

Domestic Violence – FAQs

What is domestic violence?

Domestic violence is violence, force, or threat that results in bodily injury or places one in reasonable apprehension of death, sexual assault, or bodily injury and that is committed by a person against such person's family or household member, which includes a current or former spouse, a person with whom the victim shares a child in common, or who is cohabitating with or has cohabitated with the person as a spouse or intimate partner.

Who can domestic violence affect?

Domestic violence can occur between people of all ages, race, ethnicities, and economic, educational, and religious backgrounds. Domestic violence occurs in both opposite-sex and same-sex relationships and can happen to intimate partners who are married, living together, or have a child in common.

Domestic violence not only affects those who are abused, but also has a substantial effect on family members, friends, co-workers, other witnesses, and the community at large. Children who grow up witnessing domestic violence are among those seriously affected by this crime. Frequent exposure to violence in the home not only predisposes children to numerous social and physical problems, but also teaches them that violence is a normal way of life - therefore, increasing their risk of becoming society's next generation of victims and abusers.

What does domestic violence look like?

- Calls you names, insults you, or constantly criticizes you
- Keeps track of where you go or whom you are with
- Threatens you or your children with physical violence or the use of a weapon
- Forces you to have sex or disregards your wishes about sexual activity or birth control
- Causes you to lie to others (e.g. regarding injuries)
- Embarrasses or humiliates you in public in an attempt to control you
- Bites, slaps, hits, kicks, or chokes/strangles you
- Prevents you from having access to your own money or shared financial accounts
- Keeps you from working outside the home or has forced you to switch jobs

What can you do if you or someone you know is a victim of domestic violence?

- The Office of Wellness and Mental Health can help you to think about your options and talk about how the incident has impacted you. OWMH can also refer you to local resources, including shelter and provisions for basic needs. Domestic violence is a violation of NOVA Policy. For information on NOVA's obligation under Title IX to address instances of domestic violence, see the Sexual Misconduct and Sexual Harassment Policy on Sexual Violence, Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, and Stalking. For more information, visit the [Title IX](#) webpage.
- You have the right to file a police report, and to file a report with the Office of Wellness and Mental Health or the Title IX Coordinator.
- In the event of an emergency, call 911 or notify campus police at 703-764-5000. Go to a safe place and seek medical attention, if needed.
- If you are a victim of domestic violence, know that the abuse is never your fault and there are resources available for you.

¹ Adopted from The United States Department of Justice (2015) and Fairfax County Domestic Violence: Domestic Violence Overview (2013).