

# Talking about family violence

English Express special issue for adults

Alberta Children and Youth Services

## Healthy relationships

Most adults are members of a family.

There are many relationships within families. For example:

- between a husband and a wife
- between a parent and a child
- between a mother-in-law and a daughter-in-law

Most people want to be part of a happy family. So they try to have healthy relationships. For example:

- ✓ They listen to each other.
- ✓ They help each other.
- ✓ They do not make each other feel afraid.

### How do families have healthy relationships?

Here are some examples:

I will put the kids to bed so you can study.

Thanks, dear. That's a big help.



**1** We respect each other. We are polite. We show our love.

I am upset. I need more help taking care of our parents.

**Note:** This woman is deaf. She is signing.



**4** We talk about our feelings.

Let's talk about the kids after dinner. I think they are watching too much TV.



**2** We are partners. We decide things together.

I don't think my granddaughter should play hockey. Hockey is for boys.

Kim loves hockey. I will take you to her next game.



**5** It is okay for us to disagree.

Sorry I yelled at you. I had a bad day at work. It is not your fault. I will talk to my boss tomorrow.



**3** We are responsible for our actions (what we say and do).

Did you have a nice time with your friends?



**6** We don't control each other. We can have our own friends. We do some things alone.

## Some relationships are not healthy

Some family relationships are not healthy because there is abuse. This abuse is called family violence.

### Example

Ed abuses his wife Ling. He controls where she goes. Sometimes he hits her.

Where have you been?



More about Ed and Ling on page B.

### Did you know?

- ✓ Family violence is a problem in all countries.
- ✓ There can be abuse in **any family**.
- ✓ Abuse is wrong in every culture.

## Is there abuse in your family? You can get help.

Talk to a worker at the Family Violence Info Line. Call 310-1818 (free).

Don't dial 403 or 780 before this number.



- ✓ You can call 24 hours a day.
- ✓ Your call is confidential (secret).
- ✓ You can get information about many things. For example:
  - ☞ how to get help if you are abused
  - ☞ how to help a friend or family member who is abused
  - ☞ how to find a counsellor

### Help in 170 languages

Tell the worker what language you speak. The worker will put you on hold and get an interpreter right away. Then the interpreter will be on the phone too.

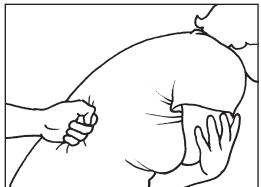
# There are many types of family violence

There are many types of family violence. Many types of family violence are against the law. For example: physical abuse, sexual abuse.

**ALL** abuse is wrong. Here are 6 types of abuse:

## 1 Physical abuse

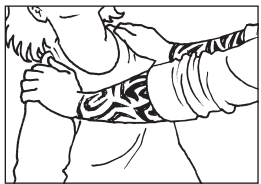
### Examples



■ hitting



■ slapping



■ pushing



■ kicking

## 2 Sexual abuse

### Examples

- forcing a family member to have sex
- forcing a family member to do sexual things they do not like



In Canada, it is against the law to force anyone to have sex.

## 3 Psychological abuse

### Examples

- making threats

I will kill your pet.



I will take the kids.

I will send you back to your country.



- cutting clothes, breaking things

You are a terrible wife for my son.

- calling a family member names



- not letting a family member see family and friends

## 4 Spiritual abuse

### Example

- not letting a family member practice their religion

You can't go to that stupid church.



## 5 Financial abuse

### Examples

- giving an adult family member very little money for food, clothes and other things



- taking a family member's money



- not letting an adult family member work outside the home



## 6 Stalking

### Example

- making a family member afraid by doing one or more of these things: following them, phoning many times, sending many e-mails or text messages

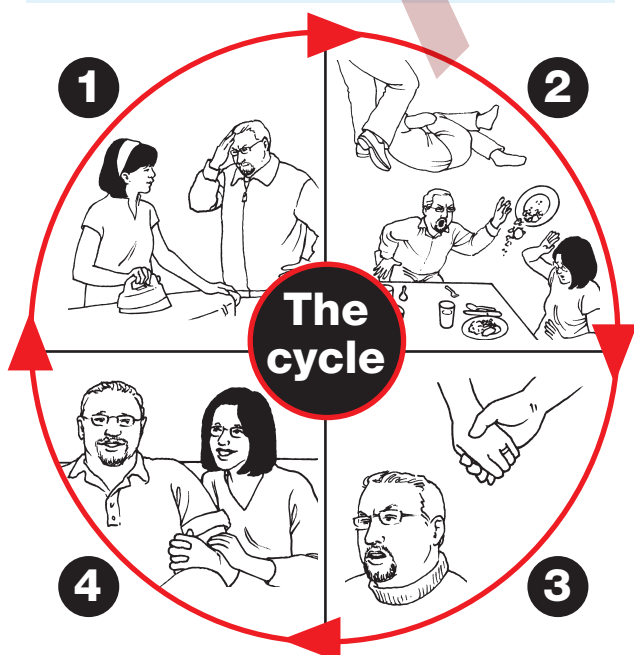


**Note:** An abuser can be any family member. For example: husband, wife, ex-spouse, boyfriend, girlfriend, father, mother, step-parent, foster parent, sister, brother, son, daughter, aunt, uncle, grandparent, in-law, caregiver.

