

# Ten Top Tips



## When women are experiencing domestic violence

1. **Women experience abuse in its various forms.** Abuse is not just physical. It can be experienced in many forms and examples include emotional or verbal abuse, sexual assault, social isolation or financial deprivation to name a few. If one or more of these applies to you, then you are experiencing what is considered to be domestic violence!
2. **Any form of abuse** is usually an attempt to control another person. If you feel that you are unable to speak your mind freely without fear of consequences, or if you are restricted from having contact with friends or from seeking help or medical attention when you need it then this is considered a form of domestic violence.
3. **Violence and abuse** are often mistakenly called conflict, fighting, arguments, etc, when in fact something different is happening as fear is being generated which is not usually the case when couples are just experiencing a difference of opinion or arguing.
4. **Women are not responsible for the behaviour of their partners.** Women do not choose to be treated abusively or invite violence or cause it to happen because using violence is a choice and the person choosing violence is the one responsible for it. . It is your partner's choice to use violence that is the problem, not you.
5. **Women who experience violence** also experience a violation of their basic human rights. Women are equal to all others and have a right to live in a safe environment, free from violence and fear.
6. **Women often live in fear** that no one else could be experiencing or feeling the same as them. This is actually not true. Women experiencing violence often feel ashamed about what is happening and blame themselves which makes it difficult to share their fears with family and friends; however, there are professionals who can assist.
7. **Women who experience domestic violence** have developed ways of keeping themselves safe. Women are the experts in their own unique situations and are often tuned in to the behaviour of the person who is abusive and know the warning signs well. Trust those reactions; as women know how to keep themselves safe. If you are feeling unsafe it is very important to get help!
8. **Women who have feelings of disbelief, confusion, shame or guilt** may restrain themselves from talking to other people about what is happening to them, therefore isolating themselves. There are professionals who can help you understand what is going on in your life.
9. **Women in domestic violence situations** can often put everyone else's needs before their own. It is important to care for yourself. This can be challenging when you're not used to putting your needs first and are feeling unsafe, so we suggest you start with small steps such as a walk in the sunshine, taking time to read a magazine, having a chat with a friend, or going to a movie – something that makes you feel good and gives you a chance to build trust in yourself again so you can gain confidence to take other steps towards changing your situation or seeking help.
10. **Women often don't know where to get help.** If you feel ready to take those first steps, or just want to speak to someone contact the numbers below.

Centrecare

Women's Domestic Violence Helpline

Crisis Care

9325 6644

1800 007 339

1800 199 008

