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| **Getting Support**  Choosing to stay with a partner who is abusive is very difficult and complicated. You may feel isolated from friends and family members who do not understand your situation. Those friends and family may be unaware of the abuse, may be unsure how to help, may not understand your choice or reasons for staying, or they may have chosen not to help or support you. Further, they may be aware but do not recognize the abusive behavior as a problem.  A victim of abuse needs support, during and after the relationship. If you someone you know has an abusive partner, consider getting support from a victim advocate who understands the dynamics of what you are going through. The National Domestic Violence Hotline, at 1-800-799-SAFE (7233), is open 24 hours a day and available for anyone who needs information about resources in their area, or just needs to talk.  **Benefits of Counseling**  When it is safe to do so, consider speaking to a counselor. Some benefits to seeking counseling:   * Coping skills and strategies can help you to continue daily activities and relationships. * Establishing a support network can help to decrease the negative physical, psychological, and emotional effects that often result from traumatic experiences. * In a confidential setting, you can discuss topics such as:   + Safety planning and options for the future.   + The event and how it made you feel.   + Legal and judicial decisions. | |  | | --- | | **Who Can Help?**  [*Agency*] Victim Services can assist you with information regarding victims’ rights, Crime Victim Compensation, case status, navigation of the criminal justice system, and referrals to the appropriate community resources or helping professionals or organizations according to your specific needs.  **Resources**  Local Resources  [*Insert state Crime Victims’ Compensation information*]  [*Insert other relevant local resources*]  National Resources  **Victim Information and Notification Everyday (VINE)**  1-877-894-8463  [www.vinelink.com](http://www.vinelink.com)  **National Domestic Violence Hotline**  1-800-799-SAFE (7233)  [www.thehotline.org](http://www.thehotline.org)  **Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network (RAINN)**  1-800-656-HOPE (4673) – National Sexual Assault Hotline  [www.rainn.org](http://www.rainn.org)  **WomensLaw.org**  [www.womenslaw.org](http://www.womenslaw.org)  This publication was produced under [Grant Number] awarded by the Office for Victims of Crime, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this draft publication are those of the contributors and do not necessarily represent the official position of the U.S. Department of Justice.  [*Revision Date*] | | |  | | --- | | **Choosing to Stay in an Abusive Relationship**  **[*Agency*] Victim**  **Adult Grief and Loss**  **Adult Grief and Loss**  **Services**  ***[Address]***  ***[Phone number]***  ***[Insert Agency logo]***  **[insert Agency logo]**  **[insert Agency logo]**  **[insert Agency logo]**  Name/ID Number:  Direct Number: | |
| **Reasons Victims Stay**  Abuse is a pattern of behavior to maintain power and control over another person in an intimate relationship. This behavior can include the use of physical and sexual violence, threats and intimidation, emotional abuse, and financial control.1  Reasons for staying are often complicated. Some examples of reasons victims of domestic violence stay include:   * Children (needing help with childcare or not wanting them to lose a parent) * Knowing the abusive partner will carry out threats. * Conflicts with religious and/or cultural values or family expectations * Lack of financial or social resources * Lack of a support system (isolated by the abusive partner) * Fear of retaliation for reporting to law enforcement or outside persons or agencies * Fear that the “system” won’t work (or worse, having past experience with it not working) * Fear of losing immigration status * Hope that the situation will change * Genuine love for the abusive partner   Each person’s situation is different, and safety planning is essential. Violence often escalates over time. The risk of death is highest when a victim attempts to leave or successfully leaves the relationship.  Victims know their abusive partners better than anyone—and therefore know when it is and is not safe to leave.    1 National Domestic Violence Hotline, “[Abuse Defined](https://www.thehotline.org/is-this-abuse/abuse-defined/).” | **Safety with an Abusive Partner**  If your partner is abusive and you choose to stay, always think about your safety and the safety of your children. Even if you are not ready to leave, you can take steps to promote safety. If possible and when it is safe to do so, consider:   * Identifying your partner’s use and level of force so you can assess danger to yourself and your children before it occurs. * Trying to avoid an abusive incident by leaving the house or the situation. * Identifying safe areas of the house where there are no weapons and there are ways to escape. When arguments occur and you cannot leave, try moving to those areas. * Not running to where the children are—your partner may hurt them as well. * If violence is unavoidable, making yourself a small target; diving into a corner and curling up into a ball with your face protected and arms around each side of your head, fingers intertwined. * Always having a phone accessible and knowing what numbers to call for help. Know the phone number to your local domestic violence/sexual assault shelter or organization. Call or text (if possible) the police. * Letting trusted friends and neighbors know of your situation and develop a plan, code word, and visual signal for when you need help. * Teaching your children how to get help. Instruct them not to get involved in the violence between you and your partner. Plan a code word to signal to them to get help or leave the house. * Teaching your children that violence is never right, even when someone they love is being violent. Tell them that neither you nor they are at fault or are the cause of the violence and that, when anyone is being violent, it is important to stay safe. * Practicing how to get out of the house safely with your children. | * Plan for what you will do if your children tell your partner of your plan or if your partner otherwise finds out about your plan. * Keep weapons like guns and knives locked away and as hard to get to as possible. * Make a habit of backing the car into the driveway and keeping it fueled. Keep the driver’s door unlocked and others locked—for a quick escape. * Try not to wear scarves or long jewelry that could be used to strangle you. * Create several plausible reasons for leaving the house at different times of the day or night. * Call a domestic violence hotline periodically for support and to talk about your options and available resources.   **Planning to Leave**  If you think you might leave in the future, if it is possible and safe to do so, consider:   * Keeping important documents (birth certificates, passports) in a safe place (car, friend’s house). * Keeping evidence and a journal of physical abuse (records or pictures) noting dates, events, and threats, in a safe location or with a trusted person. * Knowing where you can go to get help (e.g., a friend or family member, domestic violence organization or shelter); tell someone what is happening to you. * If you are injured, going to a doctor/emergency room and report what happened to you. Ask them to document your visit. * Planning with your children and identifying a safe place for them, like a room with a lock or a friend’s house where they can go for help. Remind them that their job is to stay safe, not to protect you. * Contacting your local domestic violence/sexual assault shelter or organization and finding out about laws and other resources available to you before you must use them during a crisis. * Acquiring job skills or taking courses at a community college. * Trying to set money aside or asking trusted people to hold money for you. |