

Documenting Abuse



The warning signs of dating violence aren't always dramatic, but if you keep track of incidents of abuse, you can better identify red flags, take steps to prevent future abuse and be prepared if you ever do decide to seek legal remedies. Detailed documentation is important, especially if the incident took place in a private setting or was repeated in a distinct pattern.

Ways to Document Abuse

- Keep a journal about what you're going through. Include:
 - Any incidents of abuse.
 - Statements you, your partner or any witnesses made about what happened.
 - The date and time of each incident.
 - A description of any injuries, no matter how small. Take pictures if you can store them safely.
 - A description of the scene. For example, is the furniture overturned? Are any items thrown around? Again, take pictures if you can.
 - How the incident made you feel.
- Seek medical care, even if there are no visible injuries. Just because you don't have any cuts or bruises doesn't mean you weren't physically harmed.
- File a report with the police.

Digital Abuse Counts Too

In abusive relationships, threats and controlling behavior often occur by phone or over the internet. On occasion, your partner will even admit to the abuse or an element of it in a message or online post. You may be hesitant to report this type of unwanted contact or even recognize it as abuse, but it counts in a court of law.

Digital evidence is often fleeting and can be deleted, accidentally or intentionally, very easily. For this reason, it's important to secure evidence quickly:

- Print out all emails that contain any evidence or information about the incident. Make sure the printout includes the sender, recipient, date and time.
- If possible, print out text messages. If not, take a picture of the cell phone displaying the message, contact information, date and time.
- If possible, print out your call log. If not, take a picture of the cell phone displaying the contact information, date and time.
- Print screen shots of social networking sites that contain evidence, such as admissions of abuse, threats of violence or pictures that you didn't consent to. Remember to check both your and your partner's site.
- Record voicemails onto a digital recorder and include the time and date.
- Try to save all future, abusive electronic communications using these same methods.

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SMS text "loveis" to 22522

call 1-866-331-9474

Discuss your options confidentially.
Peer advocates are available 24/7.

For more information, visit www.loveisrespect.org

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