

## How do I know if I am being abused?

### Has your partner been...

#### *Emotionally abusive?*

- ▶ Ignored your feelings?
- ▶ Humiliated you in private or public?
- ▶ Continually criticized you, called you names, and/or shouted at you?
- ▶ Kept you from working, controlled the money, made all the decisions?
- ▶ Insulted, driven away or kept you from your friends and family?
- ▶ Withheld your medication or prevented you from accessing services?
- ▶ Destroyed your possessions, household items, car?
- ▶ Criticized your children? Your parenting?
- ▶ Threatened you or made you feel afraid?
- ▶ Blamed you for his/her actions?

#### *Sexually abusive?*

- ▶ Pressured or forced you to have sex when you did not want it?
- ▶ Pressured or forced you to do sexual things that you were not comfortable with?
- ▶ Criticized you sexually? Called you names like “whore” or “frigid”?
- ▶ Withheld sex and affection as a way to punish you?

#### *Physically abusive?*

- ▶ Pushed, grabbed, slapped, or bit you?
- ▶ Kept you from leaving or calling for help?
- ▶ Thrown objects at you?
- ▶ Hit, punched, kicked, or strangled you?
- ▶ Hurt or threatened you with a weapon?

If someone in your life is hurting you... It is not your fault. You are not alone. Help is available to you.

## It is not your fault.

Nobody deserves to be abused. Abuse in a relationship happens when one person uses his/her power to control the other. Abusers have learned that their tactics are effective.

If your partner is abusive, you cannot stop the abuse—only the abuser can stop it. Alcohol or drugs do not cause the abuse, but can make it worse.

Once abuse starts, it almost always happens again, and usually gets worse over time.

For help exploring your options, call your state hotline listed on the back of this booklet.

## Abuse can happen to anyone.

Abuse in intimate relationships can happen to people with disabilities, older people, teens, people in opposite-sex relationships and same-sex relationships, and to people of any

income level, race, class, ability and gender.

## What can I do?

Find support for yourself...

- ▶ Talk to an advocate, counselor or someone you trust.

Make a safety plan...

- ▶ In case you need to leave quickly, hide an ‘emergency kit’ in a safe place. Include money, important papers like birth certificates and phone numbers, keys, medicine, and other essentials.
- ▶ In a violent situation, avoid rooms without exits or with potential weapons such as kitchens and bathrooms.
- ▶ Arrange a signal with a neighbor or friend to let them know when you need help such as using a code word or flashing a light.

- ▶ Discuss a safety plan with your children, including people they can call or go to in an emergency.

For help with safety planning, call your state hotline listed on the back of this booklet.

### What about calling the police?

Any abusive behavior can be harmful, some kinds are against the law. If your partner is hurting or intimidating you, the police may be able to arrest him/her. If you have any questions about calling the police, you can call your state hotline anonymously to learn more. In an emergency, you can call 911.

### Should I get a Protection Order?

If your partner has hurt or intimidated you, you may qualify for a Protection Order. A Protection Order:

- ▶ Is a civil (not criminal) process.
- ▶ Orders him/her to stop abusing you.

- ▶ Can order him/her to stay away from you, your home & work.
- ▶ Is available 24-hours/day through family court or law enforcement.

For more information, call your state-hotline.

### Where can I find support?

Help is available through your state's domestic violence programs.

They offer free:

- ▶ Confidential 24 hour crisis hotline
- ▶ Access to emergency shelter
- ▶ Referrals and help sorting out options
- ▶ Help in accessing financial, housing and personal support
- ▶ Help with restraining orders and other legal issues
- ▶ Emotional support & support groups

Please find a list of hotlines at the end of this booklet.

### Statewide hotlines for New England:

<b>Connecticut</b> .....	1 (888) 774-2900
<b>Maine</b> .....	1 (800) 799-7233
<b>Massachusetts</b> .....	1 (877) 785-2020
<b>New Hampshire</b> ....	1 (866) 644-3574
<b>Rhode Island</b> .....	1 (800) 228-7395
<b>Vermont</b> .....	1 (800) 228-7395



## Feeling alone? Don't know who to talk to?

Is someone hurting you?  
Talk to your health care provider.  
There is help.



## FAMILY VIOLENCE PREVENTION FUND



Independent Licensees of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association.