

An illustration of a woman in a green shirt reaching out to hold hands with silhouetted figures in a stone archway. The archway is made of grey stone blocks and frames a bright, blue sky with white clouds. The silhouetted figures are of various ages and are holding hands, forming a circle. The woman in the foreground is also holding hands with one of the silhouetted figures. The overall scene is one of support and community.

# LEAVING ABUSE



Legal  
Services  
Society

British Columbia  
[www.legalaid.bc.ca](http://www.legalaid.bc.ca)

Legal Aid BC

July 2019

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See the back cover to find out how to get free copies of this booklet.

This booklet explains the law in general. It isn't intended to give you legal advice on your particular problem. Because each person's case is different, you may need to get legal help. The information in this book is up to date as of July 2019.

MAYA AND JASMINE ARE FRIENDS. ONE DAY THEY MEET. MAYA IS UPSET, SO THEY SIT AND TALK.

WHAT'S WRONG, MAYA?



MY MARRIAGE HASN'T BEEN EASY. ROY GETS ANGRY A LOT. SOMETIMES HE YELLS AT ME AND SCARES ME. SOMETIMES HE HITS ME...



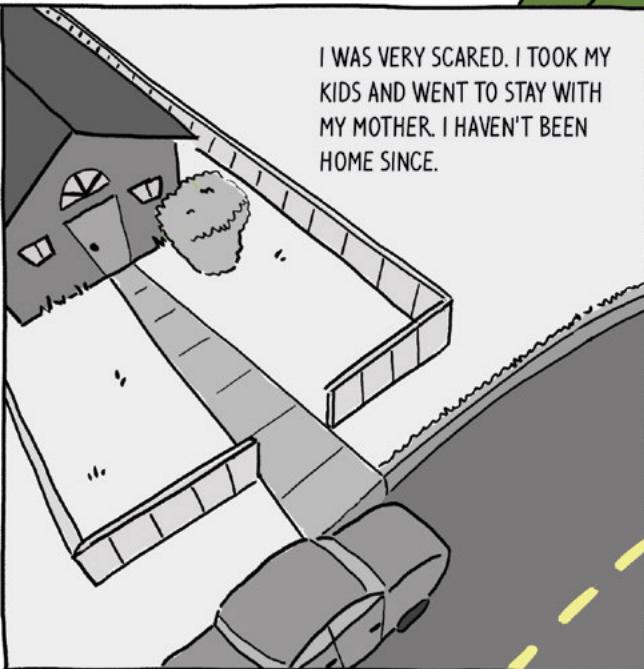
TWO NIGHTS AGO HE GOT VERY ANGRY. HE YELLED AT ME AND HIT ME. MY NEIGHBOURS CALLED 911 AND THE POLICE CAME TO OUR HOME.



THE POLICE TOOK ROY AWAY FOR THE NIGHT.



I WAS VERY SCARED. I TOOK MY KIDS AND WENT TO STAY WITH MY MOTHER. I HAVEN'T BEEN HOME SINCE.



I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO. I FEEL SO ALONE.

IF YOU'RE IN DANGER FROM YOUR PARTNER, **DON'T WAIT. CALL 911.** IF YOU DON'T SPEAK ENGLISH, ASK 911 FOR AN INTERPRETER. IF YOUR AREA DOESN'T HAVE 911 SERVICE, CALL YOUR LOCAL POLICE OR RCMP EMERGENCY NUMBER.

DON'T WORRY. I CAN HELP YOU FIND HELP.



HERE'S THE PHONE NUMBER FOR VICTIMLINK BC.



YOU CAN CALL THEM 24 HOURS A DAY, 7 DAYS A WEEK AT 1-800-563-0808 OR 604-875-0885.  
YOU CAN ALSO TEXT 604-836-6381.

VICTIMLINK BC HELPS PEOPLE WHO ARE VICTIMS OF ABUSE. THEY CAN GIVE YOU INFORMATION AND SUPPORT. THEY CAN TELL YOU WHAT YOU CAN DO NEXT.

ALSO, THEY SPEAK MANY DIFFERENT LANGUAGES.



THANKS. I'LL CALL THEM.

