

Intimate Partner Violence:

A guide to recognizing signs, staying safe, and offering support



Content warning: This article mentions intimate partner violence, abusive behaviors, and trauma. This may be distressing for some readers.

What is intimate partner violence?

Intimate partner violence (IPV) is when someone in a relationship hurts their romantic partner by harming, controlling, scaring, or threatening them physically, emotionally, or financially.

IPV is sometimes referred to as domestic violence (DV). However, domestic violence is a broader term that isn't limited to romantic partners and can involve harming any members of the household, including elders and children. If you're experiencing intimate partner or domestic violence, know that you are not alone. And if you see the warning signs, you can support those affected.

With your Walmart team, you're never alone.

Walmart cares about the well-being of all associates. If you're being threatened or hurt or if you're feeling unsafe, reach out to the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-SAFE (7233) or TTY 1-800-787-3224.

They are available 24/7 to help you and your loved ones.

Remember, you don't have to face these challenges by yourself.

All Walmart associates have access to Lyra Health for free therapy, mental health support, and learning tools. Visit walmart.lyrahealth.com or call our Care Navigator Team at 1-800-825-3555 to learn more about how Lyra can help you.

Intimate partner violence: Fiction vs. fact

IPV affects many people, and there's a lot that's misunderstood about it. Here are some common misconceptions—and the truth about each.

Fiction	Fact
"IPV only happens when a man abuses a woman in a relationship."	Women, as well as people living with a disability, tend to experience IPV at higher rates. But people of all genders can experience IPV, including 1 in 3 men , according to the CDC.
"IPV doesn't happen that often."	According to the CDC, millions of Americans have experienced IPV , including around 15 percent of women. The World Health Organization's report on violence against women (PDF) (463KB) indicates that IPV also happens in other countries.
"That's just how men are; it's not that big of a deal."	Violence is not OK and is not "normal" behavior. Most people do not hurt their partners. IPV can be traumatizing and should not be dismissed or overlooked.
"People who experience violence at home must be OK with it or they'd leave."	Leaving a partner who is hurting you is not easy. There are many things that make it hard, like not having enough help, feeling scared or ashamed, or holding out hope that things will get better, according to the National Domestic Violence Hotline's article on staying in abusive relationships .
"If someone experiences IPV, they probably did something to deserve it, or there was something they could have done to stop them from getting so upset."	There is no excuse for IPV. No one deserves to be hurt, and blaming the survivor is not helpful , according to The Center for Relationship Abuse Awareness. IPV is never the survivor's fault.
"There's nothing I can do to stop what's happening, so what's the point of talking about it?"	There are actions you can take to recognize IPV, help stop or prevent it, or support survivors. Read on for examples.

Risk factors and signs of IPV

Here are some signs that someone you know might be in a harmful relationship:



They stop spending time with friends and family because of how their partner acts.



They have a lot of fights and arguments, including hitting and breaking things.



They have to ask their partner before they can hang out with friends, spend money, or change how they look.



They start missing shifts at work.



They start wearing long sleeves or other clothes that aren't part of the uniform or that don't make sense for the weather.

Here are some things that make someone more likely to hurt someone in a relationship:



They saw or experienced violence when they were young.



They have problems with alcohol or drugs.



They make threats about hurting others, even as jokes.



They have a hard time dealing with rejection or when someone says “no.”



They sometimes have a hard time controlling their actions or emotions.



They believe they should control or be in charge of their partner.

Remember, these signs are not proof that there is violence in a relationship, but they could be hints that it might be happening.

If you think someone is experiencing IPV, here's how you can help:

DO:



Be there for them and listen to them without judgment. Help them know that their feelings are OK.



Understand that people in a harmful relationship might feel scared, ashamed, or unsure.



Help them stay safe if they want to leave the relationship. Offer to help them find a new place to live, get legal help, or change their phone number and email.



Work with trusted associates to cover their shifts so they can go to important appointments.



Encourage them to [make a safety plan](#) for the future, following the guidance of the National Domestic Violence Hotline.



Write down any observations when something unusual has happened, like bruises or big arguments, including when and where it occurred. This information can help if they decide to tell someone—but that isn't your job.



Remind them that they are more than their unhealthy relationship. Do things that focus on fun activities, not just the unpleasant stuff.



Keep supporting them even after they leave the relationship. Fleeing a hurtful situation can be hard for a long time, and they will need your ongoing support.

DON'T:



Tell other people their private information without asking them first. This is a personal issue, and it should only be shared if they say it's OK.



Call the police without asking them. Dealing with hard relationships is tricky, and getting the police involved without a plan can make things worse.



Make the problem seem less serious. It's hard to know what to say when you find out someone is in an unhealthy relationship. Use clear and supportive words like, "You are worthy of a relationship full of safety and trust."



Tell the person's partner what they're doing or where they're staying if they decide to leave the relationship. Only that person should decide if they want to share that information with their partner.