



# #HOLLERSAFESPACE

You can use this guide on what to do, where to go, and how to get treatment if you're a victim of abuse or if you know someone in need of help.



Pure Shopping Pleasure

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# EDUCATE

You can help by educating yourself and others, assisting a friend who is being abused, speaking up, and being an involved bystander.

Here you'll find statistics on domestic violence, Netcare support, donations, types of abuse, signs of emotional abuse, commonly asked questions about adolescent dating abuse, and testimonies.

## STATS ABOUT DOMESTIC ABUSE: SOUTH AFRICA

South Africa Has An Average

**83 MURDERS  
PER DAY**



a **WOMAN** is  
**MURDERED**  
every **3 HOURS**  
in South Africa

**9.6%**

of **males** in  
KwaZulu-Natal and  
the Eastern Cape  
reported **being**  
**sexually victimised**  
**by another male.**

**114 life sentences** were  
handed down for GBV  
crimes in the first six  
months of the 2022/2023.



**1 in every 3 adolescents**  
reported having experienced some form of  
sexual abuse at some point in their lives.



**36.8%**  
of boys



**33.9%**  
of girls

reported some form of sexual abuse.  
That is, overall, **35.4%**

**29% of GBV attacks** are carried out by **total strangers**, with  
the majority being perpetrated by someone close to the  
victim, such as a spouse or **intimate partner (15%), relative or**  
**household member (13%)** or **friend or acquaintance (22%)**..

A rape is said to occur every **17 seconds in SA**

where **1 in 3 women** and **1 in 6 men** are raped, 1 in 25  
incidents are reported to the police, 45% of rapes in SA are  
classified as child rapes, and 50% of children in SA will  
experience abuse before the age of 18

# STATS ABOUT DOMESTIC ABUSE: GLOBAL



An estimated **8 million Australians** have experienced violence (physical and/or sexual) since the age of 15, including:



have experienced physical violence



have experienced sexual violence

The **CDC in America** found that about **1 in 3 men** experienced contact sexual violence, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner during their lifetime. Nearly **56% of men** who were victims of contact sexual violence, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner first experienced these or other forms of violence by that partner before age 25.

In the UK 1 in 3 victims of domestic abuse are male. **1 in 6 -7 men** and 1 in 4 women will be a victim of domestic abuse in their lifetime.

Sources: <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/intimatepartnerviolence/men-ipvsvandstalking.html> | QUARTER TWO CRIME STATISTICS 2022/2023 <https://www.sps.gov.za/newsroom/msspeechdetail.php?nid=4367> | The Optimus Study on Child Abuse, Violence and Neglect in South Africa (2016) <https://mg.co.za/news/2023-01-16-gender-violence-xenophobia-corruption-south-africa-human-rights-problems-continue-in-2023/#~:text=Despite%20the%20government%20passing%20new,viole%20against%20women%20were%20reported> | <https://www.unicef.org/southafrica/child-protection> | About BJS oip.gov | Personal Safety, Australia, 2021-22 financial year | Australian Bureau of Statistics (abs.gov.au) | <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC10091185/> | <https://mankind.org.uk/>

## FORMS OF VIOLENCE

These forms of violence can happen in childhood, teen years, or in adulthood.

### INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE (IPV)

Physical violence, sexual violence, stalking, psychological aggression, and control of reproductive or sexual health by a current or former intimate partner.

### SEXUAL VIOLENCE (SV)

Sexual activity when consent is not obtained or given freely.

### CONTACT SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Includes rape (penetration of the victim), being made to penetrate someone else, sexual coercion, and/or unwanted sexual contact.

### STALKING

Occurs when someone repeatedly harasses or threatens someone else, causing fear or safety concerns.



# open disclosure

## Mission

A holistic provision of prevention and awareness, treatment and after-care service to those at risk of substance abuse and those who are already engaged in substance abuse and a safe environment through addressing issues of affordability, accessibility and affinity of counseling service.

## Vision

To become the premium provider of psycho/social and economic empowerment support service to those at risk, victims and survivors of sexual violence, whilst proactively influencing and ensuring the implementation of the legislation that is gender sensitive and pro poor. We thrive on providing ethical and practical solution for our client.

## Projects



Individual Counseling Sessions



Early prevention programmes



Public awareness campaigns



Educate learners about GBV



Group Counseling sessions



Online counseling



Referrals to treatment centers to highly addicted individuals



Ke moja (substance abuse)



Presentations at clinics



Motivational sessions

For more information on the organization visit: [www.opendisclosure.org.za](http://www.opendisclosure.org.za)

# RAPE & WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW



**What is rape:**

Rape is defined as: Any act of sexual penetration with a complainant (survivor) that is unlawfully and purposefully committed without the complainant's permission. This is in accordance with the Sexual Offences Act of December 2007.

Women, men, and children from all areas of life are all susceptible to rape. Nobody asks to be raped, and having intercourse without permission is rape.

The majority of rapes are carried out by individuals the victim knows; however, you might be raped by a stranger or someone you trust. Rape isn't about sex; it's about control and power.

**A crime of power, not of desire, is rape. It's a violation of your human rights and is forbidden by law.**

**Stats & facts:**

A rape is said to occur every 17 seconds in SA, where 1 in 3 women and 1 in 6 men are raped, 1 in 25 incidents are reported to the police, 45% of rapes in SA are classified as child rapes, and 50% of children in SA will experience abuse before the age of 18.

