- Making threatening gestures
- Abandoning someone in dangerous places
- Forcing someone to sit in a car that is being recklessly driven
- Refusing to help someone that is sick, injured or pregnant

**Sexual abuse** is an act which exploits someone for the purpose of sexual satisfaction or control. It takes place against someone's will and without consent. Sexual abuse includes:

- Any misuse of a person for sexual pleasure
- Fondling or other unwanted sexual contact
- Sexually demeaning remarks
- Treating someone as a sex object
- Insisting that someone dress more sexually than he or she is comfortable with
- Name-calling ("You're a whore!")
- Forcing someone to have sex when they don't want to
- Forcing someone to have sex after they've been beaten
- Forcing someone to have sex without protection
- Forcing someone to have sex with or in front of other people

**Emotional abuse** is an attempt to hurt, attack or control a partner or family member. Many people find it difficult to talk about and wonder if it's serious because, unlike bruises or broken bones, it can't be seen. Emotional abuse is very serious! Emotional abuse can include:

- Domination or manipulation
- Name-calling, shouting or swearing
- Making threatening remarks or gestures
- Making fun of someone in front of others
- Being overly jealous or possessive
- Listening to someone's phone calls
- Accusing someone of unfaithfulness without good reason
- Isolating someone from their family and friends
- Preventing someone from going to work or school
- Attacking someone's children or pets

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- Selling personal or household things without consent
- Threatening to kill someone or leave them or throw them out
- Threatening to kill oneself

**Economic abuse** occurs when a person takes financial advantage of a partner or family member. Economic abuse includes:

- Taking or spending someone's money
- Preventing someone from having a job
- Unfair or selfish distribution of money
- Not allowing someone to spend money the way they want to

**Domestic violence can happen to anyone of any age. It also occurs in same-sex relationships. It's important to keep in mind that, although women are usually seen as the victims of domestic violence, men are abused in the home as well.**

### What Is A Protection Order?

A protection order is a legal document stating that the person named as the abuser (the respondent) can't do certain things to the person who applies for protection (the complainant). The order tells the respondent that if he/she does anything the order forbids him/her to do, then he/she will be arrested.

The abused person or any other person acting on his or her behalf - like a counsellor, healthcare worker or social worker - can apply for the protection order. Such a person must get the complainant's written permission and must have a material interest in the person. For example, a counsellor would have a material interest in seeing that her client is assisted in the best possible way. If a protection order has been obtained and the police arrive at a scene where there is violence, the police have a duty to arrest the abuser. If they don't arrest the abuser, the police themselves can be arrested as it's against the law for them not to arrest an abuser.

### How To Apply For A Protection Order

- The complainant fills out a form and swears in an affidavit (a written declaration made under oath) that he or she is telling the truth;
- The form and attached affidavit are lodged with the clerk of the court;
- The clerk submits these forms to a magistrate who decides whether or not to grant an interim (temporary) protection order;
- A copy of the interim order is given to the respondent over the next 10 days; and
- After another 10 days, the respondent must appear in court and prove why the interim order should not be made final.

### What A Survivor Can Do

- Obtain a protection order;
- Speak to someone or phone POWA on (011) 642 4345;
- Have friends or neighbours visit often;
- Report an abuser at the nearest police station;
- Phone Crime Stop on 0860 010 111 or the SAPS emergency number: 10 111.

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