



FAMILY VIOLENCE

What is family violence?

Family violence is an act by a member of a family or household against another member of the family or household that is intended to result in physical harm, bodily injury, assault, or sexual assault, or that is a threat that reasonably places the member in fear of imminent physical harm, bodily injury, assault, or sexual assault. Family Violence does not include defensive measures to protect oneself.

The term "Family Violence" is often used interchangeably with the terms "Domestic Violence," or "Spousal Abuse." However, violence does not only occur between couples or spouses. It can occur between parents and children, siblings, roommates, and numerous other types of relationships.

What is Intimate Partner Violence?

Intimate partner violence can occur between opposite or same sex couples, couples who are married, co-habiting, dating, or who dated previously. It includes verbal, emotional, economic, physical and sexual violence. It is not uncommon for people to misinterpret or ignore the "red flags," especially at the beginning of a relationship, thinking that they are actually signs that their partner really cares about them or that their partner will change.

Teen Dating Violence, violence within gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender relationships and violence against people with disabilities or who are Deaf are often overlooked. *For more information on Teen Dating Violence and GLBTQ issues, please visit www.safeplace.org.*

Family violence, intimate partner violence and abuse can happen to anyone regardless of gender, ethnicity, age, education, religion, disability status, or sexual orientation. Remember: All family and intimate partner violence is ILLEGAL and can be traumatic.

Am I in an Abusive Relationship?

Warning Signs:

- My partner embarrasses me with bad names or put-downs.
- My partner looks at me or acts in ways that scare me.
- My partner tries to control what I do, where I go, or who I talk to.
- My partner tries to keep me from spending time with or talking to my friends or family.
- My partner takes my money/Social Security or makes me ask for money.
- My partner tells me I'm a bad parent or threatens to take the children away from me.
- My partner blames me for his/her abusive behavior.
- My partner has destroyed property (punched walls, broken items, etc).
- My partner has shoved me, slapped me or hit me.
- My partner has hurt/killed or threatened to hurt/kill my pets.

- My partner has threatened me with a gun, knife or other weapon.
- My partner has strangled/choked me.
- My partner has threatened to kill him/herself and/or me.
- My partner has abused me while I was pregnant.

If your partner does any of these things, you may be in an abusive relationship. There are a variety of services available to help you, even if all you want to do right now is talk. You can start by calling the TCSO Family Violence Unit at 854-4393, SafePlace at 267-7233, or any of the resources listed at the end of this section.

Impact of Family Violence on Children

Children who are exposed to family violence, either by seeing/hearing it, or witnessing the aftermath (destroyed property, marks or bruises on their caretaker), may experience a variety of feelings: guilt, anger, helplessness, sadness, and fear. Some behaviors you may observe in your child include irritability, clinginess, aggression, withdrawal, nightmares, changes in sleeping patterns, or school problems. Some children will not show any obvious signs that they are affected by the violence, but they still need support and reassurance that the violence is not their fault.

If you suspect that abuse or neglect of a child, elderly, or disabled person may be occurring you are required by law to notify Child/Adult Protective Services at 1-800-252-5400 or your local law enforcement agency. If you need to reach a specific Travis County CPS caseworker call (512) 854-3195.

If You Make a Police Report about Family or Partner Violence:

There are several possible outcomes of reporting abuse to law enforcement:

- The offender may be arrested and face prosecution
- a warrant may be issued for his/her arrest
- or he/she may be asked to leave the residence

If no arrest is made at the time of the incident, a detective may be assigned to investigate the situation further. If an arrest is made, there may be an Emergency Protective Order issued at the request of the victim or on behalf of the victim.

Confidentiality of Identifying Information of Family Violence Victims

A victim may choose a pseudonym to be used instead of his or her legal name to designate the victim in all public files and records concerning the offense, including police summary reports, press releases, and records of judicial proceedings. A victim who elects to use a pseudonym must complete a pseudonym form and provide it to the law enforcement agency investigating the offense. Forms are available through the OAG or law enforcement.

Protective Orders and safety planning are important resources that can help keep you safe. For detailed information about Protective Orders in Austin/Travis County, please see: [\(link coming soon\)](#) For detailed Safety Plan information, please see: [\(link coming soon\)](#)

What does the law say?

There are multiple sections of the Texas Code of Criminal Procedure, Texas Family Code and the Texas Penal Code that are applicable to Family Violence.

For a concise list of relevant statutes see Womenslaw.org:
www.womenslaw.org/statutes_root.php?state_code=TX

Available Resources

TCSO Family Violence Protection Team Line: (512) 854-4393

APD Family Violence Protection Team Line: (512) 974-8535

Office of the Attorney General – Crime Victims Compensation: 1 (800) 983-9933

www.oag.state.tx.us/victims/about_comp.shtml

Shelters/Family Violence Crisis Centers:

SafePlace (Austin and Travis County): (512) 267-SAFE (7233)

www.safeplace.org

Hope Alliance (formerly the Williamson County Crisis Center): (800) 460-SAFE (7233)

www.hopealliancetxt.org

Family Crisis Center, Bastrop County: (830) 693-5600

www.family-crisis-center.org

Hays/Caldwell Women's Center: 1 (800) 700-HCWC (4292)

www.hcwc.org

Support, Information and Resources:

Saheli for Asian Families: (512) 703-8745

www.main.org/saheli-austin.org

Central Texas Muslmaat (support for Muslim women): (512) 577-SAFE (7233)

www.ctmaustin.org

Texas Council on Family Violence: (512) 794-1133

www.tcfv.org

National Domestic Violence Hotline: 1 (800) 799-SAFE (7233) or TTY: 1 (800) 787-3224

www.ndvh.org

National Teen Dating Abuse Helpline: 1 (866) 331-9474 or TTY: 1 (866) 331-8453

www.loveisrespect.org