SA has the highest child and baby rape incidences in the world, and a South African woman's chance of being raped is higher than her chance of learning to read.

**Myths & truths:**

Myths and preconceptions regarding rape are among the major issues our society is dealing with. These false notions have detrimental impacts on the community, preventing victims from receiving justice and healing, and letting rapists get away with their crimes.

To help victims find healing and justice, it's crucial to understand the difference between a myth and the truth and to reject myths.

MYTH:	TRUTH:
A drunk and inebriated woman asked to be sexually assaulted.	It's rape if there was no consent! Consent must be freely granted in its entirety by a person who is capable of doing so.
A woman wearing provocative clothing asked to be raped.	The rapist does not become enamoured or lustful by the sight of a woman's body or what she's wearing. Rape is about wrath, hatred, power, and control.
All rapists are strangers.	In the majority of cases, the victim knew the rapist. According to Rape Crisis, 10% of victims are raped by strangers, while 90% are by somebody they know.
If you're married or in a sexual relationship, rape can't happen.	You have the right to refuse even in a relationship. If intercourse is forced after being refused, it's rape.
If someone consented before, it's acceptable to do it again.	If it was the first time, one can't assume that it will always be OK. Every time, consent is required.

**What to do during rape:**

- It's advised to refrain from fighting back as 85% of rapists in SA are equipped with a knife or gun.
- You must be absolutely certain that you can fight them off before putting yourself in greater jeopardy. It's crucial for women to learn self-defence skills and tactics to help them avoid potentially harmful situations and eventually save their lives.
- At some point, your survival takes precedence above the rape.
- Remember how they appear, not what they're wearing. Pay attention to any markings like scars or tattoos that will help the police recognise them.
- Attempt to memorise only one attacker if there are several attackers; do not let them know you're doing this.
- Scratch them if you can - for DNA evidence under your nails.

### What to do after rape:

- Your survival is a priority, therefore get to a secure location.
- Even though it may be challenging, tell a trusted person so you may receive assistance and support. If a stranger is the first person you see, make sure to collect their contact information.
- Don't wash, brush your teeth, shower, or bath because you will wash away DNA evidence.
- If you were drugged, you'd need to be tested for the type of substance, so don't eat or drink anything, and don't take any medication.
- Don't change your clothes.
- If possible, visit your neighbourhood Netcare hospital or local police station.
- Conduct a forensic investigation to gather DNA evidence related to the crime.



### How to report a rape

You can report irrespective of whether you want to lay a charge or not (laying a charge means you want the case to go to court).

It's your responsibility to report the case, to prevent the rapist from hurting someone else!

#### The reporting procedure is as follows:

- Your statement will be taken by a police officer. When you make the statement, a friend or family member can be there. You're entitled to request a female officer take your statement in a quiet space and in the language of your choice.
- You're welcome to add to your initial statement if you feel it was insufficient. It's crucial that you recall what you said, therefore demand a copy of your statement.
- When you call the police to ask questions about your case, you must always refer to your assigned case number.
- If you go to the police station to report the crime, they will transport you to the hospital so they may examine you forensically and collect your DNA.
- If you need to attend an identification parade, the date of the trial, when you will have to give testimony, when the suspect is detained, when he or she is released on bail, or when the matter is resolved, the investigating officer should keep you informed.
- To make further calls about case information, a survivor must make sure they have the investigating officers' contact information.
- A prosecutor will then receive the case from the police. You should be able to get information about the case from the police officer, the investigating officer, and the prosecutor.

#### The reporting procedure is as follows:

- DNA evidence, which must be collected within 48 hours, can convict rapists.
- DNA is the material found in cells that determines characteristics such as eye, hair and skin colour.
- Each individual's DNA is unique to them. This is why it's crucial to avoid bathing or cleaning yourself after a rape and why DNA can be used to identify the offender.
- DNA types that might hold evidence include blood, skin, saliva, nail tissue, hair and semen.
- Reporting sexual assault incidents and keeping DNA evidence could: Increase likelihood of identifying the offender; increases likelihood of holding perpetrators accountable, and prevents sexual attacks from happening in the future.

### Medication after rape | You are entitled to:

- Be treated with respect and decency at all times by the medical professionals who support you after the rape, including the nurses, police, prosecutors, and social workers.
- Receive complete and accurate health-related information. The cost of any medications they can prescribe to you as well as their availability must be disclosed to you by health professionals.
- If you're seriously injured, you shouldn't be refused treatment even if you're unable to pay for it.
- It's private to disclose information about your health. Without your consent, no healthcare professional may disclose your HIV status to others.

### Worried about contracting HIV after being raped?

- To lessen your chance of contracting HIV, you can take ART (anti-retroviral) medications referred to as "post exposure prophylaxis" or PEP. Children can also use these medications.
- As soon as possible after the incident, but no later than 72 hours (3 days), you must begin taking the medication.
- It's too late for these medications to lower your chance of developing HIV if more than 72 hours have passed from the rape.
- You must undergo an HIV test before starting treatment, which must include pre-test counselling (discussing what the test means) and post-test counselling after you've learned the test's results.
- Only those who have tested HIV-negative can begin taking medication. The medication must be taken for 28 days.
- These drugs are strong and might cause side effects including headaches, fatigue, skin rashes, a runny stomach, nausea, and others.
- Typically, these adverse effects are minor and transient. Go back to your doctor and ask for medicine to help you manage the side effects if they're particularly unpleasant.
- If you test HIV-positive, you won't start taking medicine, but you should talk to your doctor about self-care measures you may take.

