

What is Domestic Violence?

Domestic violence can be defined as a pattern of abusive behavior in a close relationship to gain or maintain power and control over the other person.

Domestic violence can be physical, sexual, emotional, economic or psychological actions or threats of actions that influence another person. This includes any behaviors that intimidate, manipulate, humiliate, isolate, frighten, terrorize, coerce, threaten, blame, hurt, injure or wound someone.

- **Physical Abuse:** Hitting, slapping, shoving, grabbing, pinching, biting, hair-pulling. Physical abuse also includes denying a partner medical care or forcing alcohol and/or drug use.
- **Sexual Abuse:** Coercing or attempting to coerce any sexual contact or behavior without consent. Sexual abuse includes, but is certainly not limited to, marital rape, attacks on sexual parts of the body, forcing sex against someone's will, or treating one in a sexually demeaning manner.
- **Emotional Abuse:** Undermining an individual's sense of self-worth and/or self-esteem. This may include, but is not limited to criticism, diminishing one's abilities, name-calling or damaging one's relationship with his or her children.
- **Economic Abuse:** Making or attempting to make an individual financially dependent by maintaining total control over financial resources, withholding one's access to money or forbidding one's attendance at school or going to work.
- **Psychological Abuse:** Causing fear by intimidation; threatening physical harm to self, partner, children or partner's family or friends; destruction of pets and property and forcing isolation from family, friends, school and/or work.

Domestic violence can happen to anyone regardless of race, age, sexual orientation, religion or gender. Domestic violence affects people of all socioeconomic backgrounds and education levels. Domestic violence occurs in both opposite-sex and same-sex relationships, and can happen to intimate partners who are married, living together or dating.

Domestic violence not only affects those who are abused, but also has a substantial effect on family members, friends, co-workers, other witnesses and the community at large. Children who grow up witnessing domestic violence are among those seriously affected by this crime. Frequent exposure to violence in the home not only predisposes children to numerous social and physical problems, but also sends a message that violence is acceptable.

Learn More

Additional information on domestic violence as well as self-help tools and resources are available online at www.MagellanHealth.com/member. Or call us for more information, help and support.