

## Why Women Stay

It is not uncommon for an abused woman to stay in or return to an abusive relationship.

[Watch Leslie Morgan Steiner explain why domestic violence victims don't leave.](#)

Although not an exhaustive list, some of the common reasons why a woman may stay in an abusive relationship are that she:

- fears not being believed
- hopes the relationship will improve because the abuser is often remorseful
- feels she has created the problem and that she is the one who should change her behaviour
- is isolated from any system by her abusive partner
- is unable to escape her abuser's control (including control of her finances) and does not have another source of income
- lacks educational qualifications and/or employment skills
- has nowhere to go with her children
- fears being stalked or killed by her abusive partner
- fears he may kill himself if she leaves
- has grown up watching her mother being abused or was abused herself and thinks it is normal
- is pressured by family or community members to stay with the abuser
- believes that religious faith and doctrine (e.g. prescriptions against divorce) prevent her from leaving
- does not want to deny her children their father
- is fatigued or depressed from the constant high stress
- has lowered self-esteem and feels powerless and lacking in control over her life
- fear no one else would love her
- not want to change the lifestyle to which her children are accustomed
- be worried that her children will be taken away by child welfare authorities if she seeks help
- fear her partner will gain custody of the children

A woman who is a recent immigrant may have additional factors to overcome, including:

- fear of authority and deportation (for herself or her family) if she leaves her partner and/or her sponsorship relationship breaks down
- intense family and community pressure to endure the abuse
- marginalisation from support systems available in her community
- lack of economic means to support her family and self
- language barrier restricting access to support services

Disabled women also have additional factors to overcome including:

- additional dependence on their abusers for care (including affection, communication and financial, physical and medical support)
- lack of access to transportation
- lack of access to information, services and support systems in the community