### Where can you get these medicines?

- These medications are provided without charge at some clinics and state-run hospitals.
- They're also available through pharmacies, but you'll need a prescription and they could be pricey.
- Today, the majority of medical aid programmes offer and cover these medications.
- After 6 weeks from the rape, another HIV test will be performed. You must ascertain the outcomes of your HIV tests to be aware of your status.

### Sexual abuse against children

- Tragically, it's now generally accepted that child sexual abuse occurs often in many of our communities, including schools.
- Because of a power disparity, this abuse frequently occurs by family, neighbours, or teachers.
- The most important thing for you to understand is that sexual abuse is not your fault.

## STEP ONE: GOING TO THE HOSPITAL

- You should seek medical attention as soon as you can if you have experienced physical or sexual abuse. If possible, visit the hospital within 72 hours following the abuse.
- By doing this, the medical professional will be able to administer medicine to help prevent HIV infection. You must take this drug, PEP, every day for 28 days.
- Additionally, the doctor or nurse might be able to administer birth control. In public hospitals and clinics, both of these medications are free.
- The PEP and medicine to prevent you from becoming pregnant won't work if you don't visit the hospital within 72 hours after being abused. Ask the doctor or nurse what additional options are available.
- You should go to the hospital with a dependable friend or relative.

## STEP TWO: REPORTING YOUR ABUSE TO THE POLICE

- It's crucial that you inform the police if you've experienced sexual abuse so they can look into your case and track down the offender.
- As soon as possible after the abuse occurs, you should contact the police to report it. The earlier you report the incident, the simpler it will be for the authorities to gather the proof they want to track down your abuser.
- Even if you take a while to report the incident, the police must nonetheless look into it.

### STEP THREE: GOING FOR COUNSELLING

- An individual who has experienced sexual abuse need medical attention, comfort, compassion, and support.
- You might want assistance after being abused to feel safe again and to cope with life after such a traumatic and difficult incident.
- It's impossible to predict when you will feel like yourself again. It varies from person to person and might take a few weeks to many months or more.

### STEP FOUR: APPLYING FOR A PROTECTION ORDER

- According to the law, if you fear being hurt by someone, you can get an order for protection. This has nothing to do with the criminal justice system.
- **You can submit an application for a protective order without filing a charge.**
- There are two types of protection orders. One is under the Domestic Violence Act and the other is under the Protection from Harassment Act.
- Visit your nearest magistrate court. You'll be given paperwork to complete from the court clerk, including a statement outlining the incident and the manner in which the harassment or abuse occurred.
- The clerk will present your application to a magistrate, who will promptly issue you an interim protection order. You'll be given a date to return to court to get a final protection order.
- Take a copy of your interim protection order to the police station as soon as you receive it so that they may provide it to your abuser.
- You and the abuser will both need to appear in court on the return date.

### STEP FIVE: REPORTING THE CASE TO THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

- If a teacher at your school is abusing you, you should report them to the police as well as your principal.
- The department of education must be informed by the principal. You should report the situation to the department of education if your principal is the one who is sexually assaulting you or if your principal fails to do so.
- You can get help from family or friends. You can also speak to another teacher who you trust.

### STEP SIX: TRANSFERRING TO A NEW SCHOOL

- It could be very difficult for you to continue attending the school where you were assaulted.
- In that situation, transferring to a new school is an option.





# MatrixMen

BUILDING BETTER MEN

MatrixMen was established in 2011 and is the first organization in Africa to talk to male survivors of sexual abuse. Since our inception we have broadened the scope of what we do to include male victims of childhood abuse as well as men who suffer GBV.

In 2023, after the ravages of covid and the escalation in suicides, we decided to focus on Men's mental health as a general construct.

Men are less likely to get support for mental health issues, as it is seen as a taboo by society. Men are supposed to be tough, not cry, and never have problems. They are in general taught from a young age that they are not to talk out if they have issues. The old adage that cowboys don't cry further impacts men and the way they deal with life problems. Sadly men resort to 5 coping mechanisms to deal with issues, Addiction, Anger, Sex, Sports and Silence. None of these are healthy.

At MatrixMen, we want to lead the way and show men that therapy is in fact beneficial, that dealing with issues is not shameful but courageous. We want to encourage positive masculinity.

## Projects

- **Counselling**
- **Anger management**
- **THE NKUNZI PROJECT:** The Untold Stories of Male Survivors of Sexual Abuse
- **MatrixMens circles.** A safe space for men to get together and talk about issues that they are normally not allowed the space to do.
- **Divorce support** including parental Alienation.
- **Training** offered for lay counsellors in the following areas:
  - Abuse recovery
  - Addiction recovery
  - Sexual integrity
  - Emotional integrity

For more information on the organization visit: [www.matrixmen.org](http://www.matrixmen.org)

**Contact Us:** 011 430 4445

**Address:** 28 Grosvenor road Craighgall

# TYPES OF ABUSE

- SEXUAL** - Any sexual activity carried out against the victim's will is sexual abuse.
- PHYSICAL** - This is the most well-known type of abuse since it purposely results in physical harm. This could involve physical violence including beating, kicking, strangling, property destruction, using a weapon, etc.
- ECONOMIC/FINANCIAL** - Taking advantage of a partner's financial situation by managing the home budget and preventing them from using their own bank account or making purchases.
- EMOTIONAL/VERBAL** - Occurs when one partner uses derogatory language, insults, jealousy, intimidation, humiliation, and other tactics to exert control over the other.
- Any other controlling or abusive behaviour which poses a threat to your safety, health, or well-being.

