

What is Abuse?

Abuse is when someone harms another.

Abuse or violence can occur in any family. It can happen to anyone regardless of:

- gender
- age
- income level
- ethnic background

Abuse can occur in any relationship, including a marriage, same-sex or dating relationship.

The harm can include behaviours that are:

- physical
- sexual
- psychological
- financial
- neglectful

It can be one instance or a pattern over time.

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse includes:

- hitting, punching, slapping, choking, burning, pushing, shoving or any other forceful physical act you do not consent to
- confining you or not letting you contact friends or family
- forcing you to take drugs or drink alcohol or do something illegal

*Abuse is
against
the law in
Canada.*

*You should NOT rely on this booklet for legal advice.
It provides general information on Alberta law only.*



Find more information about sexual violence at: www.cplea.ca/sexual-violence/

Read more about coercive control in a LawNow article at: bit.ly/3FkcJWe

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse includes:

- any sexual activity that you do not consent to
- forcing or threatening you to do something sexual that you do not want to do
- using physical force, weapons or objects in sexual acts without your consent
- involving other people in sexual acts without your consent
- involving or suggesting involving in sexual activity a child or someone who cannot give consent (such as someone who is ill, drunk, high on drugs, being intimidated or pressured)

In any relationship, including a marriage, Canadian law says you must voluntarily consent to each sexual activity.

Psychological Abuse

Psychological abuse includes:

- controlling behaviour, such as bullying, humiliating, threatening, yelling, blaming, shaming, ridiculing, disrespecting or criticizing you
- controlling what you can or cannot do
- threatening to commit suicide
- threatening to injure or kill someone
- threatening to hurt or take away your children
- using person beliefs (such as the abuser's interpretation of religious or cultural beliefs) to manipulate, dominate or control you

Financial Abuse

Financial abuse includes:

- keeping you dependent on the abuser
- stealing your money
- controlling your finances or refusing to share money
- not allowing you to work or go to school
- causing you to lose your job (such as by making you miss work)

Neglect

Neglect means not providing things needed to survive, such as food, clothing, medical care, or shelter. It can also include causing a risk of serious harm by not doing something.

LEARN MORE ABOUT ABUSE AND HOW TO RESPOND

Read the other info sheets in this series to learn more about:

- Emergency Protection Orders
- King's Bench Protection Orders
- Exclusive Possession Orders
- Restraining Orders
- Keeping the Abuser Away
- Going to the Police
- Gathering Evidence of Abuse
- Serving Documents on an Abusive Party
- Renting and Ending Your Lease Early
- Planning to Leave
- Help with Finances
- Children & Parenting
- Leaving an Abusive Relationship If You Are Not a Canadian Citizen
- Clare's Law

Visit www.willownet.ca – a CPLEA website about violence and abuse laws in Alberta.

If you are experiencing abuse, help is available.



About CPLA

The Centre for Public Legal Education Alberta is dedicated to making the law understandable for Albertans. We provide legal information on a wide variety of topics through our websites, print resources, workshops and more. For more information, visit our website: www.cplea.ca

© 2021

Legal Resource Centre of Alberta Ltd., Edmonton, Alberta

Operating as: Centre for Public Legal Education Alberta

You should NOT rely on this booklet for legal advice. It provides general information on Alberta law only.

We would like to thank the Alberta Law Foundation and the Department of Justice Canada for providing operational funding, which makes publications like this possible.

**Alberta LAW
FOUNDATION**



Department of Justice
Canada

Ministère de la Justice
Canada

Resources

Find more information about domestic violence and the other info sheets in this series on **WillowNet** – a CPLA website about violence and abuse laws in Alberta. www.willownet.ca

- **Family Violence Info Line: 310.1818**
Get help anonymously. Available 24/7 in over 170 languages.
- **Victim Services Alberta: 780.427.3460 or www.alberta.ca/victim-services-units.aspx**
Connect with local supports.
- **Court and Justice Services:**
www.alberta.ca/court-and-justice-services.aspx
Get help finding court forms or information on the court process.
- **Community Legal Clinics in Alberta:**
www.lawcentralalberta.ca/clinics
Get free legal advice if you earn a low income.
- **Legal Aid Alberta's Emergency Protection Order Program (EPOP): 1.780.422.9222 (Edmonton area) or 1.403.297.5260 (Calgary area) or www.legalaid.ab.ca/services/family-violence-matters/**
Get free legal help applying for an EPO.



We want to know what you think!
To take our one minute survey:

- capture this QR code with your phone camera, or
- go to bit.ly/3g8tb99