

## **CAN I STOP BEING ABUSIVE?**

If you are abusing your partner, the first and hardest part of ending the abuse is admitting that it is wrong. It is very important to take responsibility for the problem and get help to end it. If you have already taken this step, you are on the right track.

### **What Do I Need to Know?**

Changing abusive behavior is a long and hard process that you cannot do alone. It is extremely important that you get professional help to get through it. Though you may not know it, you rely on your beliefs and attitudes to justify the abuse. With help you can change these beliefs and learn how to treat your partner with respect.

Remember that physical and sexual violence aren't the only types of abuse. You may be harming your partner in verbal or emotional ways, like through intimidation, threats, isolation, and other means of control. You should be taking steps to end all forms of abuse. It will take time to deal with this, but you must make the commitment to ending the abuse immediately.

### **What Can I Do?**

- Remember that violence is always a choice. There are no excuses for your violence and no one else to blame for your behavior.
- Focus on how your abuse affects your partner, family and children. Fully accept how seriously you have hurt the people you care about.
- Accept the consequences of your behavior. Your partner has the right to get help from police or the courts. You may face legal consequences for being abusive, either with jail time or a restraining order.
- Remember that you are not alone during this time. Your friends and family can support your wish to change and help you in difficult times.
- Get help from a program that focuses on abusive relationships. A good program will help you end violent behavior and create a better relationship for you and your partner.
- Respect your partner's right to be safe and healthy as you work toward change, even if this means you can't be together.
- Because change is hard, there may be times when you justify your actions or feel like giving up. Remember that those who really want to change are more likely to be successful.

**You have the right to a safe and healthy relationship...**  
**free from violence and free from fear.**