**What you can do when you are being abused?**  
You have the right to apply for a **protection order at the police station or magistrate's court** or filing a criminal complaint at the closest police station.

A protection order is a court order for the abuse to stop against a person with whom you have had a domestic relationship. Additionally, it could stop them from enlisting anybody else's assistance in their criminal activity. For your protection, a temporary restraining order may also be obtained at any hour of the day or night. Any domestic abuse victim may request a protection order.

If a child is too young, a parent, guardian, or any other individual acting on their behalf but with their consent, can apply for a protection order.



# FAQ'S ABOUT ADOLESCENT DATING ABUSE

Q:	A:
Is domestic violence the same as adolescent dating abuse?	Despite being comparable, the two are perceived differently by most people. Domestic violence and adolescent dating abuse both involve abusive behaviours that are used to exert control over a victim. Abuse can take many forms, such as physical, emotional, verbal, and technological/cyber. Abuse of any kind may hurt and leave scars. You may get harmed without being beaten.
Can a relationship be abusive even if we're not "dating?"	Yes, abuse may occur in relationships with friends, family, and casual acquaintances. Even when you're not dating someone, they might treat you badly.
Why will my friend not "leave" the abusive relationship?	Your friend might not be able to make the decision to go. Victims may feel ashamed and embarrassed. The abuser has gradually destroyed their self-esteem. Additionally, they might not be ready for word of the abuse to spread across their social group. Numerous factors contribute to victims' refusal to "leave." Leaving frequently does not guarantee an end to the violence. In actuality, when the victim leaves, the violence will worsen. Making a safety plan with a therapist, friend, or advocate is crucial for this reason.
What can I tell my friend who think it's all her/his fault?	As you talk to your friend, provide resources. Your friend needs a sympathetic ear that is free from criticism. Reassure her/him that you care about their physical and emotional well-being, and that what's occurring is not their fault.
What consequences can adolescent dating abuse have?	Dating abuse can have long-lasting impacts. Drug misuse, dropping out of school, depression and/or anxiety, eating disorders, and suicide attempts are more common in victims. Victims frequently feel alone and lose their sense of identity.

Q:	A:
Is it possible to determine whether the person I like has an abusive personality?	You can look for a variety of "red flags" in a potential abuser. Common signs include jealousy, controlling behaviour, unauthorized use of a cell phone or email, constant texts or calls, anger issues, separating you from friends or relatives, keeping an eye on you or questioning you constantly, and telling you what to do.
I'm not aware of any victims of adolescent dating abuse. Is it really happening in my community or school?	Because it's embarrassing, a victim of abuse won't tell anybody, not even their best friend. It's possible that the person in line in front of you or the person sitting next to you in class is a victim or survivor.
How can I tell if my friend is a victim of adolescent dating abuse?	<p>There are several symptoms to look for that will give you a hint, even though you may never be able to tell for sure if someone is being abused.</p> <p>Some indications include: isolation, marks of injuries, fear, changes in appearance and self-esteem, tries to hide activities from their partner, have to get "permission" to engage in activities, and majority of the time is depressed or in tears.</p>

## HOW TO IDENTIFY A PSYCHOLOGICAL ABUSER

Gaslighting is a word used to describe a type of psychological and emotional abuse that causes victims to doubt their reality and sanity.

It is a strategy frequently employed by narcissists, psychopaths, or those suffering from behavioural problems to manipulate and control others.

**There are four main types of gaslighting.**

- **The first is a flat-out lie.** It's the least damaging but still very harmful. It's employed to mask covert behaviours and fosters a strong sense of mistrust in interpersonal interactions.
- **The second type is reality manipulation,** which can give the victim the impression that they're losing control over reality. The capacity of a person to recognise what is true and to have faith in their own memories and judgement is frequently questioned and damaged.
- **The third is scapegoating,** in which the abuser subtly assigns blame in an effort to defend their actions. This could happen when a dishonest partner exaggerates their spouse's flaws.
- **There's also coercion,** where the behaviour ranges from charm offensive, to pressure and manipulation and even bullying or violent behaviours.

The immediate symptoms include being agitated, feeling tense, losing focus and attention, getting frustrated with arguments, and even retaliating against friends or relatives who express worry. Long-term effects might include psychological stress, despair, loneliness, and anxiety. One's self-esteem and confidence might be impacted too.

If you always feel the need to apologise, if you think you can do nothing right, or if you frequently feel anxious or worried, you may be experiencing gaslighting in one of your relationships. Ultimately, there's hope for recovery and healing.

The victim must keep in mind that the abusive behaviour is not their fault. Additionally, they must refrain from debating the truth with the abusive individual and rather practise listening to their thoughts, feelings and instincts again.

The abuser must also stop the destructive behaviour and accept full accountability for the emotional abuse. Finding a safe space to calm your thoughts and assess how you feel about yourself is also advised. Be mindful of your emotions.

