

eliminating racism empowering women

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YWCA USA
1015 18th Street, NW
Suite 1100
Washington, DC 20036

T: 202-467-0801
F: 202-467-0802
www.ywca.org

Direct Contact:
Debra Roth,
Director of Communications and Marketing
T: 202-467-0801
communication@ywca.org

Andrea Zentz
Lead Communications and Marketing Associate
T: 202-467-0801
communications@ywca.org

ywca week without violence tips abusive relationships: warning signs and advice

You have the right to a safe and healthy relationship, one that is free from violence and fear. Know the warning signs of an abusive relationship as provided by women's organizations, law enforcement agencies, counselors and other concerned individuals:

- Constant put-downs;
- Controlling or dominant behavior;
- Extreme jealousy or insecurity;
- Explosive temper;
- Isolating you from family and friends;
- Big mood swings;
- Possessiveness;
- Financial control;
- Telling you what to do; and
- Preventing you from doing what you want to do.

Tips for Teens and Young Adults **How to leave an abusive relationship**

1. First, make sure you're safe. Contact a trusted adult for help.
2. There's a tendency to isolate yourself from your friends and family when you get involved in a serious relationship. Re-establish contact so they can provide support.
3. Talk to trusted adults, such as counselors, doctors, teachers and coaches.
4. Don't rely on yourself alone to get out of the situation. The people who love and care about you can help you break away.

5. Break up with your partner over the phone, so the partner cannot touch you. Do this when your parents or guardians are at home.
6. Look through your local phone book for lists of crisis centers, teen help lines and abuse hotlines. These organizations have professionally trained staff to listen, understand and help.
7. Write down any violence that may have occurred, the dates, the locations and what happened. This could be important if you need to obtain a restraining order to keep the abuser away from you.
8. For safety sakes, avoid contact with the person.
9. Walk with your friends, not by yourself.
10. Think of where to go in case of an emergency, such as a police station or even a public place like a restaurant or mall.
11. Carry a cell phone, phone card or money. Decide on code words ahead of time so your family and friends will know you need help when you call.
12. Call 911 right away if you are ever afraid that the person is following you or is going to hurt you.
13. Keep domestic violence hot-line numbers in your wallet and/or program them into your cell phone.

Tips for Adults

How to leave an abusive relationship

1. Talk to women from previously abusive relationships. They may be able to give you advice and the courage to make your move.
2. Stash \$20 away each week and hide it so your partner cannot find it.
3. If you can, break off the relationship with your partner over the phone or ask a few male relatives to go with you and help you move.
4. If you have to flee at a moment's notice, keep important documents such as your social security card, birth certificate and checkbook where they can easily be accessed. Also, try to keep some cash on hand.
5. If you are concerned about your pet(s), contact an animal shelter, family or friends and see if they will board the pet(s) until you settle into a new home.
6. Contact a women's organization for support and counseling. YWCA, for example, will help you learn your rights, the legal ramifications of your situation and where you can stay. Some YWCA associations provide shelters.
7. Contact family and friends who may be able to protect you.
8. Don't live alone at first. Move into a shelter or into the home of family or friends who are unfamiliar to your abuser.

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9. Don't go out alone.
10. Alert security at work or school. Have someone walk you to your car.
11. Get a restraining order, preventing your partner from calling or seeing you. This is not always effective, but it gives police the right to make an arrest if there is a violation.
12. See a therapist to help you deal with the situation.
13. Put yourself on stable financial footing. Find a job, obtain some training and/or enroll in classes to improve your monetary status.
14. Join a support group.