IS YOUR RELATIONSHIP AFFECTING YOUR HEALTH?

Has a past or current partner:

- put you down or called you names?
- threatened you, your possessions, or your loved ones?
- hurt you or tried to hurt you physically, sexually, or emotionally?

IF SO, **VA CAN HELP.**

VA HEALTH CARE | Defining EXCELLENCE in the 21st Century

What Is Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)?

Intimate partner violence (IPV) occurs when a current or former intimate partner (for example, boyfriend, girlfriend, spouse) harms, threatens to harm, or stalks their partner.

EMOTIONAL IPV

Emotional IPV is when a person tries to hurt his/her partner's self-worth. It is common for emotional IPV to begin before other types of IPV.

Examples include:

- Name calling, putting you down
- Controlling your money or spending
- Keeping you from friends and family
- Bullying, stalking
- Controlling where you go or what you wear

PHYSICAL IPV

Physical IPV is when a person tries to hurt his/her partner by using physical force.

Examples include:

- Hitting, slapping
- Shoving, kicking
- Choking, biting
- Restraining, hair-pulling

SEXUAL IPV

Sexual IPV is when a person forces or tries to convince his/her partner to engage in sexual activities when the other partner does not want to or is unable to consent (for example, when someone is impacted by alcohol or drugs).

THREATS OF VIOLENCE

Threats of violence are ways to cause fear through words, actions, or weapons to harm the partner, their possessions, their pets, or their loved ones.

Some people experience only one of these forms of violence while others may experience more than one. IPV can be a single event or can last for many years. No matter what, no one deserves to be treated this way.

EVERYONE DESERVES TO **FEEL SAFE.**

IPV CAN HAPPEN TO **ANYONE.**

It happens to women or men who have intimate relationships with women, men or both. It can happen no matter your age, income, race, ethnicity, culture, religion, or disability.

What Are the Effects of IPV?

MENTAL HEALTH

- Sadness
- Feeling "on edge"
- Difficulty concentrating
- Trouble relaxing
- Being stressed out
- Trouble sleeping
- Nightmares
- Feelings of shame or guilt
- Blaming yourself for what happened

PHYSICAL HEALTH

- Pain
- Headaches
- Pregnancy complications
- Stomach problems
- Bruises/cuts
- Broken bones
- Fatal injuries
- Female health problems

SOCIAL HEALTH

- Avoiding new relationships
- Feeling uncomfortable or unsafe in relationships
- Money problems
- Difficulties trusting people
- Pulling away or isolating from friends and family
- Homelessness
- Job issues

It may be hard to talk about these experiences. It is normal to get upset when discussing IPV or to worry about what others will think. Remember that ***it is not your fault.*** If you would like to speak with someone in private, VA has services and people who can help you. ***You are not alone.*** Talk to any of your VA providers.

More than **30%** of women have experienced **rape, physical violence, or stalking** by an intimate partner at some point in their lives

Over **50%** of women have experienced **emotional IPV**

RESEARCH SUGGESTS THAT

IPV may be more common in Veteran than non-Veteran relationships

HAS A CURRENT OR PAST PARTNER EVER:

- ☐ Emotionally mistreated you (e.g., called you names, tried to embarrass or intimidate you)?
- ☐ Tried to control where you go, who you talk to, what you can wear, or what you can do?
- ☐ Told you that you are "crazy" or "worthless?"
- ☐ Stolen or tried to control your money?
- ☐ Looked at you or acted in ways that scare you?
- ☐ Threatened you, your possessions, or your pets or loved ones?
- ☐ Physically hurt you or tried to hurt you?
- ☐ Forced you to engage in sexual activities?
- ☐ Threatened to commit suicide or kill you if you left them?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, your health and safety may be at risk.

VA CAN **HELP.**

What Can I Do If I Have Experienced IPV?

The most important thing is

YOUR SAFETY

and the safety of your children

If you don't feel safe at home right now, you can seek help **IMMEDIATELY by calling 911**

If you do feel safe now, ***but are concerned about the future,*** there are steps you can take to increase your safety:

- Talk to *any* of your VA providers about IPV or any safety concerns.
- Tell your trusted friends and family about what is going on and come up with a safe place you could go if needed.
- Create a safety plan with your provider.

YOUR SAFETY PLAN MAY INCLUDE:

- ✔ Safe places you can go.
- ✔ Saving money in a safe place.
- ✔ Phone numbers and addresses for family and friends.
- ✔ Shelters and crisis hotline numbers.

Contact local shelters if you are unable to stay with trusted family and friends.

TO FIND A LOCAL SHELTER:

- ✔ Contact your local police department,
- ✔ Call the National Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-799-SAFE (7233), or
- ✔ Visit www.thehotline.org

What Services Are Available?

MANY PEOPLE WITHIN VA CAN **HELP YOU GET SERVICES.**

- Contact your local VA hospital and ask to speak with the Women Veterans Program Manager.
- VA employees who are impacted by IPV can contact their Employee Assistance Program.
- VA can provide community referrals for things such as legal advice, shelters, and support groups.
- VA offers effective therapies for mental health problems that commonly occur with IPV, such as posttraumatic stress disorder, depression, anxiety, and alcohol or drug use problems.
- Talk to your primary care provider and they can refer you to a mental health specialist, such as a social worker or psychologist.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

- Women Veterans Healthcare
  www.womenshealth.va.gov/womenshealth/intimatepartnerviolence.asp
- Futures Without Violence
  www.futureswithoutviolence.org
- National Domestic Violence Hotline
  www.thehotline.org

One in Three Women Veterans are Hurt by Someone They Love.

LET VA HELP.

WOMEN VETERANS HEALTH CARE

VA Care Management and Social Work Services
Care and Compassion across the Continuum

National Center for PTSD
POSTTRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER

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Intimate partner violence (IPV), which is often called domestic violence, occurs when a current or former intimate partner (e.g., boyfriend, girlfriend, spouse) harms, threatens to harm, or stalks their partner. While domestic violence does include IPV, it refers to any violence that occurs in the home. Domestic violence includes child abuse, elder abuse, and other forms of interpersonal abuse. IPV refers specifically to violence between intimate partners. IPV can happen to anyone. It can happen no matter your age, income, race, ethnicity, culture, religion, or disability.

NATIONAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HOTLINE

1-800-799-SAFE (7233)

Call for 24-hour confidential support, local referrals, safety planning, housing options, and legal resources.

Call 911 if you are in immediate danger.

www.thehotline.org

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