

Healthy Family Relationships and the Law

What newcomers need to know

LEGAL INFO
NOVA SCOTIA



www.legalinfo.org

Healthy family relationships

In a healthy family, you feel respected and safe. Two people in a couple are sometimes called “partners” or “spouses”. Sometimes they are called “husband” and “wife.” Both people in a healthy relationship are equal.

The children feel safe and happy in a healthy family. They are not afraid of a parent or other relative.

When one partner abuses the other

Sometimes, one person in the family hurts the others. This is called abuse. More often, the man hurts the woman or children, but not always. The person who is hurt is called a victim.

A relationship with abuse is not a healthy relationship.

Here are some signs of abuse. If your partner does these things to you, get help right away. If you see someone doing these things to someone they love, talk with the victim about getting help.

Abuse is when your partner:

- is critical of you
- reads your email, checks your phone, or checks what you do online
- blames you for their problems
- keeps you away from your friends and family
- controls all the family's money
- says he is shamed by you because you do not behave properly
- hits you or throws things at you
- forces you to have sex when you don't want to



The victim might:

- make excuses when their partner is mean
- become aggressive and angry
- be nervous when the partner is there
- seem to be sick more often or to miss work
- try to cover bruises
- change plans with friends at the last minute
- seem sad, lonely, withdrawn
- be afraid
- use drugs or alcohol to cope
- need permission from their partner to spend money

Abuse is never the victim's fault.

Hurting people is against the law

If someone in your family abuses other people in the family it can be a crime in Canada. One type of crime is called physical assault. It means hitting, choking, punching, burning, or throwing things at someone.

Another type of abuse in families is called sexual assault. That is when one person forces another to have sex the person does not want. This includes kissing or touching. It is a crime even if the two people are married. It is a crime even if no one is hurt.

If someone is hurting another person in your family, your family can get help.

If a person threatens or hurts someone in their family, you can call the police.

You can talk to a trusted friend or a counsellor at the Immigrant Settlement Association of



Nova Scotia (ISANS).

If your partner is hurting you, you might want to apply for a peace bond or emergency protection order. These are court orders that say your partner must stay away from you.

The person who is hurting others can get help to stop.

You can talk with a lawyer, counsellor, emergency shelter or victim services program about what approach is best for you and your family. A trusted friend might also help.

Friends who see a problem can sometimes help

It is hard to talk about violence or abuse. If you know that someone is hurting people they love, you might worry about making things worse. A person who hurts their family might not stop on their own. Talking to them can help, but you must be careful. The most important thing is that the victim and the children stay safe.

Nova Scotia has services that can help. Call **2-1-1** to talk about services that can help.

If you talk to a man or a woman who is hurting their family, think about when is a good time.

- Approach the person when they are calm and offer to help.
- Be direct and clear about what you have seen and what worries you.
- Remind them you care about them.
- Don't fight with them or try to force them to do anything. This can make things more dangerous for the person who is being abused.
- Remind them they are responsible for their actions, especially if they want to blame the



victim.

- Remind them they can change.
- Avoid making harsh comments about this person, but tell them the violence needs to stop.
- Remind them that violence and control will not make their family safe.

What the police will do

If your partner is abusing you or someone in your family, it might be a crime. The police might come to your house or apartment, if someone calls the police.

Police will call child protection if your partner is hurting your children or could hurt them.

If the police charge your partner with a crime, they might take your partner out of your home. A person who hurts others might go to jail, but they might not go to jail. The police or court might let the person out of jail and tell them they must follow strict rules. If the police charge your partner with a crime, they can order your partner to stay away from you. This means your partner cannot talk to you or to go back to the house or to your work.

Will Canada deport my family if one person hurts the others?

If you are a permanent resident in Canada, you do not need to live with your sponsor to stay in Canada. You can stay in Canada even if a family member is arrested.

If you are not permanent resident and your partner is arrested, you should call a lawyer.



What is an emergency protection order?

An emergency protection order can help to protect you if your partner is abusing you. You should think about applying for one if the abuse is serious and if it is happening now.

