

HELPING VICTIMS OF INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE IN MILITARY POPULATIONS

Intimate partner violence (IPV), also called domestic violence, is defined as violent or aggressive behavior from a current or previous partner. Physical violence, sexual violence, stalking, and psychological aggression are all forms of IPV. These behaviors may occur in a single episode or recur over time. IPV includes both subtle and direct behaviors, ranging in severity from mild altercations

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to homicide. IPV can also involve direct harm or threats toward children and pets. Nearly 1 in 4 women and 1 in 7 men in the U.S. report severe physical violence from an intimate partner in their lifetime. The impact of IPV on victims depend on the duration, frequency, and severity of these behaviors.

Adverse Effects of IPV

IPV frequently causes long-lasting consequences for the victim and for children that are exposed, even indirectly, to the behavior. Adverse effects may include:

- Diminished physical health and well-being
- Depression and other mental health problems
- Increased use of alcohol and tobacco
- Decreased ability to parent effectively
- Decreased work performance
- Sleep problems
- Changes in eating (weight gain or loss)
- Difficulty concentrating
- Isolating from family and friends

Understanding IPV Behaviors

Perpetrators of IPV often blame victims for causing abusive behavior and may manipulate people and situations that can leave victims feeling confused and isolated. If your partner is engaging in the behaviors below, you may be experiencing IPV:

- Tries to control your time and daily activities
- Tries to control or threatens to restrict your access to money, friends or family, school, or your job
- Forces you to have sex
- Threatens and/or humiliates you in front of others
- Damages your belongings
- Controls your access to and use of contraception

- Threatens to have you reported for made up crimes
- Repeatedly contacts you without your consent
- Reads your email or accesses your social media accounts without your permission
- Blames you for things that are not your fault

How to Get Help

Victim shame, stigma surrounding IPV, fear of retribution by the perpetrator, and financial consequences can serve as barriers to seeking help. Even if you are not certain that you are experiencing IPV, it can be helpful to contact a trusted resource to share your experiences and to learn more. The recommendations and resources below can help you feel safer and get connected with experts:

- Call 911 if you are in immediate physical danger
- Seek medical care right away if you have been abused
- Talk with someone you trust
- If you plan to go to law enforcement, consider asking a friend to accompany you
- Call the National Domestic Abuse Hotline at 800-799-SAFE to find a victim advocate near you. Advocates can help address areas of concern, such as your safety and the safety of your children and pets, your job, and finances
- Call the National Sexual Assault Hotline at 800-656-4673 for help following an assault
- Call the National Dating Abuse Helpline at 866-331-9474 for help following dating violence

- Consider reporting to victim advocate services:
 - » This is *restricted reporting*, which allows individuals to get medical and counseling services from the military Family Advocacy Program without launching an investigation or alerting the individual's military command
- Consider reporting to police or military law enforcement:
 - » This is *unrestricted reporting*, which initiates a criminal investigation
- The Family Advocacy Program (FAP) works to provide for the safety of IPV victims and offers treatment services
<https://www.militaryonesource.mil/family-relationships/family-life/preventing-abuse-neglect/the-family-advocacy-program>
- Victim Advocates can be a confidential resource and advise on reporting options, staying safe, getting medical services, and finding counseling
<https://www.militaryonesource.mil/family-relationships/relationships/relationship-challenges-and-divorce/how-to-find-help-for-victims-of-domestic-abuse>
- Military OneSource can help with a Military Protective Order (MPO), taking away the service member's weapon and mandating the abuser cannot enter the victim's workplace. MPOs are given by judges, magistrates, or other legal authorities
<https://www.militaryonesource.mil/>
- Consider counseling services through Military OneSource

Specific Branch Resources

For more details about the resources and services offered through your specific branch, consult the following resources:

- **Navy:** Fleet and Family Support Program
https://www.cnicy.navy.mil/ffr/family_readiness/fleet_and_family_support_program.html
- **Army:** U.S. Army Family Advocacy Program
<https://www.militaryonesource.mil/family-relationships/family-life/preventing-abuse-neglect/the-family-advocacy-program>
- **Marines:** Marine Corps Community Services, Family Advocacy Program
<https://www.usmc-mccs.org/services/support/family-advocacy/>
- **Coast Guard:** U.S. Coast Guard Family Advocacy Program
<https://www.dcms.uscg.mil/Our-Organization/Assistant-Commandant-for-Human-Resources-CG-1/Health-Safety-and-Work-Life-CG-11/Office-of-Work-Life-CG-111/Family-Advocacy-Program/>

Additional Resources

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Intimate Partner Violence website:
<https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/intimatepartnerviolence/index.html>
- Office on Women's Health, Department of Health and Human Services
<https://www.womenshealth.gov/relationships-and-safety/domestic-violence/signs-domestic-violence>
- World Health Organization
http://www.who.int/reproductivehealth/publications/violence/VAW_infographic.pdf?ua=1