

## Making the decision to leave an abusive relationship

As you face the decision to either end the abusive relationship or try to save it, keep the following things in mind:

**If you're hoping your abusive partner will change...** The abuse will probably keep happening. Abusers have deep emotional and psychological problems. While change is not impossible, it isn't quick or easy. And change can only happen once your abuser takes full responsibility for their behavior, seeks professional treatment, and stops blaming you, their unhappy childhood, stress, work, their drinking, or their temper.

**If you believe you can help your abuser...** It's only natural that you want to help your partner. You may think you're the only one who understands them or that it's your responsibility to fix their problems. But the truth is that by staying and accepting repeated abuse, you're reinforcing and enabling the behavior. Instead of helping your abuser, you're perpetuating the problem.

**If your partner has promised to stop the abuse...** When facing consequences, abusers often plead for another chance, beg for forgiveness, and promise to change. They may even mean what they say in the moment, but their true goal is to stay in control and keep you from leaving. Most of the time, they quickly return to their abusive behavior once you've forgiven them and they're no longer worried that you'll leave.

**If your partner is in counseling or a program for batterers...** Even if your partner is in counseling, there is no guarantee that they'll change. Many abusers who go through counseling continue to be violent, abusive, and controlling. If your partner has stopped minimizing the problem or making excuses, that's a good sign. But you still need to make your decision based on who they are now, not the person you hope they will become.

**If you're worried about what will happen if you leave...** You may be afraid of what your abusive partner will do, where you'll go, or how you'll support yourself or your children. But don't let fear of the unknown keep you in a dangerous, unhealthy situation.

<https://www.helpguide.org/relationships/domestic-abuse/getting-out-of-an-abusive-relationship>

Once you have made the decision to leave contact an advocate that works specifically with Domestic Violence. In Redwood County you can contact WoMen's Rural Advocacy Program at 507-637-3040 or Minnesota Indigenous Women's Society at 507-627-4357. These organizations work with both men and women. They will assist you in creating a safety plan, identify supports, assess the risk of danger and, in general, be prepared for the future.