

Safe Relationships

Key Points

- A safe relationship has open and safe communication.
- Consent is the agreement to do something.
- Tell someone you trust and the police if someone is violent or makes you scared.

What is a safe relationship?

A safe relationship has open and safe communication. It is free of physical and mental abuse. In an unsafe relationship, someone makes you feel scared and forced to do something.

Consent

Consent is the agreement to do something. You should not feel pressured to give consent. You can take back consent anytime. It is not safe if someone forces you to do something after you have said “No” or were unable to say “No.” Some unsafe actions are forced sex and unwanted touching or kissing.

Physical and Mental Safety

You are safe physically when you are not afraid that touching will be violent or unwanted. You may not be physically safe if a person is hitting, slapping, punching, kicking, pulling your hair, pushing, biting, choking, or using a weapon on you.

Your mind is safe when you are free from verbal or emotional abuse. Abuse can be when a person says or does something that makes you feel afraid or bad about yourself. You may not be safe if a person is bullying, yelling, and name-calling. Some forms of abuse can be someone tells you what you can or cannot do, or someone threatens to hurt you or themselves.

Frequently Asked Questions:

Should I call the police?

Yes. Domestic violence is a crime. The police can take you and your children to your family’s or friend’s house or a safe place like a women’s shelter. If the police officer does not speak your language, find someone who is not your child, husband, or boyfriend to interpret. Always ask the police officer to complete an “incident report,” which describes what happened.

Can I get a protection order even if I am not a U.S. Citizen?

Yes. You do not need to be a citizen or legal permanent resident to get a protection order. You can get an application at courthouses, women’s shelters, legal services offices, and some police departments.

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My husband is threatening to take my children away if I leave him. What can I do?

If your husband or boyfriend threatens to take your children away or take them to his home country, get help using the following steps:

1. Get a “custody order.” The order can stop your husband or boyfriend from taking the children from the U.S.
2. Send a copy of the custody order to the U.S. State Department to stop him from getting a visa or passport for the children. Send a copy to the embassy in the U.S. of your husband’s or boyfriend’s home country.
3. Give a copy of the order to the children’s schools. Tell the school staff not to release the children to anyone but you.

Will I be deported if I take any of these actions?

No. You cannot be deported if you report someone for domestic violence.

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