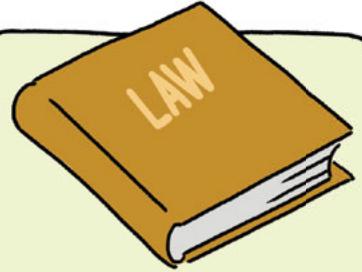
LATER THAT DAY, MAYA GOES TO THE WOMEN'S CENTRE AND MEETS SARA. SARA IS A COMMUNITY WORKER. MAYA TELLS SARA ABOUT HER PARTNER.

AND HERE IS A WOMEN'S CENTRE THAT'S CLOSE TO YOU.

WOMEN'S CENTRE



MANY PEOPLE WHO ARE ABUSED ARE AFRAID TO LEAVE THEIR PARTNER. IT'S SCARY, BUT PEOPLE LIKE ME CAN HELP.

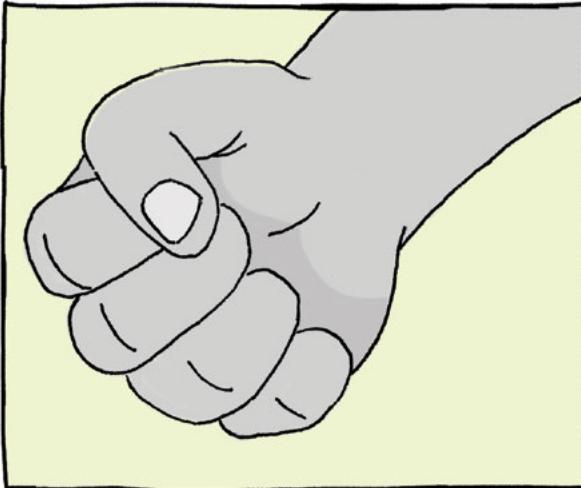


ABUSE IS NEVER YOUR FAULT. IT'S AGAINST THE LAW TOO.

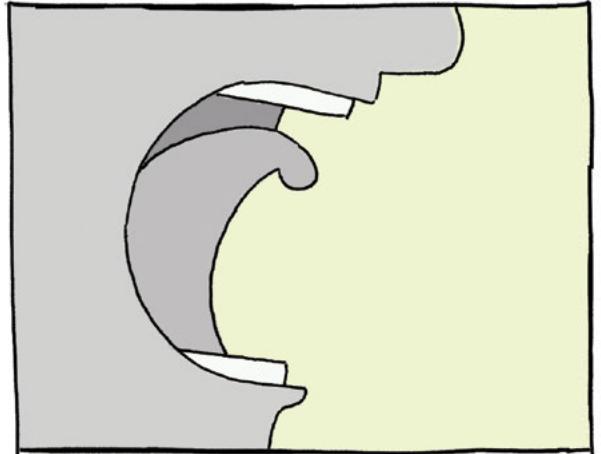
ABUSE IS MORE THAN JUST HITTING,

ABUSE IS WHEN SOMEONE USES THREATS OR VIOLENCE TO CONTROL THEIR PARTNER. THERE ARE MANY TYPES OF ABUSE.