# Family violence often goes in a cycle

Abuse can go on for months or years. But an abuser is not violent all of the time.

The abuse often goes in a cycle. Most cycles have 4 parts.



The cycle happens again and again. It happens more often. The abuse gets worse.

## Example: Ed and Ling

### Part 1

- Ed becomes angry and tense. He is upset about his job. He wants to hurt someone.



- Ed chooses to abuse his wife. He calls her names. He gets mad easily.



- Ling is afraid. She does nice things for Ed so he won't get mad.



### Part 2

- One day, Ed hits Ling. The next day, he kicks her. Ling is terrified. She is afraid to tell anyone.



### Part 3

- Ed is sorry. He is more kind and loving.

I will change.



- Later, Ed says, "You made me angry. So I hit you."

It is your fault.



### Part 4

- For a while, Ed seems calm. Ed and Ling pretend (act like) their relationship is okay. But their relationship is not healthy.



**Then Part 1 begins again.**

Ed and Ling need help to stop the cycle of abuse. Where can Ed and Ling get help? See pages C and D.

## What can victims of abuse do?

I am abused. I am ashamed to tell anyone. My friends will laugh at me. What can I do?



I am abused. I am terrified sometimes. I feel very sad and alone. What can I do?

### Talk to someone

✓ Talk to someone you trust. Find someone who understands why you are afraid.

### See a doctor

✓ Go to a doctor or hospital if you are abused. Talk about the abuse. Be honest.



### Leave

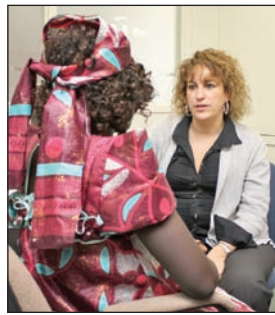
✓ You can leave. Take your children if they are in danger. Phone the police or a shelter. They will find a safe place for you to stay. They can help you find legal help.

You might leave your home for a few days. You might choose never to go back home.

### If you stay

✓ You might stay with your abuser. But remember that the abuse usually does not stop without help.

✓ Find out who can help you. For example: a counsellor, an elder, a religious leader.



If you or someone else is in danger, call 9-1-1 (free call, 24 hours a day). The police will come and help.

## Help for abusers

I am abusing my wife. I want to stop. What can I do?



I want to stop hitting my boyfriend.

Are you abusing a family member? Family violence is against the law. The police might charge you with a crime. For example: assault.

### You can get help

You are responsible for your actions (what you say and do to other people).

✓ You can get help. You can phone the Family Violence Info Line. See page A.

✓ You can talk to someone. For example: a friend, elder, counsellor or religious leader.

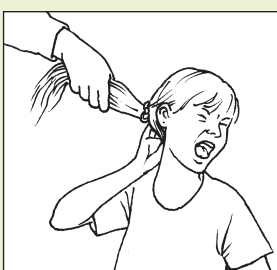
## Abuse is harmful to children

### Child abuse is:

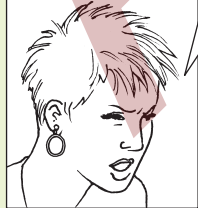
**1** when a child sees or hears family violence. Example:



**2** when a child is abused. Examples:



I will lock you in the closet.



**3** when a child is neglected (when parents don't take care of their child). Example:

There is no food. I am so hungry.



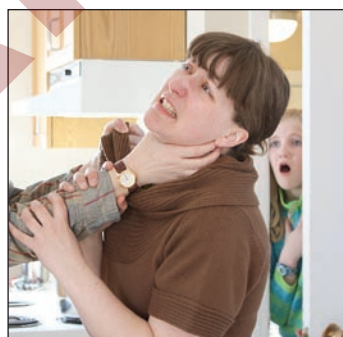
☞ Child abuse is always wrong. It is not the child's fault.

☞ Many children are afraid to tell someone about the abuse.

### Abuse affects children in many ways

Abuse is very bad for children. Abuse affects them right away. It affects them later in life too. For example:

✓ Children might think that the abuse is their fault.  
 ✓ They might learn that it is okay to abuse someone.



✓ They might think it is okay for someone to hit them as a child, **and later** as an adult.

### Get help right away

Are you a child or teen? Is there abuse in your family? Get help right away.

