

# Healing from Domestic Violence

We have everything  
inside of us to heal  
our past, present,  
and future.



For Latina Survivors

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## Where there is breath, there is life

Your mind, body, and spirit are connected; each impacts the other. Being in an abusive relationship can affect your whole being. When one or more parts of yourself are harmed, all parts are harmed. By working on and restoring one part, all parts benefit.

When anyone experiences abuse, focused breathing can help the healing process.

**Take a breath.** When we focus on our breath, we think more clearly, have more control of our actions or reactions, and our energy is restored.

**Low and slow.** The stronger and most restorative breath comes from breathing low in the body, from below your belly button, rather than high in the chest. Your inhale should fill your belly and your exhale should be long and s-l-o-w.

**Take three breaths with gentle movement.** Stop. Relax your shoulders and neck. Sigh. Put one hand on your belly to remind you where your breath should come from. Inhale naturally while raising your arms and exhale low and s-l-o-w while lowering your arms. Release the tension in your body, whatever it is.

*Adapted from Norma Wong, Move to End Violence*

## Where there is life, there is hope

Hope is the life force that keeps us going. Hope can help you recover more easily from trauma from an abusive relationship. When you are abused, you can start to believe that is how life is supposed to be. You can begin to feel that you don't have any control over your options. Regaining or maintaining control over your own thoughts, decisions, and actions can help to rebuild your sense of power and freedom from domination and violence. Begin to undo the harm or traumatic impact of violence by practicing slowing down – listen, think, speak, eat and walk slower. Focus on making one decision at a time.

## What Is Domestic Violence?

While the dynamics or tactics of abuse may look different depending on specific circumstances, domestic violence affects individuals of all races, genders, sexualities, ages, religions, physical and mental abilities, socio-economic status, cultures and countries of origin.

Domestic violence is:

- A pattern of abusive behavior that is used by one partner to take or keep power and control over the other partner.
- Can occur between family members, such as a child, elderly parent or individual and extended family member(s).
- Harms our emotional and physical health, economic independence, and how we parent.
- Can hurt our social and emotional well-being and our physical bodies.
- Not something that occurs just once, and usually gets worse over time. People who abuse are responsible for their behaviors. An abusive partner may deny what they did, make excuses for it, or blame what they did to you on stress or alcohol. Domestic violence is a learned behavior and people choose to be violent. Drugs, alcohol, or other people's behaviors and choices do not make abusive people use violence.

## Personal, Cultural and Structural Identities that Shape Survivors' Experiences

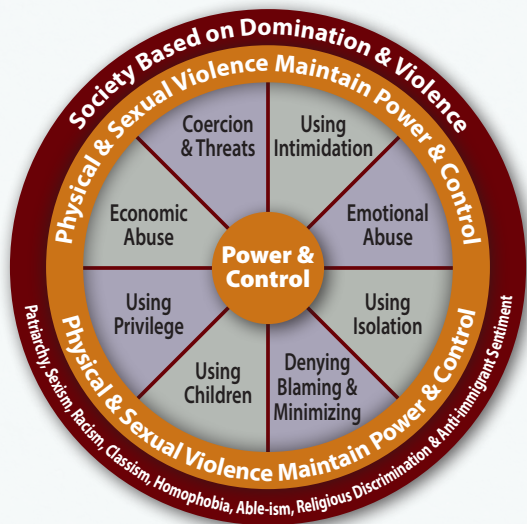
Your decision to seek help is influenced by your identities - gender identity, sex, race, class, sexual orientation, physical and intellectual ability, religion, language proficiency, national origin and immigration status.

Intersecting systemic oppressions may also shape your experience of domestic violence. Systemic oppressions are the ways in which history, culture, beliefs, institutional practices and policies interact to keep a ranking or power over others based on an identity (like gender or race) or characteristic (like immigration status).

These systemic oppressions may include, but are not limited to, patriarchy, sexism, racism, classism, homophobia, able-ism, religious discrimination, and anti-immigrant sentiment.

## Power and Control Wheel

Here's one way to think about domestic violence and other things that may shape your experience. The red ring represents our societal culture of devaluing people based on identities, which contributes to a culture of violence. The orange ring represents how people use threats of physical and sexual violence to keep power and control in a relationship. The inner sections outline more subtle ways a person can maintain power and control.



