

Neighbours, Friends and Family

Warning Signs to Identify and Help Women at Risk of Abuse

Are you concerned about someone you think is being abused? Recognizing the warning signs and risk factors of woman abuse is the first step.

He puts her down

He does all the talking and dominates the conversation

He checks up on her all the time, even at work

He tries to suggest he is the victim and acts depressed

He tries to keep her away from you

He acts as if he owns her

He lies to make himself look good or exaggerates his good qualities

He acts like he is superior and of more value than others in his home

She may be apologetic and makes excuses for his behaviour or becomes aggressive and angry

She is nervous about talking when he's there

She seems to be sick more often and misses work

She tries to cover her bruises

She makes excuses at the last minute about why she can't meet you or she tries to avoid you on the street

She seems sad, lonely, withdrawn and is afraid

She uses more drugs or alcohol to cope

(Suggestions in this card apply equally to gay and lesbian relationships.)

The situation may be more dangerous if, in addition to the warning signs: the couple has recently separated; the couple has custody and access issues; he has access to weapons; he is convinced she is seeing someone else; he has a history of abuse and he threatens to harm her children, her pets or her property.

The Assaulted Women's Helpline at 1-866-863-0511 offers a 24-hour telephone and TTY 1-866-863-7868 crisis line for abused women in Ontario. The service is anonymous and confidential, and is provided in up to 154 languages. They will discuss the warning signs of abuse you have seen and give you practical advice on ways to help.

For more information about the services of the Assaulted Women's Helpline visit www.awhl.org.

For further information about the Neighbours, Friends and Families campaign visit www.neighboursfriendsandfamilies.on.ca.

In an emergency, call the police.

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Neighbours, Friends and Family Safety Planning Tips for Women Who Are Abused

Safety planning is a top priority. Here are some important things you can do to increase your safety:

- 1** Tell someone you trust about the abuse.
- 2** Gather important documents: all personal identification, financial and legal papers, house deed/lease, address book, medication and money/credit cards.
- 3** Put together valued pictures, jewellery and objects of sentimental value, as well as toys and comforts for your children.
- 4** Carry a photo of the abuser and your children with you.
- 5** Contact a women's shelter or the police. Ask for an officer who specializes in woman abuse cases. He/she can help you do further safety planning.
- 6** Consult a lawyer. Keep any evidence of physical abuse (such as photos). Keep a journal of all violent incidents, noting dates, events, and threats and witnesses.
- 7** Make sure your children's school or day care centre is aware of the situation and has copies of all relevant documents.
- 8** Do not tell the abuser you are leaving. Leave quickly.
- 9** Do not return to your home, unless accompanied by police.
- 10** Never confront the abuser.

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