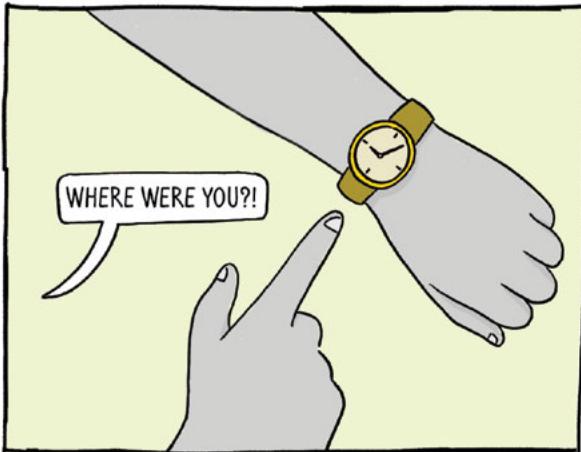




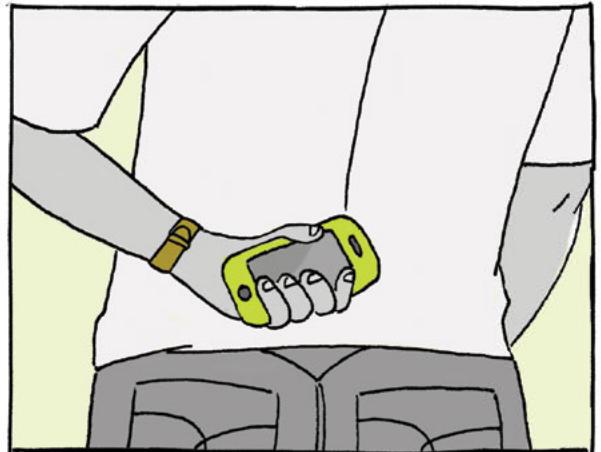
HITTING YOU, SAYING THEY'LL HIT YOU, OR BREAKING THINGS IS **PHYSICAL ABUSE**.



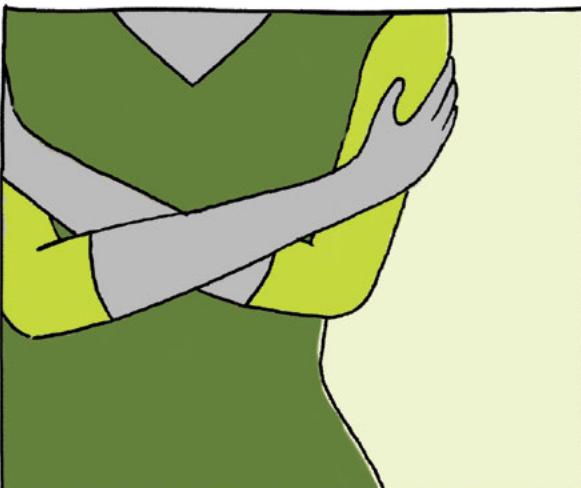
**VERBAL AND EMOTIONAL ABUSE** CAN BE YELLING AT YOU, THREATENING YOU, OR STOPPING YOU FROM TALKING TO YOUR FRIENDS OR FAMILY.



IF YOUR PARTNER WANTS TO KNOW WHERE YOU ARE ALL THE TIME, OR SHOWS UP TO SEE IF YOU'RE WHERE YOU SAID YOU WOULD BE, THAT'S **PSYCHOLOGICAL ABUSE**.



IF YOUR PARTNER LISTENS TO YOUR PHONE CALLS, OR READS YOUR TEXT MESSAGES AND EMAILS, THAT CAN ALSO BE **PSYCHOLOGICAL ABUSE**.



**SEXUAL ABUSE** IS WHEN YOUR PARTNER MAKES YOU HAVE SEX WHEN YOU DON'T WANT TO.



IF YOUR PARTNER CONTROLS YOUR MONEY OR STOPS YOU FROM MAKING MONEY, THAT CAN BE **FINANCIAL ABUSE**.



I CAN HELP YOU MAKE A SAFETY PLAN SO YOU AND YOUR CHILDREN ARE SAFER.



I CAN HELP YOU GET COUNSELLING.



I CAN ALSO HELP YOU APPLY FOR MONEY IF YOUR PARTNER CONTROLS YOUR BANK ACCOUNT.



AND I CAN HELP YOU APPLY FOR LEGAL AID, TO GET A LAWYER TO HELP YOU FOR FREE.



LEGAL AID BC GIVES FREE LEGAL ADVICE OR A FREE LAWYER TO SOME PEOPLE.

MAYA GOES TO A LEGAL AID OFFICE NEARBY. SHE MEETS WITH AN INTAKE WORKER.

LEGAL AID OFFICE



HI MAYA, MY NAME IS JIM. I'M A LEGAL AID INTAKE WORKER. MY JOB IS TO FIND OUT IF YOU CAN GET A LEGAL AID LAWYER.



THERE ARE THREE DIFFERENT TYPES OF FREE LEGAL AID. THE TYPE OF HELP YOU GET DEPENDS ON WHAT YOUR PROBLEM IS AND HOW MUCH MONEY YOU HAVE.



YOU CAN LEARN ABOUT THE LAW FROM OUR FREE BOOKLETS AND BROCHURES AND OUR WEBSITES. OUR LEGAL INFORMATION IS FREE FOR EVERYONE.



SOMETIMES, YOU CAN MEET WITH A LAWYER TO GET SOME ADVICE ABOUT THE LAW.



