

# **DOMESTIC VIOLENCE INFORMATION PACKET**



For free & confidential  
support 24 hours a day:  
(800) 848-5991  
Español: (866) 728-2131

## **Holland Program Center and Business Office**

411 Butternut Drive, Holland, Michigan 49424  
Walk-in Hours: M-F, 9AM - 5PM

## **Allegan Satellite Office**

Hours vary, please call for appointment  
151 Brady Street, Allegan, Michigan 49010

## **Grand Haven Satellite Office**

Hours vary, please call for appointment  
300 North Ferry Street, Suite C, Grand Haven,  
Michigan 49417

**Domestic violence can happen to anyone, regardless of age, gender, race, sexual orientation or socioeconomic status. In this packet you will find information, and resources you can use to learn more about domestic violence.  
No one deserves to be abused.**

# WE ARE HERE.

“We are here to listen...  
Not to work miracles.

We are here to help people discover what they are feeling...  
Not to make their feelings go away.

We are here to help people identify their options...  
Not to decide for them what they should do.

We are here to discuss steps with people...  
Not to take steps for them.

We are here to help people discover their own strength...  
Not to rescue them and leave them still vulnerable.

We are here to help people discover they can help themselves...  
Not to take responsibility for them.

We are here to help people learn to choose...  
Not to keep them from making difficult choices.

We are here to provide support for change.”

- Anonymous

# What is Domestic Violence?

Domestic violence “is a pattern of behaviors used by one partner to maintain power and control over another partner in an intimate relationship.” Domestic violence can be overt, such as physical violence, or subtle, such as name calling, emotional manipulation, or financial control.

## Does your partner ever...

Make you feel afraid?

Control what you do, who you talk to, or where you go?

Push, slap, or hit you?

Deny the abuse or tell you it's your fault?

React to everyday scenarios with anger?

Criticize your accomplishments or goals?

Counter or contradict everything you say?

Disregard your opinion?

Lead you to believe you're crazy?

Avoid discussing things that are important to you?

Call you names?

Prevent you from seeing or talking with friends or family?

Threaten suicide if you break up with them?

Threaten to harm you, your pet, or your kids/family?

Make you feel guilty for their actions?

## The Facts

1 in 4 women and 1 in 7 men report experiencing violence from an intimate partner in their lifetime.

**Your partner may try to blame you for their actions, but abuse is never your fault.  
Domestic violence can occur in any intimate relationship, it does not require marriage.**

# Power & Control Wheel

Abuse comes from a desire to gain power and control over a partner. Abusive partners may believe that they have the right to control their partner. The power and control wheel is a helpful tool to understand the overall patterns of abusive behaviors. Can you relate to any of these?



# Red Flags & Warning Signs

It's not always easy to tell at the beginning of a relationship if it will become abusive. In fact, many abusers may seem absolutely perfect in the early stages of a relationship. Possessive and controlling behaviors don't always appear overnight, but rather emerge and intensify as the relationship grows. If you're beginning to feel as if your partner is becoming abusive, there are a few behaviors that you can look out for.

## **Have you noticed any of the following behaviors in yourself?**

Do you apologize all the time?  
Are you forced to accept the blame for everything in your relationship?  
Do you "walk on eggshells" so as to not set your partner off?  
Do you cry a lot more than you used to?  
Do you repress feelings, particularly anger?  
Are you constantly trying to figure out how to get your partner's approval?  
Have you given up interests, activities, or people who were once important to you?  
Have you let go of opinions, ideas, hopes or dreams you've had for yourself?  
Is your life based on trying to please your partner so as to avoid anger or disapproval?  
Do you tell yourself your partner's jealousy is a sign of caring for you?  
Do you participate in sexual activities you don't like because you are afraid your partner will get angry if you don't?  
Do you want to end the relationship, but are afraid of what your partner might do?

## **Have you noticed any of the following behaviors in your partner?**

Insist on having control over your life and your behaviors?  
Tell you who to see, how to act, or what to wear?  
Intimidate you by telling or threatening to withdraw love or leave?  
Frighten you into submission with threats of violence?  
Switch from charm to anger without warning?  
Project the blame for all shortcomings and failures onto you or other people?  
Attack your character through insults or name-calling?  
Accuse you of being too sensitive or overreacting when they upset you?  
Confuse you by refusing to confront issues, denying abuse, or changing the subject?  
Compete with other people in your life for your attention?  
Belittles you sexually?  
Charming in public, but apt to anger when you are alone?  
Hits walls, breaks things, or destroys property when angry?  
Blame aggressive behaviors on being drunk or high?  
Pushes, slaps, or physically hurts you?  
Puts you in dangerous situations, such as driving recklessly?

# What keeps us in abusive relationships?

We may recognize that the behavior of our partners is not normal or acceptable, yet we choose to stay. There are many reasons why survivors may stay in an abusive relationship. Every reason is valid. Below are some common reasons that keep us in unhappy or abusive relationships. If you are being mistreated, it might be helpful to look over this list and circle reasons that you identify with.

