

Abuse is wrong in any culture

Pittiannginniq Ihuanngittuq
Pitquhiminingni Humiliqaak

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Pilualdanik nammangilak nallianituinnak
piusitukaujuni

La violence est inacceptable,
peu importe la culture

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About this booklet

This booklet is for Inuit women who are suffering from abuse in a relationship or in a family. If you know someone who is abused, give her this booklet. Ask her if she wants help. She may need your support. Tell her she is not alone.

As someone in an abusive relationship, you may feel alone. You may have trouble talking with people. If you are being abused, you may be afraid for yourself or your children.

You may need to know more about the law, your rights, and the kind of help you can get if you are being abused.

What is abuse?

You have been abused when another person hurts you or treats you badly.

The abuse can be physical, sexual, emotional, psychological (mental) or financial. You may experience more than one type of abuse.

Usually the abuser is a husband, ex-husband, boyfriend or ex-boyfriend. Sometimes a member of your family or your husband's family is the abuser. The abuser could be a woman but is usually a man.

In an emergency

Call the police or call a friend if you can

Run outside if you think you will be safer there and other people can see you

Scream, let the neighbours know so they will call the police

These are some types of abuse:

- hitting
- pinching
- slapping
- pushing
- punching
- kicking
- burning
- shooting
- stabbing or cutting

These are crimes.

Sexual abuse is:

- sexual touching or sexual activity when you do not consent to it

This is a crime.

These are some types of emotional or psychological abuse:

- making threats to harm you, someone you know or your pets
- breaking your things or throwing them away
- stalking you (criminal harassment*)

These are crimes.

These are some examples of financial abuse:

- taking your pay cheque
- withholding money from you so that you have no food or making you pay all the bills

These are crimes.

* *words that are underlined are explained in the back of the booklet*

Other forms of abuse are not crimes, but they are still abuse. Some examples are:

- humiliating you
- insulting you
- putting you down
- ignoring you
- screaming at you
- calling you names
- telling you what you can do, where you can go, who your friends can be
- refusing to let you have any money

Help is available

There are some people who can help you, such as social workers, alcohol and drug workers, community health workers, nurses, RCMP, KRPF, women's group, shelter workers or court workers.

You may have a shelter or safe home in your community.

Also you may be able to get:

- advice and counselling
- a safe place to stay
- financial help
- legal help, which may be free of charge
- help to leave - you can go to court to ask for custody of your children, financial support or even a divorce
- a peace bond from a criminal court
- a custody order from a civil or family court

You can still get help if you decide not to leave.

Where can you get more information?

- women's shelter
- police
- hospital or health centre
- women's centre or women's group members
- telephone crisis line
- legal aid office or local court worker
- teachers
- doctor, public health nurse or community health worker

You are not alone

Abuse happens in all kinds of families. It happens to women who have no children or to women who do, to those who are rich, poor, professionals, full-time mothers, young or old. It happens to women of all backgrounds, religions, races, cultures and ethnic origins. Abuse can happen at any stage of a relationship.

It is not your fault

Talking about abuse can be difficult. Many women feel ashamed or are afraid their family or friends will not believe them. But remember, **nothing you do gives anyone the right to abuse you in any way.** There is no excuse for abuse. It is not your fault.

Many women have found that there is a cycle of abuse. The tension builds for a while until the abuser acts violently. After the 'explosion' or violence there is a period of calm or quiet. The abuser may say he is sorry and promise it will not happen again. However, in time the tension may build and the abuser may become violent again and the cycle of abuse continues.

Your children need protection

Boys who see abuse in their families are more likely to abuse their wives or partners when they grow up. Girls are more likely to accept abuse as a fact of life. Children who grow up watching adults act violently may think that violence at home is normal.

If the abuser is also abusing your children you should get help for them too. Child abuse is against the law. You can go to the child welfare or family services agency for advice, help or counselling. You can also go to the RCMP and have the abuser charged.

Children should be protected.

Is it better to stay or leave?

You should think first about your safety and the safety of your children. You may fear that your family and friends will not support you if you leave. This may happen, but even if it does, it may be better for you and your children than continuing to suffer the abuse.

You may choose to leave for a short time or you may decide to leave permanently but still not end your marriage or relationship. Ask yourself:

- how dangerous is it to stay?
- is there a gun in the house?
- has the abuser ever used a weapon like a knife or stick to hurt you?
- does the abuser take drugs or drink too much?

What if you decide to stay?

You might decide it is better for you to stay. If you are injured get medical treatment. You do not have to tell anyone who caused the injuries but it is better for your treatment if you tell your doctor or nurse exactly what happened.

Keeping notes or a diary about your injuries and the times you are abused may help if you decide to leave later. Keep this in a safe private place. It is a good idea to have a plan ready in case you need to leave quickly.

