



What Is Elder Abuse?

**A comprehensive guide to helping
you understand elder abuse**

Elder abuse is the intentional or negligent mistreatment of an adult over the age of 60, and hundreds of thousands of seniors are victims each year.

At least one in 10 older adults living at home are abused, neglected or exploited every year, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), but incidence rates are likely much higher, considering elder abuse often goes unreported to adult protective services organizations.

This toolkit will provide you with these insights and more. Inside you'll find:

- Helpful Articles
- Recommended Books
- Lists
- Danger Assessments
- In-Depth Videos
- Survey Results
- Support Communities
- How to Find Help



There are hundreds of articles on [DomesticShelters.org](https://www.DomesticShelters.org) covering the many facets of domestic violence. Here are links to those that will help you answer the question, “What is elder abuse?”

[What Is Elder Abuse?](#)

A comprehensive guide to understanding domestic violence and the role of adult protective services.

[5 Signs of Elder Abuse](#)

How to spot it, and what to do about it.

[What Is Domestic Violence?](#)

Helping you understand domestic violence and abuse.

[Am I Being Abused?](#)

How to recognize when a partner's actions show a pattern of abuse.

[Survivor Alex: Leaving Abuse After 47 Years](#)

Reclaiming her life, she moved to the ocean and cherishes each day.

[Ask Amanda: My Elderly Mom Is Being Abused](#)

When senior partners depend on each other, but one is abusive.

[Ask Amanda: My Abusive Pastor-Husband Has Dementia](#)

Leaving someone with a disease presents even more guilt.

['My Friend Told Me She's Being Abused'](#)

The right and wrong things to say at this moment.

[A Shelter Just for Senior Survivors](#)

Director of the nation's first elder abuse shelter talks about the challenges this demographic can face.

[When Domestic Violence Happens Later in Life](#)

Why elders are more likely to suffer in silence.

[When Alzheimer's Disease Takes a Violent Turn](#)

Can you forgive someone you love for abusive behavior when an illness is to blame?

[Customizing Your Safety Plan](#)

One size does not fit all when it comes to safety planning.

[Barriers to Leaving, Part 1](#)

There are at least 50 reasons a survivor may not be able to leave an abuser.

[Barriers to Leaving, Part 2](#)

A DV survivor gives possible reasons survivors may stay with an abuser.

[Barriers to Leaving, Part 3](#)

Did any of these prevent you from walking out the door?

[Barriers to Leaving, Part 4](#)

No place to go, no job skills and eight other reasons it can be hard to walk away.

[Barriers to Leaving, Part 5](#)

The final 10 reasons why a survivor might stay.

[Calling a Hotline When There Are Barriers In Your Way](#)

How to reach out to a DV hotline when you feel like you can't.

[When Your Support System Isn't Clear](#)

Some survivors aren't able to turn to family and friends.

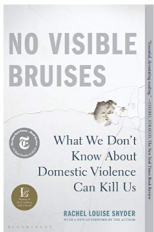
[Ask Amanda: How Do I Ask for Help?](#)

One reader knows it's time to disclose abuse, but she's not sure where to begin.

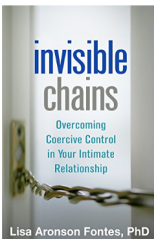


Reading books can be a helpful way to understand if you're a victim of abuse and understand the abuser's behavior.

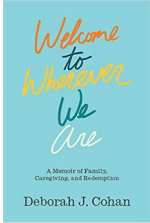
Here are our recommended reads:



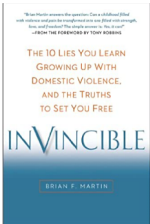
No Visible Bruises: What We Don't Know About Domestic Violence Can Kill Us. In *No Visible Bruises*, journalist Rachel Louise Snyder gives context for what we don't know we're seeing. She frames this urgent and immersive account of the scale of domestic violence in our country around key stories that explode the common myths—that if things were bad enough, victims would just leave; that a violent person cannot become nonviolent; that shelter is an adequate response; and most insidiously that violence inside the home is a private matter, sealed from the public sphere and disconnected from other forms of violence.