SOMETIMES, A LEGAL AID LAWYER CAN GO TO COURT WITH YOU.



WHY DO YOU NEED HELP?

I LEFT MY PARTNER BECAUSE HE HITS ME. MY KIDS ARE WITH ME AND WE'RE STAYING WITH MY MOTHER. I'M AFRAID TO GO BACK TO MY PARTNER.

IT'S VERY IMPORTANT THAT YOU TELL THE LEGAL AID INTAKE WORKER THAT YOU ARE LEAVING AN ABUSIVE PARTNER. THIS WILL HELP YOU GET A FREE LAWYER.



JIM ASKS MAYA MANY QUESTIONS TO SEE IF SHE CAN GET A FREE LAWYER.



HOW MUCH MONEY DO YOU HAVE?

MY PARTNER HAS ALL THE MONEY.



YOU CAN GET A FREE LAWYER. I'LL FILL OUT SOME FORMS. HERE'S THE PHONE NUMBER. YOU CAN PHONE THE LAWYER'S OFFICE AND MAKE AN APPOINTMENT.

THANK YOU.

MAYA GOES TO SEE THE LAWYER. THE LAWYER'S NAME IS ASHA.

I LEFT MY PARTNER BECAUSE HE WAS ABUSING ME. I'M AFRAID OF HIM. CAN YOU HELP ME?

YES. FIRST, I CAN HELP YOU ASK THE JUDGE FOR A PROTECTION ORDER.

WHAT'S THAT?

A PROTECTION ORDER IS A COURT ORDER. IT TELLS YOUR PARTNER THAT HE CAN'T BE AROUND YOU.



YOUR PARTNER ISN'T ALLOWED TO GO TO YOUR HOME, CALL YOU, TEXT YOU, OR CONTACT YOU IN ANY WAY.



IF YOUR PARTNER DOESN'T DO WHAT THE PROTECTION ORDER SAYS, HE CAN BE ARRESTED IF YOU OR SOMEONE ELSE CALLS THE POLICE.



TO GET A PROTECTION ORDER, WE HAVE TO FILL OUT SOME FORMS. THEN WE'LL GO TO COURT TO TALK TO A JUDGE.

WHAT HAPPENS THEN?

WE TELL THE JUDGE THAT YOU WANT A PROTECTION ORDER AND WHY YOU WANT IT.

I'M NERVOUS ABOUT GOING TO COURT.

IT'LL BE OKAY. I'LL BE THERE TO HELP.



LATER...MAYA AND ASHA GO TO COURT TOGETHER TO TALK TO A JUDGE.



I ORDER ROY NOT TO COMMUNICATE WITH YOU, DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY.

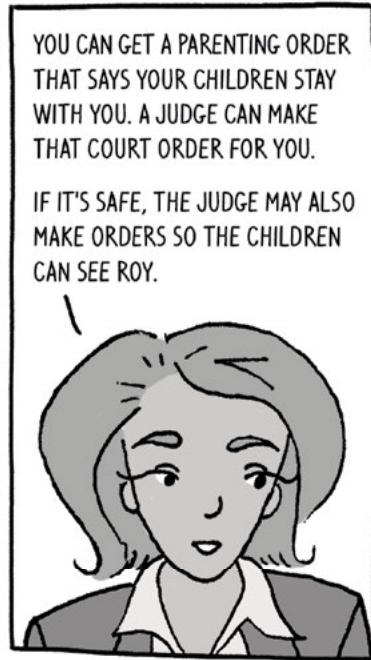
AT COURT, THE JUDGE GIVES MAYA A PROTECTION ORDER.



THE PROTECTION ORDER MAKES MAYA FEEL SAFER. BUT SHE'S STILL WORRIED ABOUT OTHER THINGS...



I'M WORRIED ABOUT WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO MY CHILDREN. HOW CAN I MAKE SURE MY CHILDREN WILL STAY WITH ME?



YOU CAN GET A PARENTING ORDER THAT SAYS YOUR CHILDREN STAY WITH YOU. A JUDGE CAN MAKE THAT COURT ORDER FOR YOU.

IF IT'S SAFE, THE JUDGE MAY ALSO MAKE ORDERS SO THE CHILDREN CAN SEE ROY.