## Forms of Domestic Violence that Latina and/or Immigrant Women Experience

**Using Intimidation:** Makes you afraid with their voice, looks or actions. Hides or destroys things or important documents (passports, birth certificates, ID cards). Discloses your sexual orientation, physical or mental disability, or immigration status without your consent.

**Emotional Abuse:** Puts down your feelings, rights or opinions. Calls you names, tells you you're wrong, ignores you, or yells at you. Fabricates lies about you and tells them to immediate and extended family members in the U.S. and/or in your country of origin.

**Using Isolation:** Keeps you away from your family (in the U.S. and/or in your country of origin), friends, work, or culture. Blocks calls or emails. Prevents you from using assistive technology, receiving job training or learning English.

**Denying, Blaming, Minimizing:** Denies what they did, blames you for the abuse or tells you it wasn't too bad. Uses religion or cultural traditions to justify or minimize the abuse.

**Using Children:** Threatens to take your children away from you (or to a different country). Threatens to leave the family. Asks the children to watch you. Coerces you to have sex or become pregnant and uses religion for justification. Threatens to report you to child protective services (CPS), immigration enforcement agents or other authorities.

**Using Privilege:** Takes power over you just because they are male, or because of your identities, like race, sexual orientation, religion, disability or immigration status. Fails to file or stops any petition to legalize you and/or your children's immigration status.

**Economic Abuse:** Stops paying bills, won't let you work, tries to get you fired, stops working to control you or threatens to report you to your employer or immigration authorities if you are working unlawfully.

**Coercion and Threats:** Says they will hurt you, themselves or someone else, or harms your pets. Says they won't take care of your needs related to a disability. Scares you with weapons (i.e. hides them from you or randomly displays them to cause fear). Says they will disclose your immigration status, physical or mental disability, or sexual orientation or identity without your consent. Threatens to stop any petition to legalize you or your children's immigration status.

*This version is an adaptation of Futures Without Violence, "Power and Control Tactics Used Against Immigrant Women"*

## Safety Strategies

Decisions about your personal safety and the safety of any children in your care are difficult. You may have to weigh the risks of physical and emotional harm, the safety of children or family and friends, access to financial resources, religious beliefs, the loss of the relationship, and risks involving arrest, detention or immigration authorities.

You may have additional life challenges including lack of affordable housing, a physical or mental disability, or lack of immigration status.

Advocates understand that leaving the relationship is not always possible or that it might not be what an individual wants to do. An advocate with a community or tribal domestic violence program, in partnership with a trusted community organization, can assist in creating an individualized plan that addresses your basic needs, concerns or risks, regardless of your decision to leave or stay in the relationship.

## Domestic Violence and Latino Families

When you are abused by your partner and confronted with discrimination, inequity and oppression on a constant basis, you may feel like you have no control over your options. To begin undoing the harm or traumatic impact of violence, know that you don't have to do this alone. Help does not have to come from one single place. Here are some ways you can tap into your resiliency and strength during times of difficulty:

**Healing** – *We have everything inside of us to heal our past, present, and future.*

Involve your children and extended family members that love and accept you to create healing practices rooted in traditional rituals, prayer, spirituality and medicine.

- Create sacred spaces in your home with your children, such as an altar, to draw strength from your ancestors.
- Practice daily rituals that uplift your family's spiritual existence.
- Use calming traditional medicines, oils and teas that help ground you.
- Connect with Mother Nature, find time to play outside, plant flowers or grow a garden with your children.

**Community** – *Sanctuary is found in each other.*

It's important to stay connected to community members and organizations that understand your cultural background and language to better support you in finding possible solutions.

- Talk to trusted family members and/or friends who can refer you to resources or organizations that have been helpful to them.
- Connect with a trusted community leader, organization or immigration attorney to help identify additional social services that address your needs.

**Cultural Pride** – *To reclaim our story is to claim who we are.*

Oral storytelling is a practice your ancestors may have used to create a spiritual connection, keep memories and traditions alive across generations, and connect families to their roots.