If you get an emergency protection order, it begins right away and lasts for up to 30 days. It gives you time to look at options that will last longer. You might want a peace bond, or you might want police to charge your partner with a crime. You might want to apply to family court for custody of your children, for property and money, or to set up parenting time for your partner.

An emergency protection order will say that your partner cannot contact you. That means they cannot talk to you or go to your home or your work. The police might be able to take your partner out of your home. You might also have control for a short time of the car or a bank card or other things you need.

You apply for an emergency protection order by calling **902-424-8888** or **1-866-816-6555**. You can also call a transition house or police for help. You can apply any day of the week from 8:30 in the morning until 9:00 at night. If you need help during the night, you can call a police officer or someone working at a transition house to apply for you.

You might need an interpreter to help you apply for an emergency protection order. If you do, you must find or hire a professional interpreter. The interpreter cannot be your family member or friend. Nova Scotia Victim Services or Nova Scotia Interpreting Services can help you find an interpreter (see the RESOURCES section for more information).



If your partner hurts you and you need to be safe

If your partner abuses you, make sure you and your children are safe.

**If you have an emergency, call 911.
If someone is hurting you or you are afraid, call 911.**

- Get legal help. Call a lawyer. Nova Scotia Legal Aid can help. You can also contact a lawyer you would pay (a lawyer in private practice).
- You might want to leave your home and go to a safe house.
- You might want to take your children with you.
- You can apply to family court for custody of your children.
- You might be able to get your partner to pay money to support you and your children.
- You might be able to get your partner to leave.
- You can apply to the government for help with money.
- You might be able to end your lease early.
- You might be able to take time off work and get paid for some of that time.



Resources

If you have an emergency, call 911.
If someone is hurting you or you are afraid, call 911.

Phone numbers you might need quickly

Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner Program

If you have been assaulted in the past five days, call and leave a message. A nurse will call you back right away. You can also go to an emergency department for medical help or go to the police to report the assault.

- Halifax: **1-877-880-7263**
- Guysborough, Antigonish, Pictou and Richmond Counties: **1-877-880-SANE (7263)**
- Sydney area: **1-844-858-8036**
- Yarmouth area: **1-833-577-SANE (7263)**

Bryony House

902-422-7650

Women in Halifax who are leaving domestic violence or abusive relationships can call any time of the day or night and any day of the year.

Autumn House

902-667-1200 any time of day or night.

24-hour contact for women and men in abusive relationships. Men who abuse their partners who want help to change can also call this number, or **902-667-4500** during the day.

Emergency Protection Order - Justice of the Peace Centre

1-866-816-6555 toll-free or **902-424-8888**

Call the Justice of the Peace Centre to apply for an emergency protection order. A justice



of the peace will hear your story and decide right away whether to give you an emergency protection order.

211 Nova Scotia

2-1-1 or text **21167**

Finds services in your community any time of day or night and any day of the year. They can help you in many languages.

2-1-1 can help you find:

- a safe place away from an abuser
- information or advice about the law
- victim services to help when you need it

Phone numbers for information and help

Healthlink

8-1-1

Information or advice about your health. It can help you find a health care service in your area. Nurses can help you in French or English. They can also help through an interpreter in many languages.

Online abuse

902-424-6990 in Halifax or **1-855-702-8324** toll-free.

CyberScan helps if someone has shared private pictures of you without your consent or is bullying you online, or by text or email. They can help you talk to web companies, including Facebook and Twitter. They might also be able to help you apply to the Supreme Court of Nova Scotia for a cyber-protection order.



Adult Protection Services—Nova Scotia Department of Health and Wellness

1-800-225-7225 toll-free

Helps if you are worried that an adult is being neglected, abused or harmed. You can call between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Child Protection Services (Department of Community Services)

2-1-1 for to find Child Protection Services near you

Helps if you believe that a child is being abused or neglected. During the day, call the district office of the Department of Community Services near you. After 4:30 p.m., call **1-866-922-2434**.

Neighbours, Friends and Families Program

A campaign to help people learn signs of violence against women. To learn more, visit nsdomesticviolence.ca/nff.

Legal Services

Independent Legal Advice for Sexual Assault Survivors Program

2-1-1

www.novascotia.ca/SexualAssaultLegalAdvice

Up to 4 hours of free legal advice if you have been sexually assaulted and are 16 years old or older. You do not have to report to police or go to court if you use this service. They can help in English or French, or use a free interpreter for other languages.