We love our partner.

They may threaten violence if we consider leaving.

We might think that a 2-parent home is better than a single parent home.

We believe things will change for the better.

We believe each time they abuse us will be the last.

We are afraid of being alone.

We believe that if we improve, the abuse will stop.

We may feel at fault for the abuse.

If we grew up in abusive homes, the abuse may seem normal.

We don't want to admit what is going on.

We rely on our partner for food, money, or shelter.

We think that we can "fix" our partners.

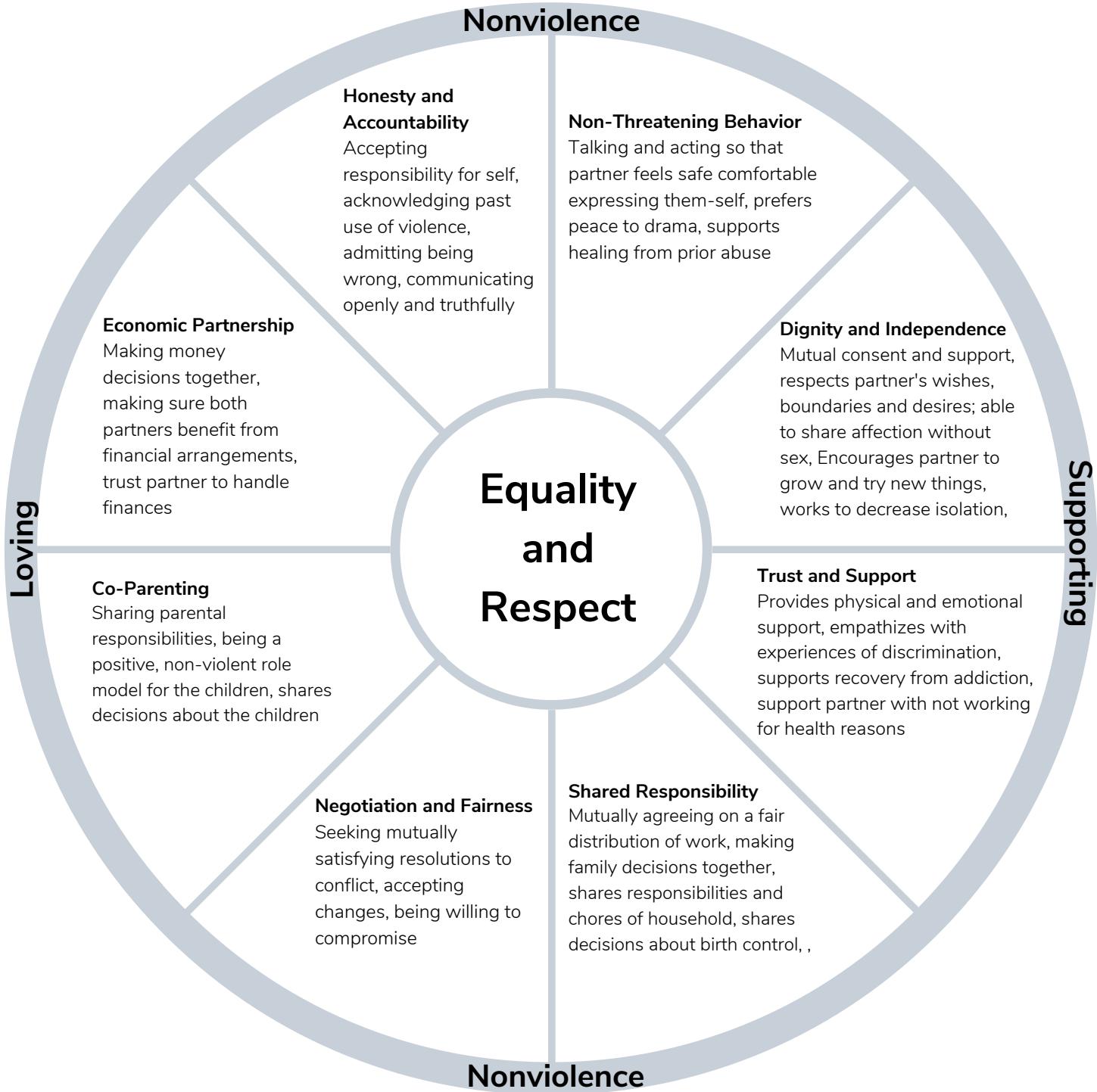
We fear we won't be believed.

We fear others will be on our abuser's side.

**Some of our reasons to stay may be based on misunderstandings or myths, and some might be based on fear. If you are struggling with wanting to end an abusive relationship but you can't get past one or more of your reasons for staying, it might help to consider the other side and look at what healthy relationships look like. Do the healthy characteristics outweigh the unhealthy ones?**

# Characteristics of a Healthy Relationship

The Power and Control Wheel shows what an unhealthy relationship looks like. The Equality Wheel shows characteristics of what a healthy relationship looks like.