- Find ways to share oral traditions such as poetry, prayers, dichos, and songs with your children.
- Talk to your elders. Ask them to tell you stories to pass down to your children.

**Family** – *We bring our family with us.*

Throughout your healing journey, it's important to connect with your children and close, trusted, immediate and/or extended family members that care for and support you. Talking with them may not make troubles go away, but it will allow you to share your feelings, gain support, receive positive feedback, and come up with possible solutions.

- Ask your counselor to adapt counseling sessions to include a familial and holistic approach.
- Ask to work with a bilingual advocate that understands your language and cultural background.
- Work with an advocate to find or create activities that cultivate family time at home or in your community.

**Safety** – *Systems that respect and validate our experiences.*

Personal, cultural and structural identities such as family, heterosexism, ageism, ableism, racism, spirituality/religion, classism, and sexism may influence your experience with systems (e.g., domestic violence programs, criminal justice system, educational institutions). In one study of the Latinas who experienced abuse, about half of them never report the abuse to authorities due to many factors, including: fear and lack of confidence in police; shame, guilt, loyalty and/or fear of their partner; fear of deportation; and previous experience with childhood victimization. <sup>[1]</sup>

We also know that for Latina survivors, community and trusted family members and friends may become your sanctuary and play an important role in your healing and safety for you and your children.

- Connect to a trusted community or family member that will support you in navigating systems that may not feel safe for you to do on your own.
- Explore your options and know your rights under anti-discrimination and immigration laws as well as practices that may violate your rights.

<sup>[1]</sup> "Barriers to Services: Facts on Intimate Partner Violence Among Latina/os." National Latino Network, [www.nationallatinonetwork.org/images/files/Factsheet\\_-\\_Barriers\\_to\\_Service.pdf](http://www.nationallatinonetwork.org/images/files/Factsheet_-_Barriers_to_Service.pdf).



## Housing Needs

Community and tribal domestic violence programs may have short-term emergency housing and some programs may have access to rental assistance funds, transitional housing units, and/or long-term housing available to you regardless of family size, national origin or immigration status.

### Short-Term Housing – Emergency Shelters

**Cost and Facilities:** Shelters are time limited. No fees are charged to stay. In most, survivors share bedrooms, kitchens, common areas, and/or bathrooms. Families share a room together.

**Children:** Shelters are equipped for children, but parents should bring a child's favorite toy or security object (for example a stuffed animal and/or blanket). Many shelters do not have childcare; parents are responsible for reaching out to family and friends to help care for children outside of the shelter when needed.

**Accessibility:** No one may be denied services because of language barriers, immigration status, or mental or physical disability. Individuals with a disability or language barrier can request reasonable accommodations to meet their needs.

**Service Animals:** All shelters must allow service dogs.

**Pets:** Some shelters will accept pets or have arrangements with local animal shelters or animal advocacy groups for animal care while you stay in the shelter.

**Services:** Shelters usually have emergency food, clothing and toiletries. Some shelters may have counseling or support groups for adults, youth, and children.

**Confidentiality:** Privacy is important. The identity of other residents at the shelter and their circumstances are asked to be kept private. Shelter staff should not tell anyone that you are staying in shelter.

## Legal Remedies and Options for Immigrant Survivors

Heightened immigration enforcement policies have increased the fear of contacting law enforcement because of unintended consequences. If you do not have a current U.S. lawful immigration status, contact an immigration attorney (beware of public “notario” fraud\*) or someone who is Bureau of Immigration Accreditation (BIA) licensed to better understand the implications of your status when looking to seek help with an abusive relationship and to identify any possible legal remedies. Legal remedies may include:

**VAWA Self Petition:** Under the Violence Against Women Act, immigrant victims of domestic violence, child abuse, or elder abuse may “self-petition” for lawful permanent resident status without the cooperation of an abusive spouse, parent, or adult child.

**U Visa:** The U visa protects certain noncitizen crime victims who assist or are willing to assist in the investigation or prosecution of a criminal offense.

