



# Share the Wellness Tip

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## No One Deserves Abuse

When domestic violence strikes, it leaves more than bruises and broken bones. It also hurts the victim mentally and affects their loved ones.

From physical assault to psychological trauma, financial control and social isolation, domestic violence affects people of all socioeconomic and educational levels, ages and religions. If you've been abused by someone you're dating, married to, living with or have separated from – and it could be a family member, too – you're not alone.

It's bad enough facing the physical problems as a result of domestic violence, but the psychological injuries can be just as damaging as the physical ones. Most common are depression and post-traumatic stress disorder. Sleep disruption, eating disorders, impaired social skills, panic attacks, psychotic episodes, and drug and alcohol abuse can also go along with domestic violence. If you have children, they too can face problems in school, and with aggression and low self-esteem, if they've seen or heard the abuse.

It's natural to feel painfully alone with domestic violence. Maybe you're afraid to tell anyone about it because you fear further brutality, threats, and intimidation from the person hurting you. Or you feel shame about being a victim and worry that people will judge you. And if you have children, you rightly are concerned about their safety and well-being.

You don't need to suffer domestic violence all by yourself. Talk with a trusted relative, friend, neighbor, coworker, your doctor or other health care provider. Consider counseling to share your emotions, learn how to cope and rebuild your self-esteem.

Along the way, don't hesitate to call the National Domestic Violence Hotline (**800-799-SAFE**); or, if you're in immediate danger, call **911**. And, if you know someone else going through this, don't wait for that person to come to you – reach out and offer your support.

*Sources: National Domestic Violence Hotline, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*