# Barriers for Marginalized Communities

## What is a marginalized community?

People whose unique values, customs, or beliefs are NOT fully accepted into the larger group. They are often alienated, pushed to the side, over-looked, or underrepresented. These communities often encounter barriers that prevent them from achieving their full potential or receiving services related to domestic violence and sexual assault.

### Examples of Marginalized Communities

- Immigrants, refugees, migrants
- Women and girls
- Survivors of human trafficking
- Individuals with mental illness
- LGBTQIA+
- People of differing religions
- Disabled people
- Incarcerated people
- People of various race
- People of various ethnicity
- Senior Citizens
- Individuals with low income
  - and more

### **What barriers, or concerns, may face those looking for help with domestic violence and sexual assault?**

- Police inaction, hostility, and dismissiveness: the fear that police will not believe the survivor, blame survivors for the violence, or that police involvement will escalate the abuse
- Police bias: unfairness targeted toward particular groups of people or with regard to domestic violence/sexual assault
- Collateral consequences: fear that the actions of police may cause involvement of Child Protective Services or Immigration; loss of housing/income, or arrest of the survivor
- Cultural identity/hierarchy: a strong personal identification based on familial structure, (e.g. gender roles)
- Concern about cultural competency: survivors may fear that they will not be understood in the context of their culture by domestic violence/sexual assault advocates or other service providers
- Stereotype Threat: the concern that negative stereotypes about one's group will be confirmed by their behavior/report

### What does this mean for survivors?

Due to these barriers, survivors may be LESS likely to reach out for help. Experiencing prejudice and discrimination based upon identity can lead to feelings of loneliness, being misunderstood, undervalued, or not fully human.

# Safety Planning

Safety planning is a necessary and important step for someone in an abusive relationship. Planning can be used while we are still with our abusers or after the relationship has ended. Our safety should be a top priority. We may not have control over our partners' violence, but we do have a choice on how to respond to them and how to best get ourselves to safety.

Below is a list of safety suggestions. Following these suggestions is not a guarantee of safety, but could help to improve your safety situation.

## Personal Safety during a Violent Incident

- Identify your partner's use and level of force so that you can assess danger.
- Identify safe areas of the house where there are no weapons and there are ways to escape. If arguments occur, try to move to those areas.
- Don't run to where the children are, as your partner may hurt them as well.
- If violence is unavoidable, make yourself a small target; dive into a corner and curl up into a ball with your face protected and arms around each side of your head, fingers entwined.
- Let trusted friends and neighbors know of your situation and develop a plan and visual signals.
- Teach your children how to get help. Instruct them not to get involved in the violence between you and your partner. Plan a code word to signal to them that they should get help or leave the house.
- Keep weapons like guns and knives locked away and as inaccessible as possible.

## Preparing to Leave the Relationship

- Leave extra money, clothes, and car keys with a trusted friend
- Make copies of important documents (birth certificate, drivers license, social security card, etc.)
- Check with family and friends to see if you can stay with them
- Rehearse the escape plan
- If you are breaking up with your partner, do so in a public space
- You may request a police escort while you are leaving
- Have your bag ready to go for a quick escape
- Materials you may need when leaving include cellphone and charger, car keys, cash, clothes, medication, birth certificate, driver's license and any other important documentation.

## After Leaving the Abusive Relationship

- Change the route you take to work or school
- Notify family, friends, and employer that your partner cannot see you
- Install a security system in your home
- Change your locks
- Change your e-mail and cell phone number
- Keep a copy of your restraining order, if applicable, on you at all times
- Have a co-worker walk with you to your car
- Change passwords often
- Don't open any attachments to an email/text if you do not know the sender

# Community Resources

If you are in immediate danger, please call 911.

## **Police/Sheriff Department– Non-Emergency:**

Allegan County Central Dispatch: (269) 673-3899

Ottawa County Central Dispatch: (800) 249-0911

Holland Police Department: (616) 355-1100

Allegan City Police: (269) 673-5170

Allegan County Sheriff: (269) 673-0510

## **Legal Support:**

Western MI Legal Services Hotline: (888) 783-8190

Allegan County Prosecutor's Office: (269) 673-0280

Allegan– Legal Advocate: (269) 673-4831 X2

Ottawa County Prosecutor's Office: (616) 846-8215

Ottawa County Circuit Court: (616) 846-8320

Victim's Rights Coordinator (Ottawa): (616) 846-8368

Violence Intervention Officer (Holland): (616) 355-4340

## **Information and Referral Networks:**

211 of Ottawa County: Dial 211 or (888) 353-6717

First Call of Allegan County: (269) 686-2100

## **Other Resources:**

Holland Rescue Mission: (616) 396-2200

Sylvia's Place: (269) 673-8700

West Shore Counseling Services: (616) 355-3000

National Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-799-SAFE