**T Visa:** The T visa was created to provide immigration relief to victims of severe forms of human trafficking.

*\*Beware of “notario” fraud. Your pursuit toward any form of justice or immigration relief in the U.S. can be damaged if you are falsely represented by someone who states they are a “notario” and not a licensed attorney. In the United States, a notario is unauthorized to provide legal advice or represent others before the law. A “notario” in the United States is authorized only to witness the signature of forms.*

## Civil and Criminal Orders of Protection

The civil and criminal legal systems have two types of orders. You **do not** need to choose either as an option in your situation.

**Civil Protection Orders (CPO):** There is no cost to file a petition for a protection order and you do not need an attorney. The paperwork for a civil protection order is available at your local court clerk’s office. You can also fill out the form at [www.idaholegalaid.org](http://www.idaholegalaid.org) under the Self-Help Forms tab (forms are also available in Spanish). A community or tribal domestic violence program advocate may be able to assist with this process. Again, if you do not have a current U.S. lawful immigration status, contact an immigration attorney to better understand the implications of your status before filing a Civil Protection Order (CPO).

**Criminal No Contact Orders (NCO):** If there is an ongoing criminal case, the judge will usually put in place a no contact order requiring that the person using violence (the defendant in a case) stay away from and not harass the person experiencing violence. The person experiencing violence can ask the court to modify or terminate an order, but the court makes the decision on whether or not to do so. No Contact Orders are only valid as long as the criminal case is ongoing (so if the charges are dropped, the order is dropped too).

## Overview of Service Providers

There are different types of community service providers or governmental organizations that assist individuals experiencing domestic violence.

Each of these organizations have different roles, ethical guidelines, and confidentiality requirements. When working with individuals from these organizations, it is important to **ask them to explain their role and their limits of confidentiality**. Individuals you may work with include:

- Domestic violence advocates employed by community and tribal domestic violence programs.
- Mental health professionals (licensed counselors or social workers) in private practice or employed by a domestic violence or community health program.
- Victim witness coordinators employed by law enforcement or prosecutors.
- Domestic violence court coordinators employed by the court system.
- Civil attorneys in private practice or with Idaho Legal Aid Services.
- Professionals at culturally-specific or issue-specific organizations, who provide access and resources specific to an individual's culture/ethnicity or other identity.
- Professionals at a disability advocacy organizations, who provide access and resources specific to an individual's disability.

## Overview of Domestic Violence Program Services

Domestic violence programs generally provide these services:

**Information.** To help you understand your rights and options, how to heal from trauma, and the root causes of violence.

**Safety Planning.** Identifies individualized, non-traditional and community engagement strategies to increase safety.

**Builds Skills.** Creates opportunities to learn skills for coping, dealing with strong feelings, problem solving, parenting, and accessing resources.

**Encouragement.** Offers understanding and respect and embraces diverse cultural realities and lived experiences.

**Supportive Counseling.** Provides counseling or support groups for you, as well as for youth and children to better understand and heal from trauma.

**Increases Access to Community Resources.** Connects you to qualified government benefits, court processes, child protective services, assistive technology for individuals with disabilities, health care, reproductive health needs, immigration relief, housing, employment resources, and more.

**Increases Social Support and Community Connections.** Maintains or finds family, social, and community support networks.

**Promote Social Change.** Promotes behaviors or social norms to end violence against girls and women and people who are gender oppressed.

## Why Gender Violence Happens

Gender violence is a problem in our society that affects all communities. Gender violence can include domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, and sex trafficking. While everyone is hurt by gender violence - girls, women and people who are gender oppressed are hurt by gender violence most often.

Gender violence is a common occurrence because of our cultural beliefs and what we consider to be “normal” or “acceptable.” In our culture, men are given more value and power than any other gender. This contributes to high rates of gender violence.

Gender violence does not happen in isolation. Gender violence is supported by larger forces or **systemic oppressions**, like patriarchy, which take power over and harm girls and women. Systemic oppressions are the ways in which history, culture, beliefs, institutional practices and policies interact to keep a ranking or power over others.

Our society ranks or values human beings based on identities, like gender, race, national origin, class, sexuality, ability, immigration or refugee status. Ranking human beings supports the **power and privileges** that some groups of people have to keep power over others.