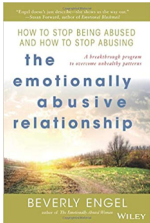
Invisible Chains: Overcoming Coercive Control in Your Intimate Relationship. Showered with attention? It can feel incredibly romantic and can blind you to hints of problems ahead. What happens when attentiveness becomes domination? The desire to control can lead to jealousy, threats, micromanaging, even physical violence. If you are trapped in a web of coercive control, this book provides answers, hope, and a way out



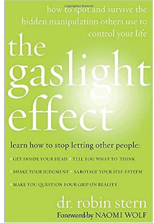
Welcome to Wherever We Are: A Memoir of Family, Caregiving, and Redemption In this gripping memoir, Cohan tells her unique personal story while also weaving in her expertise as a sociologist and domestic abuse counselor to address broader questions related to marriage, violence, divorce, only children, intimacy and loss.



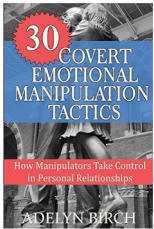
Invisible: The 10 Lies You Learn Growing Up with Domestic Violence, and the Truths to Set You Free. Invisible seeks to change this lack of awareness and understanding with a compelling look at this important issue, informing and inspiring anyone who grew up living with domestic violence--and those who love them, work with them, teach them, and mentor them.



The Emotionally Abusive Relationship: How to Stop Being Abused and How to Stop Abusing. In this fully expanded and updated third edition of the bestselling classic, you learn why verbal abuse is more widespread than ever, and how you can deal with it. You'll get more of the answers you need to recognize abuse when it happens, respond to abusers safely and appropriately, and most important, lead a happier, healthier life.



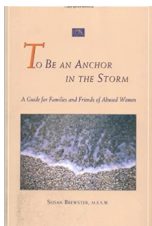
The Gaslight Effect: How to Spot and Survive the Hidden Manipulation Others Use to Control Your Life. Gaslighting is an insidious form of emotional abuse and manipulation that is hard to recognize and break free from. The book tells you how to detect gaslighting, recognize the stages and how to escape it in your relationships.



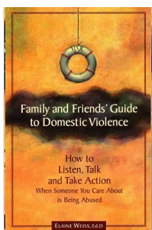
30 Covert Emotional Manipulation Tactics: How Manipulators Take Control In Personal Relationships. Learn the manipulator's game, so they can't play it with you. Identifying covert emotional manipulation is tricky. You sense something is wrong, but you can't quite put your finger on the problem. This powerful book will reveal to you if manipulation is at play in your relationships. It will open your eyes.



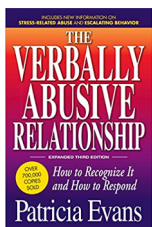
Coercive Control: How Men Entrap Women in Personal Life (Interpersonal Violence). One of the most important books ever written on domestic violence, Coercive Control breaks through entrenched views of physical abuse that have ultimately failed to protect women. Evan Stark, founder of one of America's first battered women's shelters, shows how "domestic violence" is neither primarily domestic nor necessarily violent, but a pattern of controlling behaviors more akin to terrorism and hostage-taking.



To Be an Anchor in the Storm: A Guide for Families and Friends of Abused Women. The author, herself a survivor, teaches how to recognize the signs of abuse, handle negative feelings, become an effective advocate, deal with the batterer, and distinguish between being an anchor and a rescuer.



Family and Friends' Guide to Domestic Violence: How to Listen, Talk and Take Action When Someone You Care About is Being Abused. It's hard to know what to do when someone you care about is in an abusive relationship. Do you ask about it? What if you're wrong? Do you offer to help? Even at the risk of interfering? If you have observed any of the following warning signs from a family member or friend, she may be a victim. You can help her--and, you might be saving her life!



The Verbally Abusive Relationship, Expanded Third Edition: How to recognize it and how to respond. In this fully expanded and updated third edition of the bestselling classic, you learn why verbal abuse is more widespread than ever, and how you can deal with it. You'll get more of the answers you need to recognize abuse when it happens, respond to abusers safely and appropriately, and most important, lead a happier, healthier life.



Sometimes lists are easier on the mind because they are uncluttered and to-the-point. If you'd rather read a few items vs. articles or books, these lists are for you.

To view all list items at once, click the SEE ALL button located below the list text.

- [33 Signs of Elder Abuse](#)
- [50 Barriers to Leaving](#)
- [13 Signs of Trauma Bonding](#)
- [19 Myths About Domestic Violence](#)
- [15 Obstacles Emergency Rooms Face in Identifying Abuse](#)
- [18 Warning Signs That You're Being Gaslighted](#)
- [35 Ways to Recognize Emotional Abuse](#)
- [25 Risk Factors for Domestic Violence](#)
- [19 Ways to Start Over Financially](#)



There are three well-known, free, online assessment tools available that can help you understand the level of danger that may be present, but not always obvious.

