

## Visiting a PMHP counsellor

Our counsellors offer non-judgmental support to their clients based at the Midwife Obstetric Unit in Hanover Park, Cape Town.



They will respect you and will not pressure you to leave the abusive relationship. Our counsellors know that as an abused woman, you are vulnerable and are scared of angering your abusive partner if you decide to leave.

Our counsellors will listen to your story and help you to improve your self-esteem. Together, you and the PMHP counsellor can work out safe solutions for you, your baby and other children, if you have. They will support you if you are ready or not to leave the abusive relationship.

*"I was so ashamed and angry with him and myself. I was stuck. I stopped spending time with my friends. But, when I spoke with the counsellor, she supported me to connect with them again and to see my own worth. I felt stronger being with them and I got a protection order." Lindiwe's story*

## Where else can I go for support?

**CAFDA** HIV/AIDS support groups  
Retreat 021 706 2050

**Cape Town Drug Counselling Centre** Individual and family counselling & outpatient treatment for drug problems  
Observatory 021 447 8026 • Mitchells Plain 021 391 0216

**Cape Town Refugee Centre** Individual counselling  
Wynberg 021 762 9670

**Child Welfare Society** Child abuse and maintenance issues  
021 638 3127

**Ilitha Labantu** Support group for women survivors  
Gugulethu 021 633 2383

**Legal Aid** Legal services  
Athlone 021 696 5172 • Cape Town 021 426 4126

**Marie Stopes** Information related to pregnancy, emergency contraception, family planning and abortion  
0800 11 77 85

**Mosaic** Service & Healing Centre for Women  
Wynberg 021 7617585

**Rape Crisis** Support for rape survivors, family & friends  
Counselling line 021 447 9762 • 021 633 9229  
•021 361 9085 - Athlone 021 684 1180 Khayelitsha  
021 361 9228

**Saartjie Baartman** Shelter for abused women and their children - Manenberg 021 633 5287

**St Anne's Home Shelter** for destitute and abused women and their children  
Woodstock 021 448 6792 • 021 447 1779 (after hours)

**Thuthuzela Care Centre** Support for abuse victims  
Khayelitsha Hospital 021 360 4570 / 021 360 4704 (open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week)

**Women's Legal Centre** Legal advice and support  
Cape Town 021 424 5660



## Violence against Women

This leaflet is a guide for mothers and provides valuable information about violence against women.



It's not always easy to talk about violence, especially if you are pregnant and are experiencing domestic violence. You should not be ashamed if you are the victim of any violent act.

Please remember, help is available and you are not alone. See the back of this leaflet for information on where to go and who to contact if you need any support.

**Perinatal Mental Health Project (PMHP)**

Email: [info@pmhp.za.org](mailto:info@pmhp.za.org)

Website: [www.pmhp.za.org](http://www.pmhp.za.org)

## Domestic Violence during Pregnancy

Domestic violence can be any physical, sexual or psychological harm that happens between people who are sharing a home. This could be your partner or any other member of your household, such as a parent, other relative or lodger.

Domestic Violence Includes:

- **Physical violence:** punching, kicking, and/or burning.
- **Emotional (psychological) abuse:** insults, constant humiliation, intimidation, threats of harm, or threats to take away the children.
- **Sexual violence:** forced sexual intercourse and other forms of threatening sexual behaviours.
- **Controlling behaviour:** isolating a person from friends and family, monitoring their movements, and/or restricting access to financial resources, employment, education and health care.



Domestic violence during pregnancy can negatively affect you and your baby. Sadly, we know that it is uncommon for

pregnant women to seek help if they are being abused. This may also mean that abused women may avoid visiting their clinics for pregnancy care.

Domestic violence has a range of physical and mental health consequences. For the woman, these may include losing the pregnancy, depression and post-traumatic stress disorder. For the baby, there is an increased risk for preterm delivery and low birth weight.

## Cycle of Abuse

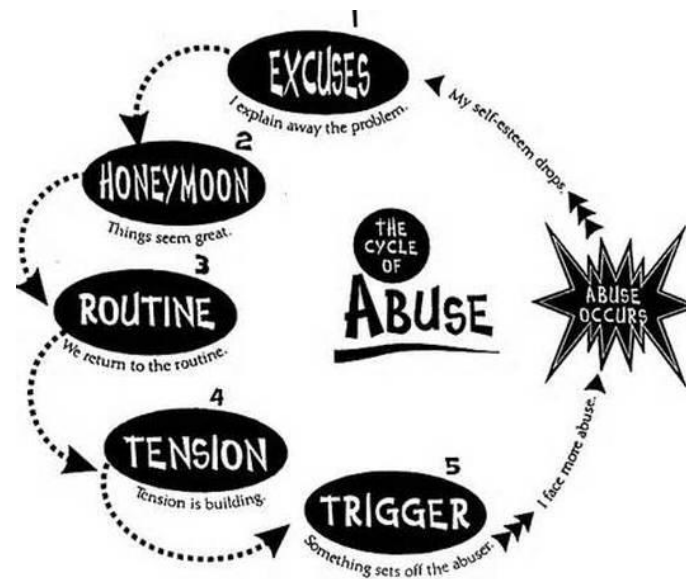


Image courtesy: Ashleigh's Patience Project

## Why do Women Stay?

It is also common for women to stay in an abusive relationship, as she may:

- be dependent on the abuser for financial support
- feel that she has nowhere to go
- have been threatened by the abuser
- hope that the abuse will stop

## Domestic Violence Act 116 of 1998

This act places huge responsibility on law enforcement, such as the South African Police Service, to protect women against domestic violence. The police have a duty to assist you if you need medical treatment or need to find shelter for you and your children.

Domestic violence is a serious crime.  
Protect yourself and your baby!

## Protection Order

A protection order is a court order instructing the person abusing you to stop. Go to your nearest police station to complete an application form for a protection order. If you have a witness, ask this person to go with you. Once you have completed your application, take the documents to your nearest Magistrate's Court.

If your abuser disobeys the protection order, report it to the police immediately. Take id documents and address details with you when you apply for a protection order.

## Have a crisis plan ready

- Identify places where you can use a telephone quickly and always carry a list of emergency numbers with you.
- Find a 'safe-house' where you can go in an emergency, like a neighbour, friend or relative's home.
- Make sure that at your safe-house there is a copy of your protection order and/or warrant of arrest.
- Always keep some money in a safe place so that you can take a taxi or bus in case of an emergency.
- Have an extra set of keys for the house or car.
- If possible, have clothes for yourself (and your children) packed in a bag, and keep it in a safe place
- If you are planning to leave, leave when your partner is not around, and take your children with you. Make sure that you are in possession of essential documents like IDs, medical aid card, and your savings/credit card.