Halifax Refugee Clinic

902-422-6736

Helps with immigration legal services for refugee claimants and people in need of



protection if you cannot afford a private lawyer. They offer legal advice to survivors of domestic violence only about their immigration status.

Nova Scotia Legal Aid

nslegalaid.ca or look under Legal Aid in the telephone book

Helps if you have a problem related to criminal or family law, employment insurance, or income assistance, or with your landlord. Some services are based on financial need.

Dalhousie Legal Aid Service

902-423-8105

Legal information and advice if you have low income. They can help with income assistance and tenant rights and housing. They do not handle immigration issues or adult criminal matters.

Legal Information Society of Nova Scotia - Legal Information and Lawyer Referral Service

1-800-665-9779 (toll-free) or **902-455-3135**

Email questions@legalinfo.org

Free legal information, or find a lawyer and other legal help.

Transition Houses

Transition House Association of Nova Scotia

902-429-7287

2-1-1

Safe houses and shelters across Nova Scotia. They can help you find a safe house near you if you want to leave an abusive relationship.

www.nsdomesticviolence.ca has a map of transition houses and other information about abuse.



Victim Services

Provincial Victim Services Program

Information and help if you are a victim of crime, or the spouse or relative of a victim. Information about your case, help to write a victim impact statement, help to apply for money or counselling and get special help for child victims or a witness of a crime.

- Halifax or Dartmouth or the South Shore: **902-424-3309**
- Annapolis Valley: **902-679-6201** or **1-800-565-1805** toll-free
- Northern Nova Scotia: **902-755-7110** or **1-800-565-7912** toll-free
- Cape Breton: **902-563-3655** or **1-800-565-0071** toll-free

Halifax Regional Police Victim Services

902-490-5300

Helps you in a crisis and after a crisis. Emotional help and help to find services.

RCMP Victim Services

1-888-995-2929 and leave a message.

Information or emotional help after a crime. Call and leave a message; they call you back in 24 hours.

Sexual Assault Centres and Programs

Antigonish Women's Resource Centre and Sexual Assault Services Association

902-863-6221

Avalon Sexual Assault Centre

902-422-4240



Colchester Sexual Assault Centre

902-897-4366

Services for men who want to
stop hurting their partners

New Start Counselling (Dartmouth)

902-423-4675 or info@newstartcounselling.ca

CornerStone Cape Breton (Sydney)

902-567-0979 or connect@cornerstonecb.ca

New Directions (in Amherst)

902-667-4500 or info@autumnhouse.ca

Freeman House's Alternatives Program (in Bridgewater)

902-543-7444 or **1-877-882-7722** toll-free, or
admin.fswns@bellaliant.com

New Leaf (in Pictou County)

902-396-2440

Bridges (in Truro)

902-897-6665 or bridges@bridgesinstitute.org

Newcomer and Immigrant Services

Salvation Army Atlantic Refugee and Immigrant Services Project

902-477-5393, extension **224**

Helps you fill out immigration forms and travel
papers.

ISANS—Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia

902-423-3607

Helps newcomers settle in Nova Scotia. Also
helps permanent residents who have a crisis,



like abuse. Free interpretation available.

African Diaspora Association of the Maritimes

adamns.com

Focuses on the needs of immigrants of African Diaspora descent.

Nova Scotia Interpreting Services

902-425-6604

902-425-5532 if you need help now

interpretingservices.ca

Interpretation services for 39 languages. Long distance charges may apply for all services.

Rainbow Refugee Association of Nova Scotia

rainbowrefugeens.com

Privately sponsors, resettles, and advocates for LGBTQI+ refugees in Nova Scotia.

NOTE: If you have a legal problem, you should talk with a lawyer. This pamphlet gives general legal information. It does not give legal advice. We try to keep our materials up to date. However, laws do change. You can check with a lawyer for changes to laws mentioned in this pamphlet.

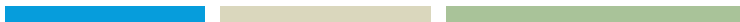
March 2019

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This publication was created with support from Nova Scotia Department of Community Services.



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