Resources like counselling and support groups may be quite helpful in one's healing.

# HOW TO IDENTIFY A PHYSICAL ABUSER

Physical abuse, as the word suggests, is any intentional use of force against another person that causes physical hurt, trauma, or injury.

It may have negative effects on the survivor's health, and in certain instances, it may result in a variety of psychological issues and difficulties. It's frequently employed as a strategy by one person to take control of another.

Physical abuse can have both acute and chronic impacts. Unfortunately, physical abuse is often far-reaching and has an impact on both the victim and the abuser's friends and/or loved ones.

**Some "red flags" to look out for while on a date or getting to know someone are:**

- Possessive, bossy and gives orders, he/she scares you, loses temper quickly, attempts to manipulate or guilt-trip you by saying "if you really loved me, you would..."; brags about mistreating others; says "I love you" - early in the relationship, uses drugs, anger issues, and constantly moody or agitated.
- Jealousy is the number one "red flag"! They're not jealous because they love you. They're jealous because there are insecurities and lack of trust in the relationship. This is not a healthy relationship.
- They are constantly checking where you are. They do it to keep an eye on you and to control you; they don't do it because they want to know where you are all the time because they care about you.
- Abuse victims often feel humiliated and helpless in their circumstances. This frequently discourages them from getting therapy.
- However, getting help from the appropriate sources is essential for anyone moving forward towards recovery. Alternatives to in-person treatment can be especially helpful for abuse survivors. It's normal for some people to feel awkward about meeting with a therapist in person.

## 7 WARNING SIGNS OF EMOTIONAL ABUSE

The repeated degradation of another person's mental health and well-being through non-physical actions is referred to as emotional abuse. A family member, friend, or romantic partner may still be emotionally abusing you even if they don't use physical force.

Because the indications of emotional, verbal, and psychological abuse are typically less visible than those of physical abuse, they're also more difficult to identify than physical abuse.

A relationship that's emotionally abusive, however, can result in low self-esteem, PTSD, depression, and other mental health issues. The first step in helping yourself or someone else who is in an abusive relationship is being aware of the warning flags.

**Here are seven indicators to look out for before it's too late:**

### **1 They're overly critical of you**

When someone is emotionally abusing you, they may insult you constantly even after you ask them to stop, or they may hold you to impossible standards and then belittle you when you fall short of them.

Even if there's no disagreement, they could frequently curse or shout at you. They criticise or threaten you with words in an effort to get you to crumble or start doubting yourself.

### **2 They intentionally humiliate you**

Those who engage in emotional abuse may employ humiliation as a strategy by making disparaging remarks about your looks, intelligence, or personal success.

When little insults are repeatedly directed at you, they can have a detrimental effect on your self-esteem.

This will be used by emotional abusers to persuade you to keep your relationship with them. All of this is a harmful tactic to keep you dependent on them.

### 3 They purposefully intimidate you

Because you worry about the consequences of disagreeing with the other person in a close relationship, you find yourself giving in to their requests.

This indicates that they have the ability to intimidate you. It could appear as though you're the target of unwarranted verbal abuse and threats.

These are harmful intimidation practises that may also result in physical violence.

### 4 They mean to isolate you

This individual will strive to keep you apart from those who are close to you.

They don't want people in your group to recognise any warning flags of abuse. If the other person wants to visit them, they can threaten to stop the relationship or prevent the development of new friendly relations.

### 5 They reject you

This is another way for someone to exert control over you by using the power of rejection. It causes you to feel insecure and guilty when you're abruptly cut off from their support.

You rely on them for emotional support while you're alone as well, and when they get distant from you, it might leave you spinning.

Another example of this is when someone rejects you in public or in front of friends and family as a form of punishment.

### 6 They want to exploit you

They reach out to you only to use you at the exploitation stage of emotional abuse.

When the tables are turned and you need their help, they provide little in return and become emotionally distant.

### 7 They have a harmful level of control over you

Emotional abusers can make you dependent on them for any decision, big or small. They'll manipulate and gaslight you, which will make you doubt your own judgement.

You may be experiencing emotional abuse if you frequently worry that making a seemingly harmless decision would anger the other person.

If you're in an abusive relationship, knowing and recognising the symptoms of emotional abuse is the first step in taking care of yourself. It's crucial to take action and get the support you need and deserve.

## HOW TO IDENTIFY A NARCISSIST

Narcissistic abuse can come in many different forms, including insulting remarks, growing contempt, ignoring behaviour (such as the silent treatment or passive-aggression), triangulation, sabotage, downplay, and much more.

Many people are unsure if they're a victim of narcissistic abuse. This can be greatly influenced by inconsistent thoughts, beliefs, or attitude change and the confusion that comes with abuse.

**We can help you identify subtle signs that you may be a victim of narcissistic abuse:**

#### 1 Your relationship is not kind, caring or sane

It might be difficult to understand toxic relationships at times. This occurs because the toxic individual will turn it around on you, place the blame, and refuse to take responsibility.

Keep in mind that if someone wrongs you and is unable to provide a sincere apology, and you continue to hang out with them, they will continue to wrong you. They won't ever feel regret.

## **2 You deal with immature behaviour and give up pieces of yourself to comply**

Narcissistic relationships are characterised by the individual getting worked up on hairline triggers that mature adults simply don't get worked up over.

Additionally, they have a sense of entitlement and want special treatment, and if they don't get it, they may be abrasive, demanding, harsh, and even explosive.

