



25 November - 10 December



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## IMPORTANT INFORMATION

### How do I know I am being abused?

There are two main ways that you can tell if you are being abused:

1. If someone is saying things to you that you feel is offensive to you and your integrity and are hurting your feelings. The abuser may also ridicule or name-call, intimidates, harass, or stalk you. That is VERBAL, PSYCHOLOGICAL and EMOTIONAL abuse.
2. If someone is touching you in a way that is undignified, harmful – e.g. hitting, forcing you to have sex, pulling hair, grabbing or smacking you. The abuser may also damage your property or enter your residence without your permission. That is all PHYSICAL abuse.

***Nobody has the right to hit, push, shove, shake, kick, slap or punch you.***

***If they love you, they would not harm you. If they respect you, they will not treat you with indignity and disrespect.***

### What do I do if I am being abused?

- **Don't suffer in silence:** If you are being physically, psychologically (mentally), emotionally or sexually abused in a relationship, it is important that you seek help. You do not have to continue to suffer in silence.
- **Talk to someone you can trust:** confide in a friend, a neighbour, a relative, a spiritual leader or elder, a doctor, or a counselor.
- **It is not your fault:** There is no excuse for any form of abuse and you do not have to put up with it. Both physical and emotional abuse is against the law and help is available through the legal system.
- **You can get help:** You can use the legal system to help you.
  - Go to the Domestic Violence Court closest to you and apply for a Protection Order.

- lay a criminal charge against the abuser, for example for rape or sexual assault

### **What are the signs that my friend is being abused?**

- unexplained bruises, broken bones, sprains, or marks
- excessive guilt or shame for no apparent reason
- secrecy or withdrawal from friends and family
- avoidance of school or social events with excuses that don't seem to make any sense

### **How do I help an abused friend?**

- **Listen:** A person who is being abused needs someone to hear and believe him or her.
- **It is not his/her fault:** Help your friend understand that it is not his or her fault. Your friend is not the bad person. The person who is being abusive has a problem and needs help.
- **Encourage him/her to seek help:** Your friend also needs your encouragement to get help immediately from an adult, such as a parent, family member, or guidance counselor.
- **If a friend has been raped:** Encourage the friend who has been raped to go to a hospital within 72 hours to test for HIV. The hospital will start them on a short course of antiretrovirals that can reduce chances of getting HIV and report the matter to the police

### **How do I help an abused child?**

- Talk to them gently
- Don't interrogate. Let the child explain to you in his or her own words what happened, but don't interrogate the child.
- Assure them they are not in trouble and that you will keep them safe.
- Tell them that you will believe them and DO so
- Contact your nearest social workers and report the case
- Call Childline where you may report the case anonymously

### **Who do I call if someone I know is being abused?**

Women Abuse Helpline: 0800 150 150

Childline: 0800 055 555

SAPS Crime Stop: 08600 10111

AIDS Helpline: 0800 012 322

### **How can I stop abusing my partner/child?**

- Acknowledge that what you are doing is wrong (no matter what the degree).
- Stop rationalizing that abusive treatment of other people as acceptable. Abuse is NEVER healthy or acceptable regardless of the messages you may have been taught or witnessed in the past.
- If alcohol makes you more likely to commit violence, stop or reduce.
- Avoid alcohol and drugs to deal with your problems.
- Exercise and listen to soothing music to deal with stress.
- Walk away from the confrontation until you are calmed down
- Go to the family elders, trusted friend, neighbour, church elders and community leaders for mediation of disputes.
- Seek out the professional assistance of a psychologist or other professionals.

### **Who can I call to help me stop my abusive behaviour?**

Gender Based Violence helpline: 0800 150 150.

Suicide Helpline: 0800 567 567

Toll free Crisis Line: 0861 574 747

National AIDS Helpline: 0800 012 322

Violence against women and children is never acceptable, never excusable, and never tolerable.