

Fact sheet

Legal aid help if you are experiencing domestic violence

What is domestic violence?

Domestic violence includes physical, sexual, financial and emotional abuse. Some examples of domestic violence:

- hitting, pushing, shoving, slapping or punching
- forced sex
- control over the family money
- insults and put-downs
- repeated phone calls
- unwanted visits to your home
- threats to harm you, your children, other family members or pets

Domestic abuse always creates fear.

Need a lawyer?

If you are experiencing domestic violence, Legal Aid Ontario may be able to assist. LAO provides a variety of services for family legal matters.

- If you are in need of **immediate** legal help, LAO offers two hours free with a lawyer. Please ask your local shelter or legal clinic if they offer this service.
- In some cases, LAO can also pay for a lawyer to help you if you've been charged with assault while trying to defend yourself against your abusive partner.

Call Legal Aid Ontario toll-free at 1-800-668-8258 to find out how we can help

Sharing information with us about your situation may help because:

- We can give you legal advice or refer you to a lawyer.
- We will better understand your legal needs. You will not be asked a lot of personal questions about the abuse.
- We can give you information and refer you to other services that can help you.

Please note: Any information that you give Legal Aid Ontario will be kept private, unless you give us permission to share the information with someone like a staff member at a shelter for abused women or a counsellor.

You can also call the Assaulted Women's Helpline

The Assaulted Women's Helpline is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week at **1-866-863-0511**. The helpline can refer you to your nearest local shelter.