## **3 You're angry, disjointed and behaving in ways that you normally don't**

Even if you're aware that you're honest, have good communication skills, are empathetic, and get along with the majority of people, there's someone that makes you feel your worst.

This often happens when your boundaries are broken and when standard human behaviour isn't upheld. Narcissists state how disloyal your accusations of them are when confronted, or they argue with you to manipulate you into something unwholesome.

## **4 Trying to prove you're a good person**

This is due to the narcissist's repeated accusations that you're everything that they are and do, including missing moral character, compassion, and love for others, as well as being unfaithful, lying, and making everything about yourself.

Naturally, you'll be furious and make a valiant effort to prove and convince them otherwise. You are prone to this narcissistic behaviour if you assume that the opinions of others determine your integrity, character, well-being, and safety.

## **5 You're mopping up the mess**

Being close to a narcissist entails a lot of drama, rough edges, and, quite honestly, the constant threat of disaster.

Narcissists typically lack attention to detail, responsibility, and sensitivity. They fly high, seeking narcissistic attention while giving little to no effort to acting morally.

If one of these people is a part of your life, it's likely that you'll be helping them with their problems and dramas, paying their fines, and even lying for them to cover their tracks.

## **6 Your boundaries are being disintegrated**

People with weak boundaries frequently become connected with narcissists. It's tough for you to speak out, defend yourself, or set boundaries with this specific individual because you risk criticism, rejection, abandonment, or punishment if you do.

As a result, you give up attempting to emphasise your requirements in an effort to reduce the drama and mayhem that ensues.

## **7 You feel addicted, disjointed, and manic**

Do you feel frenzied and unable to stop attempting to get in touch with or meet up with a narcissist, while knowing how much this is hurting you constantly?

How dependent we are on someone who abuses us so horribly may be horrifying.

## **8 You're suffering from abuse symptoms**

It's likely that anxiety, depression, as well as more serious conditions like fibromyalgia, adrenal problems, PTSD, and agoraphobia, begin to develop.

As the toxic person in your life consumes more of your energy and concentration, you begin to lose interest in the things, people, and self-care that used to give you energy.

You may begin to withdraw from society, lie to people, cover up, and feel even more alone in your traumatic sentiments and symptoms as a result of the overwhelming humiliation and agony.

There are many levels of narcissism, and some people may merely be ignorant and self-centered without necessarily having narcissistic personality disorder.

# HOW TO HELP

You can help someone who is in an abusive relationship in a number of ways. We provide guidance on what to do and how to contribute to their safety.

The reasons why victims don't leave, how to help a survivor and yourself, how to leave safely, and support groups are the topics covered here.



## WHY VICTIMS DON'T LEAVE

Your friend might not be able to make the decision to leave. Abuse victims can feel ashamed and embarrassed. Their self-esteem has gradually been destroyed by the abuser. Additionally, they might not be ready for word of the abuse to spread across their social group.

Numerous factors contribute to victims' refusal to "leave." This might include love, stigma and shame, housing, childcare, support, and financial resources. Leaving often doesn't guarantee an end to the violence. In reality, the violence will escalate when the victim leaves.

Making a safety plan with a therapist, friend, or advocate is crucial because of this.

## HOW TO HELP A SURVIVOR

### WHAT TO SAY:

- "You survived - you clearly did the right things",
- "It was not your fault",
- "I'm always here for you if you want to chat",
- "Thank you for telling me",
- "Can I do anything for you", are some things to say to them.

### WHAT NOT TO SAY:

It is not appropriate to say things like

- "It was your fault",
- "It's been so long"
- "Get over it!"
- "You wanted it",
- The worst possible response is "I don't believe you."
- "You could have prevented it had you..."
- "It's not a big issue; it happens to lots of people", and other similar phrases should not be said.

They should be treated with respect and don't pity them. Check on any physical injuries, offer comfort, and go with to their first therapy appointment. Give them the freedom to tell you as little or as much as they want to; by speaking, you're giving them the chance to claim back some power.

Patience and consistency are key. It may take a while to recover. It's crucial for you to maintain consistency since the survivor may experience many shifts, good days, and terrible days.

Let them decide whether or not a hug or being near to them will be helpful. While some people may not want to be touched, others might.

It's best to let them be in charge and allow them to make their own decisions rather than trying to fix all of their issues for them. The most fundamental right of each human being was stripped away from them: control. By giving them control, they will be able to reclaim some of the power that was taken from them.

Don't press for an explanation of what happened in great detail, and refrain from inciting additional violence by expressing a desire to confront the abuser directly. You must lead by example in putting a stop to violence.

## HELP YOURSELF - HOW TO LEAVE SAFELY

Domestic abuse victims cannot always prevent violent incidents. Here are some things you can do via safety planning.