The first few pages of the telephone book usually list the numbers for the RCMP and other emergency numbers. It is a good idea to learn the RCMP or KRPF emergency number in case you need help.

If you do not have an RCMP officer in your community you can call one of the bigger centres or the closest community with an RCMP or KRPF officer. They will usually accept collect calls.

If you are unilingual, try to find a friend or relative who will help you make the call. If your call is not returned or responded to right away, do not give up. Keep calling.

Gather information such as addresses and telephone numbers of people who can help you. If you can, save some money.

Try to do things that make you feel better. You may be able to get some counselling or learn new job skills. You may even go back to school. Look for friends or family members who will help you.

If the abuser wants to change the way he acts, he can get counselling too. With long-term help some men have learned to stop being abusers but it is very difficult for violent men to change. The abuse usually gets worse over time.

What about custody of your children?

If you leave an abusive situation you can still apply for custody of your children. If you think your children will be safer, and you are able to, take them with you if you leave. Apply to the court immediately for a custody order. A lawyer can help you. Your lawyer can also help you ask the court to order your children's father to pay financial help for you and your children. The court will base its decision on what is best for the children.

If you get custody of the children, their father will likely be able to visit them. You might want to arrange for someone else to be there when the father picks them up and returns them. If you are worried about your children's safety, your lawyer can order that someone be there to supervise the visits.

If you have a custody order it is a good idea to keep a copy with you in case there is a problem. You can also give a copy to your children's school. It is a good idea to advise the school of your situation so they can call you right away if there is a problem.

What kind of help is there?

The police

You can call the RCMP if the abuser assaults you or says he will. Many police officers are trained to deal with abuse in families and relationships. They can take you to a hospital or health centre if you need treatment. They can help you leave safely. They can even take steps to ensure the abuser stays away from you.

Women's shelter

You can go to a shelter if there is one in your community. This is a safe place where you and your children can stay for a few weeks. Staff and volunteers at the shelter will give support and

information. They may be able to help you get legal advice, financial help and a new place to live if this is what you want. They may also have food, clothing, diapers and toys in case you do not have time to pack.

Shelters are usually run by community groups. Their telephone numbers are listed in the telephone book. They may be listed in the front of the book with other emergency numbers. They will not tell the abuser where you are. You can also call a shelter just for advice. You do not even have to tell them your name. There is a list of shelters and crisis, law and victim assistance lines at the end of this booklet.

If there is no shelter in your community you can call one in the next closest community. They will usually accept collect calls. Sometimes if there is no shelter there will be safe homes. This is where local people open their homes to provide a safe place. Like shelters, they will not tell the abuser where you are. Your local helping agencies will be able to advise you if there is a safe home in your community.

Financial assistance

If you do not have a job, you may need welfare or financial assistance. Provinces and territories have different rules for financial assistance. It depends on where you live. Even if you do have a job, you may still be able to get some financial help in an emergency situation.

When you go to court to apply for custody or to get a divorce you can sometimes get help to pay for this through legal aid. You can ask the court to order your children's father to pay support if he is working or has some means of income.

What happens if ... ?

What happens if you report the abuser?

If the police have reason to believe you have been assaulted, the abuser may be charged. You will have to tell the police about the abuse. The police may also arrest the abuser, if they think there are grounds to do so.

If the abuser is arrested, he might stay in jail only a few hours until he appears in court at a bail hearing. After that, the abuser may be allowed to leave, unless the court decides there is good reason to keep him in jail.

If you are afraid for your safety, tell the police before the abuser is let go.

The court may set conditions for his release. For example the court may order that the abuser cannot see you at all. If the abuser does not obey these conditions, the police can arrest him again.

If you are afraid he will hurt you when he is released you might want to find a safe place to stay, like a woman's shelter.

What happens if the police charge the abuser?

If the abuser pleads guilty to abusing you or your children the court will sentence him. The sentence may be a fine, probation, time in jail or a combination of these things. The abuser may also be ordered to get counselling as part of his probation. Jail sentences are rare if it is his first time in court. If you are afraid, tell the Crown Attorney. If he gets probation, it is possible for the court to set conditions on his release.

If the abuser says he is not guilty, you will have to be a witness at his trial. It may be several months before the trial starts. If the court finds the abuser guilty he will be sentenced. You can ask the Crown Attorney if there are victim services in your province or territory, and to explain the court process.

Abuse is more than beatings

- Does the abuser often find fault with you or tell you that you are worthless?
- Does the abuser refuse to let you have friends or try to choose them for you?
- Does the abuser keep you from seeing your family?
- Does the abuser stop you from leaving your house?
- Does the abuser make you feel afraid by what he says or does?

If you are abused

- You are not alone
- It is not your fault
- There is help available
- Protect yourself and your children

Things to take with you if you leave

In an emergency leave as quickly as possible. Do not stop to collect the things on this list, just go. But if you have time, try to take as many of these things as you can.

