



## Stand up to intimate partner violence

# Guide for communities

Intimate partner violence (IPV) is when someone harms the person they're in an intimate relationship with, such as someone they're dating or married to. IPV negatively affects the victim's wellbeing and health, and the impact can spread to their family, friends and wider community.

IPV is complex and can be difficult to recognize. Intimate relationships are often private and intense, making IPV harder to stop. Also, urban areas present unique challenges when it comes to tackling IPV.

But IPV can be stopped when communities come together and take action. This guide offers practical steps to safely stand up to violence. Together, we can build a safe Ottawa for everyone.

## Understanding intimate partner violence in Ottawa

In 2022 there were 6,544 reports of intimate partner violence (IPV), with charges related to IPV up by 13% on the previous year. In 2023, the City Council and Ottawa Police Service declared intimate partner violence to be “an epidemic” in Ottawa.

Intimate partner violence is a problem we can overcome together. However, there are complex challenges in urban areas like Ottawa such as:

### **Higher cost of living**

Housing prices and rental costs in urban areas are often very high. This can trap victims in abusive relationships because they don't have the money to live on their own.

### **Culture & equality**

Urban areas often have diverse populations. Some cultures are less likely to talk about or report intimate partner violence. They may also worry about discrimination from support services.

### **Language barriers**

Diverse populations often speak multiple languages. If English or French isn't someone's first language, it might be hard for them to find support or resources.

### **Lack of community**

People in cities often move around a lot, making it harder to maintain community ties. Cultural and language barriers are also common. This makes it more likely that victims will be isolated from support.

### **Waiting times for services**

There are lots of support services in urban areas, but there are also lots of people. High demand for services like financial aid or therapy means it can take a while to get help.

## How can communities stand up to IPV?

**See It, Name It, Change It** is a simple way to learn and remember how to challenge intimate partner violence (IPV). It's a three part method that helps you recognize, call out and stop violence.



### Recognize intimate partner violence

IPV can look like lots of different things, and it can be a mix of these behaviours. IPV is also ongoing, not one-off.

#### **Control**

Such as controlling where their partner goes, what they wear, who they see, what they do, and their access to money.

#### **Hurting**

Like hitting, kicking, pushing or grabbing. You might notice unexplained bruises, burns, cuts or other injuries.

#### **Isolating**

Keeping their partner away from friends, family or social networks, including medical support.

#### **Monitoring**

Constantly checking their partner's phone, emails or social media accounts.

#### **Stalking**

Following their partner or showing up uninvited to their home, work or social events.

#### **Jealousy**

Being very jealous and possessive, like getting upset if their partner spends time with someone else.

#### **Threats & intimidation**

Making their partner feel afraid with looks, voice, actions or gestures.

#### **Blame**

Blaming their partner for everything or holding grudges.

#### **Insults**

Saying things to make their partner feel bad.

#### **Social embarrassment**

Humiliating or embarrassing their partner in front of other people.

#### **Mood swings**

Changing quickly from affectionate to violent behaviour with their partner.

#### **Coercion**

Making their partner do things they don't want to do, like drugs or alcohol.

#### **Sexual abuse**

Forcing or pressuring their partner into unwanted sexual activities.

#### **Gaslighting**

Making their partner question their reality, memories or sanity as a way of controlling them.

#### **Minimizing**

Dismissing their partner's concerns or experiences of abuse.

#### **Destroying property**

Damaging or destroying their partner's belongings. This can include medication.

#### **Apologizing with gifts**

Giving apologies, often with gifts and promises to change, only to be violent again.

#### **Threatening self-harm or suicide**

Saying they'll harm themselves if their partner tries to leave.



## Call out intimate partner violence

It can be hard to know what to do when you see violence. A helpful way to consider your options is to remember the **five D's**.

### Direct

Consider speaking to the violent person if you feel safe enough. You could say “hey, what’s happening here?” or “this isn’t ok”. Stay calm and be brief. Remember you want to stop the violence, not start an argument. If you start feeling unsafe, leave or call for help.

### Distract

Another option is to distract the people involved. For example, you could ask the person being violent for directions, or pretend you know the victim. If your aim is to distract, avoid talking about the violence.

### Delegate

Delegate means asking someone else to help you. This can be a good option if you feel unsafe or unable to deal with the situation by yourself. You

could also contact emergency services or a local support organization.

### Delay

If the situation feels too dangerous, you can delay your response by getting to safety and supporting the victim later. For example, you could help calm them down, ask if they want to talk, or offer to help them report the violence.

### Document

It may be useful to take a photo or video as evidence (for example, if you’re going to report the violence to the police.) Never livestream or share it online.

## STAY SAFE!

**Standing up to intimate partner violence is important, but your safety comes first. Here are a few tips to keep the situation from getting worse or putting you in danger:**

- **Use a calm, supportive voice. Avoid shouting or getting pulled into an argument.**
- **Check in with yourself and stay composed. Take breaks and breathe.**
- **Get someone you trust to support you, either in person or over the phone.**
- **Remember your motivation — you’re doing this because you care.**
- **Remember that it’s ok to walk away if you feel unsafe.**



## End intimate partner violence in Ottawa

Change won't happen overnight, but every time you call out violence you're helping to create a better community for everyone.

### Keep calling it out

Intimate partner violence only continues in our community when we let it. Be brave and keep standing up to violence. This can mean using the 5 D's, checking in on victims or reporting to the police.

### Teach & talk to others

We're stronger together. Have safe, open discussions with people you know about intimate partner violence.

### Learn & get support

Understanding intimate partner violence and the help that's available is a crucial part of tackling the issue. Find a list of resources, services and crisis lines at [ovs-svo.com](http://ovs-svo.com).



## About See It, Name It, Change It

**See It, Name It, Change It (SINICI)** is an educational campaign against intimate partner violence. We help people learn what violence is, what it looks like and how to stand up against it. Together, we can build a safer Ottawa for everyone.

The SINICI campaign in Ottawa is run by Ottawa Victim Services, a not-for-profit organization supporting survivors of crime and tragedy in Ottawa since 1998.

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