The Danger Assessment

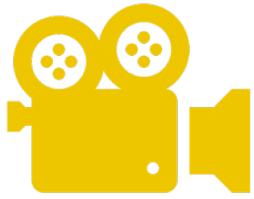
The free tool helps determine the level of danger an abused person has of being killed by an intimate partner.

MOSAIC

Using a series of questions, this tool assesses how similar a situation is to other situations that have gotten worse.

Ontario Domestic Assault Risk Assessment

A risk assessment designed to be used by professionals that calculates how a man who has assaulted his female partner ranks among similar perpetrators with respect to the likelihood that he will assault a female partner again in the future.



Click video thumbnail to watch





A lot of lessons can be taken from people who have been through it before. Check out the following survey results to learn from the experiences of others.

- [Did an abusive partner prevent you from voting in elections?](#)
- [Were you asked about abuse at your last doctor appointment?](#)
- [Survivors: Did you feel like you had power to stop abuse?](#)
- [Did an abuser ever use sleep deprivation as a form of abuse?](#)
- [How do you feel the system is failing DV survivors?](#)
- [Survivors: What types of empathy made a difference in your life?](#)
- [At what age did you first experience abuse by an intimate partner?](#)
- [Which type of abuse did you experience first?](#)



Online forums and chats can help you connect with others who are in or have faced similar situations, and find support and ideas from the survivor community.

[AfterSilence.org](https://www.aftersilence.org) aims to help victims become survivors and to communicate in the recovery of domestic and sexual violence. It offers an active message board and chat room for rape, sexual assault, sexual abuse, incest and molestation survivors. There are over 31,000 members and about 1,000,000 posts, including recent posts and many useful posts from days and months past.

[Pathways to Safety International](https://www.pathways.org/) If you're an American overseas, your situation is different than 99% of your fellow countryman, and this site will be a wonderful resource for you. Among the services is a 24-hour response to emails, as well as international phone options.

[DomesticShelters.org Facebook Page](#) offers one of the most active places where domestic violence survivors. You'll find conversation, past experiences and unvarnished stories, and occasionally advice from professionals who have joined in on a topic.

[DomesticShelters.org Facebook Group](#) is a private group designed to be a safe space for domestic abuse victims, survivors, advocates and others affected by abuse to support one another through meaningful dialogue and helpful insight.

[Fort Refuge](#) is a clever, grassroots site run by survivors for fellow survivors as a safe place to come together and discuss their struggles and victories in healing from various types of abuse. Though the forum and chat do not boast the same numbers as some of the larger organizations, they are one of the more active conversation places on the internet currently. They also add new content to their site regularly.

Love is Respect - National Teen Dating Helpline focuses on teen relationships and can be accessed by phone, text or live chat. It offers real-time, one-on-one support by trained peer advocates who offer information and advocacy to those involved in dating abuse. They also offer support to parents, teachers, clergy, law enforcement, and service providers.

National Domestic Violence Hotline offers confidential, private, one-on-one chats with advocates every day 24/7.

OnYourMind.net is a safe and anonymous place for teens to get information and support from other teens in an online chat room, covering topics such as relationships, school, depression, stress, suicide, parents, cutting, identity and health.

Pandora's Aquarium is an online forum with around 2 million posts and over 70,000 members, and is run by Pandora's Project, which provides information, support and resources to rape and sexual abuse survivors and their friends and family.

When accessing hotlines, chats or forums from a computer, tablet, or smartphone, please remember to take the necessary precautions to keep your activities confidential from your abuser. Learn more about how to stay safe online [here](#).

Also, keep in mind that local shelters may offer in-person or virtual support groups. You can find shelters in your area at [DomesticShelters.org](https://www.DomesticShelters.org).



Another way to determine if you're experiencing abuse is to contact a trained domestic violence advocate near you or through a national service.

To search for domestic violence program staffed with trained advocates, visit [DomesticShelters.org](https://www.DomesticShelters.org) and type either your city and state, or ZIP code, into the search bar at the top of the page. A list of organizations and contact numbers near you will be displayed. To reach an advocate, reach out directly by calling the phone number listed. Most are open 24/7.

To speak to an advocate at the National Domestic Violence Hotline, also 24 hours a day, seven days a week, call 800-799-SAFE (7233) or visit [thehotline.org](https://www.thehotline.org) to chat online.

It's important to know that your call is confidential and you can choose to remain anonymous when speaking with an advocate. To know what to expect when calling, read [this article](#).