- important documents, such as birth certificates, child custody papers, court orders such as peace bonds, health care cards, social insurance cards, drivers license
- money, credit cards
- cheque book, bank book, savings bond
- personal telephone and address book
- medicine
- house keys
- children's favorite toys
- clothing for a few days
- valuable jewelry

If you are thinking about leaving, you might want to collect some of these things keep them in a safe place in case you decide to leave quickly.

Words used in this booklet

assault

An assault happens when someone uses force or the threat of force on someone else without that person's consent.

bail hearing

This is a court proceeding that happens after a person has been arrested and charged. The court decides if the person should be released with conditions, such as being told he cannot contact you or be held in jail until the charges are dealt with by the court.

criminal harassment

If he is repeatedly following you or communicating with you, or watching you or behaving in a threatening manner towards you or your children, he is committing an offense called criminal harassment. This is sometimes called stalking.

Crown attorney

This is the lawyer who represents the government. The Crown attorney presents the case in the court when a crime has been committed.

custody

If you have custody of your children, you are legally responsible for making major decisions about your children's upbringing and schooling. When you have custody, your children usually live with you, but will likely visit their father.

legal help

Legal help is available from a lawyer or a legal aid office. Contact a lawyer referral service, a legal aid office or court worker to find out where you can get legal help and if you can get help free of charge.

order from a civil or family court

If you are afraid for your safety, and you do not want to call the police for help, you may be able to get an order from a civil or family court stating that the abuser must stay away from you. You should get legal help to find out about types of civil or family court orders in your province or territory.

peace bond

If you are afraid for your safety, you may be able to get a peace bond. This is a criminal court order with conditions. For example, the abuser may be told he is not allowed to see you, write to you, or telephone you. If he does not follow the order, the police may arrest him. If you want to know more about a peace bond you can ask a lawyer.

probation

This is a criminal court order that can be part of a sentence for an offender. A person on probation will have conditions set on release, such as going to counselling.

Help lines:

CRISIS LINE:

1-800-265-3333 (Nunavut, NWT, Nunavik)
(867) 979-3333 (Iqaluit)
(867) 873-8257 (Yellowknife)
(709) 896-3041 (Labrador)

NUNAVIK POLICE: 1-800-964-2644

LAW LINE:

1-800-873-3130 (Nunavut, NWT)
(709) 896-5323 (Labrador)
or 896-5051

VICTIM ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

Rankin Inlet: (867) 645-2600
Iqaluit: (867) 979-2202
Yellowknife: (867) 920-2978 (day)
(867) 669-5197 (7pm-10pm)

Shelters:

Western Arctic and Yellowknife

Inuvik Transition House Society

Box 2628

Inuvik, NT X0E 0T0

(867) 777-3877

(867) 777-3941 Fax

(867) 777-4148 Family Counselling Service

Tuk Women And Children's Shelter

Box 321

Tuktoyaktuk, NT X0E 1C0

(867) 977-2526

(867) 977-2591 Fax

Alison McAteer House

Y. W. C. A.

5004 - 54th Street

Yellowknife, NT X1A 2R6

(867) 920-2777

(867) 669-0334 Fax

(867) 873-8257 Crisis Line

Kitikmeot

Wellness Centre

BOX 81

Cambridge Bay, NU X0E 0C0

(867) 983-2133

(867) 983-2156

Ikajuqtauvvik Crisis Centre/Shelter

Taloyoak, NU X0E 1B0

(867) 561-5902

(867) 561-6906 Fax

Keewatin

Kataujaq Society
Rankin Inlet, NU X0C 0G0
(867) 645-2214
(867) 645-2442 Fax

Baffin

Qimaavik, Baffin Regional Agvvik Society
Box 237
Iqaluit, NU X0A 0H0
(867) 979-4500
(867) 979-0328 Fax

TUKKUVIK WOMEN'S SHELTER
Cape Dorset, NU X0A 0C0
(867) 897-8915 (days)

Nunavik

Northern Quebec Safe House
Kuuujuaq, Nunavik
(819) 964-0536

Women Shelter Tunngavik
1237 Av Sinnittavik
Kuujuarapik, Nunavik
(819) 929-3584

Labrador

Nain Women's Safe House
Box 447
Nain, Labrador A0P 1L0
(709) 922-1229
(709) 922-1221 Fax

LIBRA HOUSE
Box 449, Station B
Happy Valley-Goose Bay, Labrador A0P 1E0
(709) 896-8251
(709) 896-3041 Crisis Line

Use this space to list the phone numbers for your own community:

RCMP:

HEALTH CENTRE:

COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKER:

SOCIAL SERVICES:

WOMEN'S GROUP:

CHURCH:

OTHERS:

