



Teenhelp

menu

Domestic Abuse - What can I do?

Q. I don't want my family to break up, but I can't stand the violence. What can I do?

A. It is completely normal to feel torn between feeling love for one or both parents and anger at



their behaviour. No one wants their family to break up, but sometimes it is not safe for people to continue to live together. Lots of families break up for lots of reasons.

It does not mean you cannot continue to have a relationship with both your parents if you want to. Family break-up is a major change in a young person's life but there are organisations that can offer [help and support](#).

Check out the section on separation on the menu to the right.

Q. Why doesn't my parent just leave?

A. There are many reasons that someone might not be ready to leave. They might:

- Feel they have nowhere else to go.
- Feel it's worse to break up the family.
- Feel too afraid or that the abuse might get worse.
- Still love their partner and hope the abuse might stop.

- Be too ashamed to tell anyone and get help.
- Be confused and not know what to do.

Q. What can I do to make it stop?

Letting someone you trust know what is happening is the best way to get help and support for you and your family.

A.

You are not responsible for making the abuse stop. Abuse is never your fault. The person who abuses is responsible for their behaviour and only they can change it. Parents and other adults have a duty of care to children and young people. Secrecy keeps abuse from being discovered and stopped. Letting someone you trust know what is happening is the best way to get help and support for you and your family.



It can be difficult to speak out about the abuse, particularly if the abuser is someone you care about. But, if you, or someone else in the family, don't tell someone about the abuse, it is likely to continue.

Q. I just want to get away from it all, I feel like running away. What should I do?

A.

It's understandable that you want to get away from the abuse and running away might seem like a solution. But unless you have somewhere safe to go you could put yourself in more danger. Many young people who run away from home, without somewhere to go or the means to support themselves, run the risk of becoming homeless. If you feel like running away, it's important to talk to someone you trust. Talk about all your options. Find out what support services are available to you. Plan how they, and others, can help and support you with your situation.

Tell someone

If you are living in a family where there is abuse or if you are worried about your own safety or that of your family, the best thing you can do is talk to someone that you trust. It might be a relative like a grandparent or an aunt, a teacher, or another adult in your life. Keeping abuse a secret is what helps it to continue. Sometimes it can be difficult to find the right person to talk to or the right service for your situation. If this happens to you, it is important not to give up. If you can't tell anyone you know, contact a service that can give you information, advice and support.

- Childline Freephone Helpline: 1800 666 666
- Samaritans Callsave: 1850 60 90 90
- Women's Aid National Freephone Helpline: 1800 341 900
- A.M.E.N. (for male victims) Tel: 046 9023718

Get Help

If the abuser is living in your home then you might need a safe place to live for a while. There are refuges for victims of abuse around the country. The Gardaí or the local HSE duty social worker can support you to get the help you need.

- Contact the Gardaí at your local Garda station
- Talk to a duty social worker at your local HSE health centre. For details try: HSE Infoline Lo-call 1850 24 1850

If you are ever in danger:

- * **Call the Guards on 999**
- * **Contact an adult that you trust immediately**

Information on other organisations where you will be able to get help and support is provided here. If you know or suspect that someone you care about is experiencing domestic abuse, this information may help you to help them.

Q.

No one knows what my life is like. I feel so alone.

A.

Living with abuse can make you feel very isolated and alone, particularly as the abuse is likely to be hidden. Many people will understand what you are going through and can help and support you. Talk to a trusted friend, someone else in your family or another adult - a teacher, sports coach or a friend's parent or check out the Finding Help section.