- Make a mental checklist of your emergency escape plan, including where to go in case you need to go (such as a friend or relative's house).
- Put some cash and a change of clothing in a bag. Keep it hidden in your house or give it to a friend or family member. Make sure you have all the necessary documents, such as ID's, medical aid card, bank cards, etc.
- Place yourself near a door or phone so you can easily exit or dial 1011.
- Move to a space where the risk is the lowest. Try to avoid arguments in the bathroom, garage, kitchen, near weapons, or in rooms without access to an outside door.
- Use your common sense and gut instinct. You know your partner well, if the situation is very serious, you can agree with them to calm him/her down. Until you're no longer in danger, you must take care of yourself.
- After being assaulted, call the police at (10111) or visit a police station. Leave the phone off the hook since you can be in more danger if they call back and your partner answers.
- When you're being abused, make as much noise as possible. Set off the fire alarm, break things, turn up the stereo or TV, so that neighbours might hear and call the police for you.
- For children, create and use a code word so they can call for help.
- Ask the child to choose a secure location inside the home, preferably one with a phone and a lock on the door. Choose a safe location outside the home, and make sure they know the way there.
- Teach the child how to call for help. They shouldn't use a phone that the abuser can see.
- Make sure they know their details (full name, address and telephone number), and rehearse what they will say when calling for help.





### **Mission**

Empowering survivors of gender-based violence (GBV) - women, children, and men

### **Vision**

We live in a society where an increasingly high number of South Africans are exposed to trauma, crime, unemployment, and other socio-economic challenges. Gender based violence has become a pandemic that seems to be chipping away at the fabric of society. It is our mission to provide comfort, support, and the tools to empower these individuals to move from victims to Victors.

### **Objectives**

To develop, manage and sustain various projects and initiatives that assists survivors. These include our three main projects namely, Comfort Pack Project, Step-Up Project, and our Fairy Godmother Project. Our other services and initiatives include - counselling and support groups, referrals for legal advice and court preparations, self-defence classes, education and awareness campaigns and motivational talks.

- Support various crisis centres, shelters, hospitals, and police stations.
- Our focus is predominantly in the Gauteng area, with assistance rendered nationally to all the Netcare hospitals. We also link in with various organisations and crisis centres in the other regions of South Africa.

### **Projects**

- Comfort Pack Project
- Set Up Project
- Fairy Godmother Project
- Charities 4 Change

### **Other Initiatives**

- Support groups and counselling
- Motivational Talks
- Education and awareness campaigns
- Referrals for Legal advice and court preparations
- Self-Defence workshops

For more information on the organization visit: [www.epicfoundation.org.za](http://www.epicfoundation.org.za)

# RESCUE

It might be challenging to rescue a victim of domestic abuse. Here you'll find out what to do to help them on their way to independence.

This section focuses on important contact information, where to go, how to report a case, legal support, how to request a protection order, and police station procedures.

## IMPORTANT CONTACT DETAILS

<b>Saps Emergency Number</b> 0111	<b>Stop Gender Violence Helpline</b> 0800 150 150	<b>Childline</b> 0800 055 555
<b>Aids Helpline</b> 0800 012 322 Or (011) 725 6710	<b>Crime Line - Sms Anonymous Tipoff</b> 32211	<b>People Opposed To Woman Abuse - Powa</b> 011 642 4345
<b>Saps Family Violence, Child Protection And Sexual Offences Unit</b> 011 871 5178	<b>Saps Crime Stop</b> 08600 10111	<b>Women Abuse Helpline</b> 0800 150 150

## WHERE TO GO

Shelters prefer not to have their details made public as it can be accessed by abusers.

Victims can contact Alta from Epic Foundation, and she will be able to assist them with the correct shelter.

**Epic Foundation**  
Alta McMaster  
082 940 6320

## HOW TO REPORT A CASE

In the first instance, you should visit your nearest Netcare hospital. You won't need to travel to the police station if you go to Netcare since they will arrange for the police to come to you. Within their trauma units, they have specialised rape crisis units that can help you. Rape survivors can receive services from Netcare for free.

In all other cases follow the steps below:

### STEP 1: REPORT THE CASE

- Whether or not you intend to file a charge, you can still report (laying a charge means you want the case to go to court). To start a case, visit the police station.
- Your statement will be taken by the officer. This implies that they will record your story after asking you what happened. To be sure he understood you correctly, you could ask the officer to recount the statement to you when he is done.
- The officer should then either give you a J88 form or transport you to a hospital or clinic so you may have a medical check-up. Police personnel ought to constantly show respect to sexual assault victims.

- You must file a complaint to stop the rapist from hurting someone else.
- Remember to bring a friend or family member. You have the right to talk to a female officer, and to have a private conversation.
- You also have a right to communicate with people in your own language.
- When making your statement, describe what happened in detail. Ask for a copy so you may add to your statement afterwards. It's vital to recall what you stated throughout the trial.

## STEP 2: THE FORENSIC EXAMINATION

- If there isn't a Netcare nearby, go to the nearest clinic or hospital to get checked out. You should go yourself if a police officer doesn't take you for a medical examination when you arrive at the police station.
- If you've been sexually assaulted, you should go within 72 hours and avoid taking a shower before you go since doing so will destroy the DNA.
- A J88 form will be filled out by the doctor. Never take the original J88 since it cannot be used in court if you do. Instead, ask the doctor for a duplicate. The police officer will get the original and place it in your file, called a docket.

## STEP 3: GIVING YOUR STATEMENT

- Discuss your statement with the prosecutor. An investigation officer will be assigned to you once the police have opened a docket.
- The prosecutor will want to be certain that your account to the police was accurate and will want to know precisely what transpired.
- They'll also get you ready for testifying in court. Both prosecutors and investigating officers have certain responsibilities towards you.

