

Abuse is not Normal behaviour

It may sound strange, but many people have trouble spotting that they are being abused. And it is especially difficult if you have lived with the abuse for many years.

You might think that it's just the way things are and that there's nothing that can be done. If you are being abused, you might mistakenly think that it's your fault for not doing what you have been told to do, breaking rules, or not living up to someone's expectations.

Growing up in a family where there is violence or abuse can make you think that is the right way or the only way for family members to treat each other. If you have only known an abusive relationship, you might mistakenly think that hitting, beating, pushing, shoving, or angry name-calling are perfectly normal ways to treat someone when you're angry. Seeing parents or other adults that you live with treat each other in abusive ways might make you to think that's okay in relationships. But abuse is not a healthy way to treat people.

If you're not sure if you are being abused, or if you suspect a friend is, it's always a good idea to ask a trusted adult or friend. Also know that abuse is NEVER your fault. Abuse is never the fault of the person who is being abused, no matter how much the abuser tries to blame others.

Abusers may manipulate you into keeping quiet by saying stuff like: "This is a secret between you and me," or "If you ever tell anybody, I'll hurt you or your mom," or "You're going to get in trouble if you tell. No one will believe you and you'll go to jail for lying." This is the abuser's way of making you feel like nothing can be done so you won't report the abuse.

You are not alone and there are people who want to help you. Call a helpline or tell a healthcare worker at your local clinic or a social worker about what is going on.

You can get help on bwisehealth.com or from:

- Childline: 0800 55 555
- Life Line: 0861 322 322
- GBV helpline: 0800 428 428

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