

sex talk.

answers to your questions about sex and relationships

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Come support survivors and end sexual violence at the Take Back The Night march and rally, April 10th! For info call 626-1829.



Q What is the technical definition of a violent relationship? How do I know if I'm in one?

A. Great question! Abusive relationships contain a pattern of behavior that one person exhibits designed to obtain and maintain a perceived sense of power and control. Contrary to popular belief, abusive people do not simply have an anger problem, but rather an entitlement problem. The presence of abuse can manifest in different ways including: physical abuse, emotional abuse, psychological abuse, financial abuse, and sexual abuse. Abusive people will use these tactics to make their partners' world smaller by isolating them from their family, friends, and loved ones, using threats of physical or emotional harm in order to maintain power and control. Individuals in violent relationships often report feeling alone and bad about themselves because of the violence their partner inflicts.

Remember, abuse rarely occurs immediately. Often there is a honeymoon phase where the abuser will treat their partner with love, respect, and shower them with affection. This is short lived and soon the abusive traits emerge and the pattern begins. According to the Centers for Disease

Control and Prevention, **one in four women has experienced domestic violence in her lifetime.**

How can you help a friend in an abusive relationship? Often we hear individuals ask "why don't they just leave?" when really we should ask "why do abusive people abuse?" Even well-intended people can ask the wrong questions, so it is important to be aware of how to express concern to your friend. Campus Health has a great website designed to teach students how to talk to their friends about difficult situations – including relationship abuse – called Friend 2 Friend (f2f.health.arizona.edu). The Oasis Program Against Sexual Assault and Relationship Violence is a confidential resource for students, staff, and faculty either experiencing abuse themselves or being impacted by relationship violence, sexual assault, and stalking. The Oasis Program can be reached by calling 626-2051.

*Guest columnist:
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Have a question? Send it to sextalk@email.arizona.edu

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