



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 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, and be very detailed.
- Capture any incidents of abuse.
- Log statements from you and your partner.
- The date and time each incident occurred.
- Pictures and descriptions of any injuries with the dates they occurred no matter how small they are.
- How the incident made you feel.
- If there is any damage to a household after an incident occurs, take pictures if you can.
- Seek medical care, even if there are no visible injuries. Physical harm doesn't always mean cuts or bruises.
- Visit the doctor, because there may be internal injury.
- File a report with the police and keep documentation with the date and time. Do not drop the charges.
- Keep a small calendar to keep track of when the abuse happened.
- Consider outside documentation from trusted individuals.
- Create a stalking log.
- Visit a therapist, a social worker, or a counselor.
- Keep your medical records.
- Log any communication (text messages, social media, voicemails, etc.).

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 on an online post. You may be hesitant to report this type of unwanted contact or even recognize it as abuse, but it still counts in a court of law.

Digital evidence is often fleeting and can be deleted accidentally or intentionally, very quickly. For this reason, it is important to collect and preserve evidence quickly:

- Print out all emails that contain any evidence or information about the incident. (Printouts should include the following information: 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.
- 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 with your consent. Remember to check both you and your partner's social media.
- Record voicemails on a digital recorder, and include the time and date.
- Try to save all future abuse via electronic communications using these same methods.
- Take screenshots of texts and direct messages.

DOCUMENTING ABUSE

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