I'M ALSO WORRIED ABOUT MONEY. I NEED MONEY TO TAKE CARE OF MY CHILDREN.

WE CAN ASK THE JUDGE TO PUT THIS IN AN ORDER TOO. THE COURT ORDER CAN SAY THAT YOUR PARTNER MUST GIVE YOU MONEY TO HELP SUPPORT THE CHILDREN.

GETTING COURT ORDERS CAN BE COMPLICATED BUT I CAN HELP YOU.



PROVINCIAL COURT OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

LATER, MAYA AND ASHA RETURN TO COURT. THE JUDGE GIVES COURT ORDERS THAT SAY MAYA'S CHILDREN WILL STAY WITH HER AND HER PARTNER MUST PAY CHILD SUPPORT.

MAYA IS RELIEVED TO HAVE THESE COURT ORDERS.



MANY MONTHS LATER, MAYA AND JASMINE MEET FOR COFFEE.

I LEFT ROY. I FOUND MY OWN APARTMENT AND MY KIDS LIVE WITH ME. ROY HAS PARENTING TIME WITH THEM TOO AND THAT'S WORKING OUT FINE. WE GET CHILD SUPPORT FROM ROY. AND WE'VE ALL BEEN GETTING COUNSELLING.



I'M SO HAPPY TO HEAR THIS. GOOD FOR YOU!

IT TOOK ME A LONG TIME TO FIND THE COURAGE TO LEAVE MY PARTNER, BUT I DID. THERE WAS A LOT OF LEGAL STUFF TO GET THROUGH AND MY LEGAL AID LAWYER WAS THERE TO HELP ME.

SO MANY PEOPLE HAVE HELPED ME, AND I FEEL SAFER NOW. I KNOW EVERYTHING WILL BE OKAY. WE'RE STARTING A NEW LIFE.



# Help is available

If you or someone you know is being abused, help is available.

If you are in danger from your partner, don't wait. **Call 911**. If your area doesn't have 911 service, call your local police or RCMP emergency number.

**Remember:** you have the right to ask the police to help keep you safe.

It can be very hard to leave your partner. You may be afraid of your partner or the government, the police, your family, or your community. But there are people who can help.

## Make a safety plan to stay safe

A safety plan can help you protect yourself and your children, both at home and outside your home.

When you start your plan, consider the following steps:



Think about what you need to stay safe.



Get information about emergency services in your area, such as safe housing.



Talk to your children about how they can stay safe.

You can get help from a victim services worker or a trusted friend to make your safety plan.

## Where you can stay if you decide to leave your abusive partner

You and your children can stay at an emergency shelter or a transition house until you find another place to live. These places are free. Shelters and transition houses give a temporary place to live and offer support services to anyone who's been abused or is at risk of being abused.

Call VictimLinkBC for information about emergency shelters or transition houses.

**604-875-0885** (Greater Vancouver)

**1-800-563-0808** (elsewhere in BC)

## VictimLinkBC

VictimLinkBC is a free, 24-hour phone service for victims of abuse. They offer referral services and information about support resources. They offer the phone service in many different languages.

**604-875-0885** (Greater Vancouver)

**1-800-563-0808** (elsewhere in BC)

Text: **604-836-6381**

[victimlinkbc.ca](http://victimlinkbc.ca)

## Legal Aid BC

To learn about free legal services, contact Legal Aid.

**604-408-2172** (Greater Vancouver)

**1-866-577-2525** (elsewhere in BC)

[legalaid.bc.ca](http://legalaid.bc.ca)

You may be able to get a free lawyer to take your case if you're at risk of harm or violence from your partner. When you contact Legal Aid, tell them if you've been abused and need help to stay safe. Interpreters are available if you need help in another language.

If you don't qualify for a legal aid lawyer, you may qualify for free legal advice, such as **Family LawLINE** (brief legal advice over the phone) or **family duty counsel** (a lawyer who can help with some of your case).

**MyLawBC.com** is a website that asks you questions about your relationship. It can help you recognize the signs of abuse and make a safety plan. It can also connect you with people who can help you.

**Familylaw.lss.bc.ca** is a website where you can get information about family law matters such as getting court orders, separation and divorce, and child support.



You can get this and other free Legal Aid publications from your local legal aid office. Or you can:

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