It's not your fault if you are being abused. You deserve to be treated with respect.

Google

Worried about a friend?

- Try to see your friend without the partner as much as possible
- Say you are worried and mention why. Let your friend know you are here for him/her if s/he wants to talk
- Self esteem can suffer with constant criticism, humiliation etc. Try to help your friend feel good about himself/herself. Say how important the friendship is to you, what you appreciate about the person etc.
- Let your friend know that the abuse is not his/her fault and that you think s/he deserves more care & respect
- If your friend doesn’t want to talk, don’t force the issue. And don’t threaten to stop seeing your friend unless s/he leaves the abusive partner. Be clear that, no matter what happens, s/he can always talk to you and that you want to help if you can. You may be his/her only lifeline.

Worried about your own relationship?

Talk to someone you trust. You may not be sure what you want to do about the relationship, so take one step at a time. Remember you do not have to feel ashamed – you are not to blame – and you don’t have to deal with this alone.

Speak with a Peer Counsellor on-campus, or with a Student Counsellor at the Counselling & Psychological Services (CAPS). They are available for individual and couple sessions. The service is free and strictly confidential.

National Domestic Violence Hotline is available 24/7 on: 800-SAVE (7283) in emergency.

How to contact CAPS?

Call us: 662 2002 ext 2491.
Email: counsellor@sta.uwi.edu
Or pop in and see us. We are located in the Health Service Unit (HSU), between Trinity Hall and the Learning Resources Centre (LRC).

Opening hours
CAPS is available throughout the year, from 8:30am to 7pm during term-time. During vacation, we close at 4:30pm.

This leaflet prepared by the Counselling & Psychological Services, UWI, St Augustine.
An abusive relationship is more than just hitting & punching. It also involves **emotional abuse** – constant criticism, controlling what you do & who you see; **sexual abuse** – forcing you to have sex, perform sexual acts you don’t want to; **economic abuse** – monopolising your possessions (e.g. car), threatening to withhold money; **intimidation & threats** between one person & his/her spouse, girlfriend/boyfriend, or ex-partner.

An abusive individual usually tries to control his/her partner, make the other person feel bad or afraid and leave the partner socially isolated.

- Abusers & victims come from all different backgrounds, races, classes, ages & levels of education
- Heterosexual couples, gay and lesbian couples may experience abuse.
- While both men and women can be abusers, the vast majority of victims are women.

It’s widely believed that the abused person must have done something to deserve it. In fact, most victims in an abusive relationship do everything they can to pacify their partners to avoid further abuse or violence.

Violence is never an acceptable method of solving conflict in relationships, nor do partners have a legal right to assault each other, whatever they may claim to have been the ‘provocation’. Responsibility for the abuse rests entirely with the perpetrator.

**In an abusive relationship?**

- **Afraid** of your partner? Walking on eggshells to avoid getting him/her upset or angry?
- **Does s/he criticise** you? Make belittling comments or humiliate you in private or in front of others?
- **Does your partner ignore** you, or get sulky or physically aggressive (pushing, grabbing, shoving) to get his/her way?
- **Do you end up feeling** you are crazy/stupid/inadequate?
- **Does s/he get jealous** for no reason? Repeatedly & unfairly accuse of flirting with others?
- **Does your partner tell** you who to be friends with, how to dress, or control other aspects of the relationship?
- **Have you stopped** liming with certain people (or made other changes in your life) to avoid upsetting your partner?
- **Has your partner threatened** to kill himself or herself if you break up with him/her?
- **Have you been told** that the abuse is your own fault?

**No-one should be frightened of their partner or be prevented from making choices in their life.**

**The single biggest warning sign** is if your partner has been in a previous abusive or violent relationship. While it is tempting to think “it will be different with me” abusive individuals rarely change.

**Common abusive behaviours:**

- **Disrespect** – putting you down; invading your privacy (checking your cell phone and/or emails)
- **Breaking trust** – having other relationships; lying to you
- **Isolation** – monitoring your calls; preventing you from seeing other people; putting your friends and/or family down
- **Threats** – intimidating you; giving you the silent treatment; shouting; damaging your things; threatening to harm you (or someone important to you) if you leave
- **Sexual violence** – using force, blackmail, intimidation to get you to perform sexual acts
- **Physical violence** – punching, shoving, hitting, strangling, pulling hair, throwing things at you; spitting on you
- **Denial** – saying the abuse doesn’t happen; promising it will never happen again; saying the abuse is your own fault; being gentle and charming in front of others