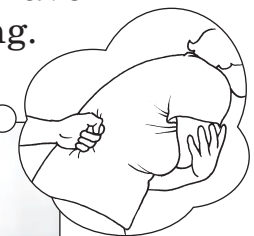
### Talk to someone

Talk to someone you trust. For example: a school counsellor, teacher, coach, elder or a friend's parents.

✓ Children might become afraid and nervous.

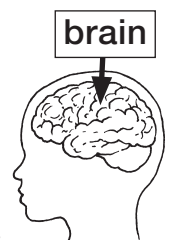


✓ They might have trouble sleeping.



✓ They might have trouble learning at school.

✓ Abuse can change how a child's brain develops (grows). These changes can be harmful.



### If you or someone else is in danger, call:

☎ **9-1-1** (free call, 24 hours a day)  
The police will come and help.

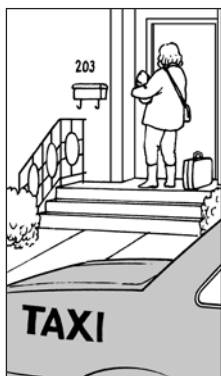
☎ **Child Abuse Hot Line**  
**1-800-387-5437**  
(free call, 24 hours a day)

## Adults should plan ahead

Is someone abusing you? The abuse might get worse. You might have to leave quickly.

### Plan ahead

✓ Find a safe place where you can go 24 hours a day. For example: a shelter or church, or a friend's house where your abuser cannot find you.

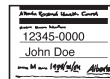


✓ Know how to get to your safe place. Will you need car keys, bus tickets or money?



✓ What will you need to take with you? Examples:

- health care card
- driver's licence
- passport
- medicine



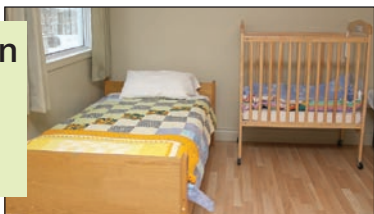
Keep these things in a safe place.

## Shelters are safe places to stay

Alberta has more than 40 shelters for abused women. There is one shelter for abused men.

✓ You can stay for a few days or a few weeks. It is free. The shelter gives you food, clothes and other things.

Your children can go to the shelter with you.



✓ Workers will not tell anyone that you are at the shelter.



✓ You can talk to workers about many things. For example:

- housing
- health care
- legal help
- ways to stay safe
- ways to stop your abuser from seeing you



Call the Family Violence Info Line for information about shelters.

## Where to get help

**Family Violence Info Line**  
**310-1818 (free)**

Don't dial 403 or 780 before this number.



✓ You can get information about many things. See page A.

**Call 9-1-1 if you or someone else is in danger**

✓ The police will come and help. In Canada, police protect people. Police cannot break the law.



**Note:** In Alberta, some areas do not have 9-1-1. In these areas, call the number for the local police or RCMP, not 9-1-1.

### Victim Services Programs

✓ Alberta has victim services programs. They give free help to victims of crime. For example: people who are abused.

✓ Call or go to your local police station. Ask about programs in your area. Or find out about programs on the Internet.

Go to: [www.victims.alberta.ca](http://www.victims.alberta.ca)

## Questions and answers

**Q:** My husband is abusing me. He sponsored me to come to Canada. I am a permanent resident.

I am worried Canada will send me back to my country if I leave my husband.

**A:** Talk to a worker at an immigrant serving agency. The worker can find people to tell you about your rights.

Will I need a lawyer?



You might need to talk to a lawyer or to Citizenship and Immigration Canada.

**Q:** Why do some adults stay when they are abused?



**A:** People stay for many reasons. For example:

- "I don't have a job or any money. How will I live?"
- "I can't leave. Divorce is bad."
- "My wife might take the kids."
- "I don't want people to know that my adult son hits me."
- "Everyone in my community knows us. People might not believe me."

**Note:** People do not have to stay with an abuser. Anyone can get help. Read page C.

### Order free copies of this issue

- 1 Go to: [www.familyviolence.alberta.ca](http://www.familyviolence.alberta.ca)
- 2 Click on "Materials and Resources."
- 3 Click on "Order form."
- 4 Print and fill out the form.
- 5 Fax the form to 780-422-1695.



If you have a problem ordering, call 310-0000, then enter 780-427-6376 (free call).

### Read this issue on the Internet

- 1 Go to: [www.englishexpress.ca](http://www.englishexpress.ca)
- 2 Click on "Special issues."

**Note:** This special issue does not use legal language.

Special thanks to the Advisory Committee, reviewers, pretesters, and to the volunteers in the photos. **Note:** The stories in this special issue are fictional. The people in the photos are volunteers. They portray fictional characters.

*English Express* is for adults who are improving their English reading skills.

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