

Gender violence

Gender violence is violence against a woman by a man with whom she has or had an emotional relationship. Women all over the world, from different cultures, religions and social classes, suffer it. It affects both their health and that of their children. That's why it is also a health problem. Violence can never be justified.

Gender violence can be:

- **Physical.** He has hit you, pushed you around or threatened you. You are afraid of him.
- **Psychological.** He controls you, isolates you (continuously calling you or sending you messages. He asks you to give an account of everything you do, does not like you seeing friends or family, does not let you work, study, attend business meetings or go on business trips), undermines your self-esteem (insulting you, belittling you or your work, humiliating you, judging how you dress, ignoring you, making you feel guilty), he intimidates you (threatening to take your children away and leave you without anywhere to live).
- **Sexual.** He has forced you to have sex or to do things you do not want to.
- **Economic.** He limits the money he gives to the family or takes your money or your things.

Often, the aggressor **makes you feel guilty** so that you think you deserve to be abused. That is not true. The aggressor is the only person at fault. You did not cause this situation.

Look for support from people you trust. A network of friends and relations offers protection against gender violence.

Get information from the social services, from women's support services or from the health professionals at your doctor's surgery. We guarantee you **total confidentiality**.

Keeping violence secret protects the aggressor and makes it harder to protect you and your children. Silence will not improve your situation and may lead to serious situations of physical or psychological danger. You have a right to be listened to, to be helped and to be protected.

Weigh up the option of reporting any kind of physical or verbal violence. You can report it to the Mossos d'Esquadra police, the local police or the public prosecutor's office, to the domestic violence courts and to the magistrate's court. The public defender will offer you legal assistance or you can choose your own lawyer. Support services for women often also have a legal service.

If you live with the aggressor. If you are afraid and think that something serious may happen, tell the people closest to you about the situation and inform the neighbours that you trust so they can call the police (112) if they hear a disturbance.

If you want to end the relationship. Do not tell the aggressor until you can be sure of the conditions necessary for safety. If you think you may have to escape, you will need a safe place to live. If you cannot find one, contact the support services for women subject to gender violence: at the doctor's surgery we will tell you what to do. You can also go to the municipal social services or to the police. There are shelters for situations that so require.

Get a suitcase ready with the minimum you need for you and your children (clothes, toilet bag, medicines, copy of the house and car keys and your own and your children's documentation: ID card, health card, driving license, deeds, life insurance and family record book). If possible, leave the suitcase at the home of someone you trust, and leave home with your children.

Children. Tell them that violence by anyone is never acceptable and if there is a violent situation anywhere, they have to protect themselves and not to interfere. Agree on a keyword for situations of risk: they should know to seek help when they hear it.

Helplines
112
900 900 120

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