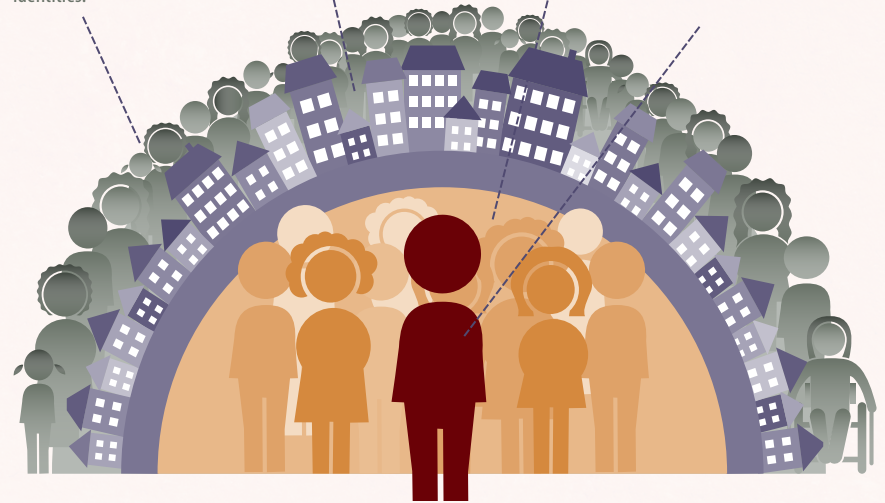
## Gender Violence Fueled by Larger Forces of Domination

**Systemic Oppressions like Patriarchy** – Large forces which dominate and harm groups of people based on gender and other identities.

**Government, Religious, and Community Organizations** – May educate and enforce oppression and dominance.

**Families, Friends, and Peers** – Influences us to accept discrimination (i.e. sexism), inequity (i.e. strict gender roles) or oppression.

**Individuals** – May choose to use violence that is fueled and supported by a dynamic system of power and dominance.



This illustration shows how individuals, families and peers, community, and societal institutions are interconnected. Individuals do not act in isolation, but are influenced by norms, contexts and social structures in which we live.

## Towards Liberation

Many women and people who are gender oppressed who are abused or raped want to get involved in their communities to end gender violence. Here are ways to make a difference in your community:

- Express your experiences through art, photography, or dance.
- Learn more about feminism – the belief in social, economic and political equity across genders. Read authors like Gloria Anzaldua, Sandra Cisneros or bell hooks, or watch Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie’s TED Talk “We Should All be Feminists.”
- Advocate for gender equity. Idaho can and should do better. In a national study by the Institute for Women’s Policy Research, *Status of Women in the States: 2015*, Idaho ranked 50th overall on the status of women.
- Join the Idaho Coalition Against Sexual & Domestic Violence and receive regular newsletters on ways to be involved in creating communities where gender violence is no longer a common occurrence. Go to [www.engagingvoices.org](http://www.engagingvoices.org).

## Glossary

**Assistive Technology:** Tools people with disabilities use for functions that would otherwise be difficult or impossible to perform.

**Coercion:** Forcing someone to do something by using force or threats.

**Equity:** Everyone receives what they need rather than the same (equality) to thrive by taking into account the lived experience of individuals.

**Liberation:** No longer being controlled or dominated by an outside force.

**Oppression:** Exercise of power and domination over another.

**Patriarchy:** Social system in which power is held by men and withholds opportunity from women.

**Restorative:** Renewing strength, health, and consciousness.

**Social Norm:** Behaviors and beliefs that are valued and supported in a society.

**Systemic Oppression:** Oppression is built into institutions like government and education systems and gives power and positions of dominance to some groups of people over other groups of people. Systems of oppression are built around what are understood to be “norms” in our societies.

## Hotline Numbers and National Resources

**Idaho Domestic Violence Hotline:** 1-800-669-3176. Answered 24/7 and provides free, confidential assistance. Spanish-speaking operators available upon request.

**National Domestic Violence Hotline:** 1-800-799-SAFE (7233) or 1-800-787-3224 (TTY line for Deaf/hearing impaired). Free, confidential assistance 24/7 to victims of domestic violence. Multilingual and may connect you with a local program that can provide assistance.