## STEP 4: TELLING YOUR STORY IN COURT

- Tell your story in court as a witness. You will be required to provide testimony during the trial, which is known as "giving evidence."
- It's crucial that you maintain your composure and convey the truth.
- The defence attorney for the individual who hurt you will make an effort to suggest that you're lying. So, it's very important that you don't panic and remain calm while telling your story and answering questions.

## STEP 5: JUDGEMENT AND SENTENCE

- Visit the court to get the verdict and sentencing. The judgement and sentence will be read out by the judge or magistrate following the conclusion of the trial.
- This is crucial because it will let you know whether the individual who hurt you was found guilty and what punishment they'll get.
- Depending on the offence, they might have to serve time in jail or only pay a fine to the judge.
- Sometimes they get a "suspended sentence", which means that they will not go to jail immediately but if they do anything to hurt you again, they can go to jail without another trial.
- The investigating officer must get in touch with you to inform you of the verdict if you're unable to attend court.

## STEP 6: COUNSELLING

- Visit a counsellor. It's always a good idea to talk to someone about what happened since being assaulted is a really tough and traumatic event, even if you feel fine.
- Speaking about what happened will help you move past it and aid in your recovery process.
- Make sure you request a referral for legal counsel.

# LEGAL SUPPORT

**Lawyers Against Abuse** can assist with answering questions about legal processes for protection orders and criminal cases.

Their purpose is to engage with state actors, empower communities, and increase the response of the judicial systems to GBV by offering legal assistance and counselling to victims.

They support victims by offering comprehensive legal services, treatment, and counselling, and they make sure that their clients' requirements in terms of their legal, emotional, and psychological well-being are addressed.

They work closely with local state actors like the police and prosecutors to create accountability in instances of misconduct and strengthen capacity through trainings and workshops.

Through community workshops and outreach initiatives, they seek to educate and empower individuals to challenge and change the attitudes and behaviours that lead to violence.

go to <https://www.lva.org.za/> for more information

## HOW TO APPLY FOR A PROTECTION ORDER

Before applying for a protection order, make sure you're at a safe place where the abuser can no longer injure you. Start making plans to leave and find a safe place to stay if you're still living with them.

### STEP 1: COMPLETE THE APPLICATION

- Ask to file for a protection order in the court that is closest to you. An application form will be given to you by the court clerk. You have space in the application to put your story down, but you may add more pages if you want to.

### STEP 2: SUBMIT THE APPLICATION

- Fill the court application and submit it. If you can, try to arrive early so that you might get an interim protection order the same day. If you're late and cannot pick up your order that day, you may do so the next morning.

### STEP 3: RECEIVE AN INTERIM PROTECTION ORDER

- Ask to file for a protection order in the court that is closest to you. An application form will be given to you by the court clerk. You have space in the application to put your story down, but you may add more pages if you want to.

### STEP 4: SERVE THE INTERIM PROTECTION ORDER

- Take the interim protection order to the local police station. The individual who has been hurting (the respondent) you will receive the temporary order from the police. This is a crucial step since the interim order doesn't take effect until they receive a copy.

## STEP 5: ATTEND THE FINAL HEARING

- Go back to court on the return date. On this day, the respondent and you will each have the chance to present your case before the magistrate, who will then determine whether to grant you a final protection order. Keep your composure and tell the truth.

## STEP 6: ENFORCING YOUR PROTECTION ORDER

- You have to get an arrest warrant along with your final protection order. You can immediately call the police and have the responder arrested if the respondent ever breaches the protective order in any way.
- You can return to court and get a fresh warrant of arrest if the original is ever misplaced or destroyed.
- Call the SA Police Services and give a statement if the abuser ignores a protection order. Give the police the order and arrest warrant you were issued.
- The abuser will be taken into custody if you're in imminent danger; otherwise, they will receive a notice to appear in court the following day.

Visit [www.hollersafespace.com](http://www.hollersafespace.com) to access to the order application

## PROCESS AT THE POLICE STATION - WHAT TO EXPECT

If you report your case to the police station, you can expect the following process.

At the police station, you will be required to sign the Occurrence Book.

**After that, they will:**

- Provide you with a notice in a language you understand and explain how you should proceed.
- Ask someone to talk to you in a language you understand.
- Take your statement privately, away from the abuser and general public.
- Decide on the basis of your statement, whether to arrest the abuser and take his/her firearm, as well as determine your needs and how to assist you.
- Serve a protection order on the individual it was made against, as the court ordered.
- A copy of the protection order should be kept, and record every arrest made as proof for victims.
- As further evidence that you reported the issue, write your complaint in the incident register at the station. This will also allow you to be updated on the status of your case.
- The hospital or police station will inform you of support services available in your area.

## SUPPORT GROUPS:

If you need help or know of someone who needs or support, get in contact with the following organisation who offer various support services and programmes.

**ToughLove SA** | 083 266 0937 | 082 3723 039

**Mondeo Victim Support Unit** | 076 152 9705

**Matrix Men** | [www.matrixmen.org/contact-us/](http://www.matrixmen.org/contact-us/)

**Epic Foundation** | [info@epicfoundation.org.za](mailto:info@epicfoundation.org.za) | 082 940 6230

**Open Disclosure** | [info@opendisclosure.org.za](mailto:info@opendisclosure.org.za) | 011- 039- 8652/ 056-5423 or 079 294 6824

## DONATIONS:



website [www.opendisclosure.org.za](http://www.opendisclosure.org.za)



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