

## RESOURCES

Below are some number that may be of assistance to you. Use this space to also record any other useful phone numbers or resources you come across.

Asian/Pacific Islander Domestic Violence Resource (DVRP)  
(202) 464-4477  
<http://www.dvrp.org>

The National Domestic Violence Hotline  
1800-799-SAFE (7233)  
<http://www.ndvh.org/>

Asian Pacific American Legal Resource Center (APALRC)  
(202) 393-3572  
<http://www.apalrc.org/dp/>



# Questions and Answers



"You deserve to be free from abuse in your own home."

VIRGINIA MARYLAND WASHINGTON DC

## What is "Domestic Violence"?

Does your partner blame you for a lot of things? Does he call you names that are demeaning to you?

Is your partner extremely jealous and does he discourage you from speaking to friends or family? Does he prevent you from getting a job or learning English?

Has your partner ever threatened to take away your children? Has he told you that he will have you deported?

Does your partner threaten to harm you? Have you ever been hit by your partner? Has he forced you to have sex when you did not want to?

Has he ever been violent towards you? Does he blame drugs or alcohol for his bad behavior? Does he claim that his actions are your fault? Does he make you feel like you are crazy?

If you answered YES, to any of these questions, YOU ARE NOT ALONE. Many other women like you are in the same situation. YOUR PARTNER'S BEHAVIOR IS NOT YOUR FAULT. Help is available to you.

**SAFETY:** Do you feel unsafe living in the same house? Do you feel unsafe even when you are not living with your abusive partner? Do you fear for your children's safety? Our advocates can work with you to come up with a safety plan.

## What Can I Do?

There are a variety of services available to assist you to stop the violence in your home: shelters, hospitals, police, legal aid and other community services. You may also be eligible for public benefits to help you and your children.

**HOUSING:** If you are in a domestic violence situation and need rental assistance or have questions about your rights as a tenant, you can speak to an advocate.

**DVRP** is a nonprofit organization that strives to help women in the Asian/Pacific Islander (A/PI) community who are victims of domestic violence. We provide free and confidential support through our

bilingual advocates who are trained to specifically assist A/PI women by increasing their access to resources and improving their safety including:

- information about domestic violence
- peer support
- safety planning
- interpretation and translation
- accompaniment to court, legal and social service providers
- referrals for shelter, legal and social services;
- financial empowerment and life skills development; and
- other services as needed

If you're an immigrant or refugee, you face some unique challenges. Keep in mind, no one deserves to be abused. Even if you are undocumented, you can get help.

**Call DVRP (202-464-4477) between 10AM and 6PM to be connected with an advocate or for information on services in your area.**

Read on for more information about what you can do to protect yourself and your children.

**SHELTERS:** Shelters provide a safe place to stay and other supportive services for you and your children. Shelters may be able to accommodate your individual needs. If you want to learn more about shelters in your area, you can speak to an advocate.

### Should I leave my home if I am in danger?

YES. Go to a friend's house or a battered women's shelter. Shelters are usually free and will often have information about other services available in your community.

**Should I call the police?** YES. Domestic Violence is against the law.

#### WHAT TO TELL THE POLICE:

"This is an emergency. I am a victim of domestic violence. My name is       (name)      , I speak       (language)       and I am at       (location/address)      ."

- police can escort you and your children to safety
- they may arrest your abuser if they believe a crime has been committed
- if the officer does not speak your language, find someone other than your child or abuser to interpret for you
- ALWAYS ask the police officer to complete a report, and ask for the incident number report and the police officer's name and badge number for any future references.
- DON'T WORRY; the police generally will not turn in a woman reporting domestic violence to the Immigration and Naturalization Services (INS).

**I have heard of Protection Orders. What do they do?** A protection order can keep your abuser from coming near, attacking, sexually assaulting or contacting you, your children, or other family members. YOU DO NOT NEED TO BE A CITIZEN OR LEGAL RESIDENT TO GET A PROTECTION ORDER.

**SUPPORT GROUPS:** Would it be helpful to speak to others who are in a similar situation as yourself? Our advocates can share information with you about support groups in your area.

You can obtain a Protection Order at your nearest police station or courthouse. Keep in mind that you do not have to leave your home if you decide to get a Protective Order. Ask your DVRA advocate for more information.

In Washington D.C., protective orders can last up to 1 year, but at least 1 incident must have occurred in D.C. to seek protection from the D.C. court.

In Virginia, there are three different types of protection orders: emergency, preliminary, and permanent. The emergency protection order is valid for 72 hours, the preliminary protection order is valid for 15 days, and the permanent protection can last up to 2 years.

In Maryland, you may be eligible for a protection order or a peace order. Peace orders last up to 6 months and provide protection to people experiencing certain kinds of abuse who are not eligible for protective orders.

**How can I get lawful Permanent Residency without my husband's help?** The Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) creates two ways for women married to US citizens or lawful permanent residents to get their residency. The first is called "self petitioning." Instead of depending upon your husband to apply for your residency with INS, you can apply on your own for yourself and your children.

Your husband plays no role in the process and does not have to know you are applying for residency. Because the law is complicated, YOU SHOULD NOT GO TO THE INS WITHOUT FIRST CONSULTING A SHELTER WORKER, IMMIGRATION LAWYER, OR ONE OF THE AGENCIES LISTED ON THE BACK OF THIS BROCHURE FOR ASSISTANCE.

The second method is called "cancellation of removal." This method is only available to you if you are in, or can be placed into, deportation proceedings.

If you qualify for cancellation, the court may waive your deportation and grant you residency. However, because you must be in deportation proceedings before you can apply, be certain to see an immigration attorney before proceeding.

If you don't qualify under VAWA, don't despair. There may be other ways you could get immigration status. The best thing to do is to discuss your situation with an immigration or domestic violence advocate. DO NOT CALL INS.

### My Partner is threatening to take my children away if I leave him. What can I do?

If your husband/intimate partner is threatening to take your children away or take them to his home country, you should know that you have options and that there are laws that may work in your favor. Learn more about how to protect yourself and your children by contacting DVRA.

**HEALTH:** There are important health screenings and evaluations that are necessary for everyone. If you are in a domestic violence relationship and you want to learn more about your health and how to afford health care, you can speak to an advocate.

**How can I support myself and my children if I leave my husband?** The law requires that the father of your children support them, even if you are living apart, even if you were never married to him, and without regard to immigration status. You should contact a family lawyer or a domestic violence advocate to find out how to obtain child support in your state.

Some married women may also be eligible to receive spousal support or alimony.

Lawful permanent residents may use their "green cards" or resident alien cards to demonstrate their eligibility to work. Refugees and other immigrants must apply for authorization to work. An immigration attorney will be able to tell you whether you are eligible for work authorization. It is very important that you do not use false papers to work or make false claims of United States citizenship.

### Will I be deported if I take any of the above actions?

If you are now a U.S. citizen, lawful permanent resident or possess a valid visa, you cannot be deported unless you entered the United States on fraudulent documents, violated conditions of your visa or have committed certain crimes.

If you are undocumented or are unsure about your immigration status, you should seek the assistance of an immigration attorney to see if you can legalize your status. Until then, you should do what you need to do to make yourself safe. Even if your husband/intimate partner were to report you to the INS, deportation may not follow, would not be immediate, and, in most cases, you would have the opportunity to present your case to a judge.

### Will my Husband/Intimate partner be deported if I take action?

Seeking assistance from shelters or lawyers is extremely unlikely to result in the deportation of your husband/intimate partner. It is important to remember that you must focus on keeping yourself and your children safe. It is your husband/intimate partner who has put himself at risk by his actions.