**National Human Trafficking Resource Center:** 1-888-373-7888 or [www.traffickingresourcecenter.org](http://www.traffickingresourcecenter.org). Available to answer calls from anywhere in the country, 24/7. More than 200 languages.

**RAINN (Rape, Abuse, Incest National Network):** 1-800-656-HOPE (4673) or [www.rainn.org](http://www.rainn.org). Free, confidential assistance 24/7 to victims of sexual assault. This hotline will connect you with a local program that can provide assistance. RAINN is multilingual via phone, and the RAINN website has a “chat” feature that you can use to talk with an advocate.

**National Latin@ Network, Casa de Esperanza:** [www.casadeesperanza.org](http://www.casadeesperanza.org); [www.nationallatinonetwork.org](http://www.nationallatinonetwork.org). A national organization that builds bridges and connections among research, practice and policy to promote healthy relationships within Latin@ families and communities. Information on the website is available in Spanish.

**TransLatin@ Coalition:** [www.translatinacoalition.org](http://www.translatinacoalition.org). A national organization that advocates for the specific needs of the Trans Latin@ community that resides in the U.S. and plan strategies that improve our quality of life.

## **Idaho Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Programs Help-line Numbers**

**Advocates Against Family Violence** – Caldwell (208) 459-4779

**Advocates for Survivors of Domestic Violence** – Hailey (208) 788-6070

**Alternatives to Violence of the Palouse** – Moscow (208) 883-4357

**Bingham Crisis Center** – Blackfoot (208) 681-8712/ Spanish (208) 681-8715

**Boundary County Youth Crisis and DV Hotline** – Bonners Ferry (208) 267-5211

**Coeur d’Alene Tribal STOP Violence Program** – Plummer (208) 686-0601

**Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault Center** – Idaho Falls (208) 235-2412

**Elmore County Domestic Violence Council** – Mountain Home (208) 587-3300

**Family Crisis Center** – Rexburg (208) 356-0065

**Family Safety Network** – Driggs (208) 354-7233

**Family Services Alliance of SE Idaho** – Pocatello (208) 251-4357

**Lemhi County Crisis Intervention** – Mahoney House – Salmon (208) 940-0600

**Mini Cassia Shelter for Women & Children** – Rupert (208) 430-4357

**Oneida Crisis Center** – Malad (208) 766-3119

**Priest River Ministries** – Priest River (208) 290-6529

**ROSE Advocates** – Weiser (208) 414-0740

**Safe Passage Violence Prevention Center** – Coeur d’Alene (208) 664-9303

**Shoshone County Women’s Resource Center** – Wallace (208) 556-0500

**Shoshone-Bannock Tribes Victims of Crime Assistance Program** – Fort Hall (208) 339-0438

**Shoshone Paiute Tribes STOP Domestic Violence Program** – Owyhee, NV (775) 757-2013

**‘Úuyit Kímti Program (New Beginnings) (formally known as the Nez Perce Tribe Women’s Outreach Program)** – Lapwai (208) 621-4778

**Voices Against Violence** – Twin Falls (208) 733-0100

**Women’s & Children’s Alliance** – Boise (208) 343-7025

**YWCA of Lewiston-Clarkston** – Lewiston (208) 746-9655

## Idaho Spanish-Speaking Community Non-Profits

**Community Council of Idaho: 208-454-1652 or [www.communitycouncilofidaho.org](http://www.communitycouncilofidaho.org)**

Idaho's largest nonprofit serving Latinos whose purpose is to improve the social and economic status of local communities through workforce preparation, education, cultural awareness, civil rights advocacy, and well-being services.

**Catholic Charities of Idaho: 208-345-6031 or [www.ccidaho.org](http://www.ccidaho.org)**

Provides low cost immigration legal services, legal consultations and assistance for citizenship, family petitions, application for victims of qualifying crimes such as domestic violence.

**La Posada, Inc.: 208-734-8700 or [www.laposadainc.org](http://www.laposadainc.org)**

Provides immigration assistance within immigration law, counseling, emergency assistance, low-income taxpayer clinic, notary services and Spanish and English translations.

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This handbook provides information about how domestic violence affects Latina survivors and the services that are available in our communities. We encourage you to go through this handbook with a community advocate with a domestic violence program.



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