02

DAY 02 · THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 26, 2026

VIOLENCE ISN'T ALWAYS VISIBLE.

Abuse can be emotional, financial, sexual ordigital —not only physical. Someone's experience does not have to leave a visible mark to matter.

UNDERSTANDING THE TOPIC

Many people picture abuse as physical violence. But many forms of abuse leave no injury at all. They can still cause fear, affect health and wellbeing, and narrow someone's choices about their own life. Different forms of abuse often happen together and build over time. A person may not use the word "abuse" to describe what is happening to them, especially at first.

You might notice other changes instead: someone withdrawing from friends, seeming anxious about a partner's reactions, or no longer having money of their own.

Someone does not need visible injuries to deserve to be believed, taken seriously and offered support.

FORMS ABUSE CAN TAKE

- **Emotional abuse:** humiliation, constant criticism, intimidation or threats to harm them, their children or pets.
- **Financial abuse:** controlling money, work or access to resources.
- **Sexual abuse:** pressure or coercion into sexual activity, or ignoring a "no."
- **Isolation:** cutting someone off from friends, family, work or community.

ONE PRACTICAL ACTION

RESPOND TO WHAT YOU NOTICE—WITH CARE.

If someone describes being belittled, threatened or cut off, take it seriously. You might say, "That sounds really hard. I'm here if you want to talk." Let them name their own experience, and don't pressure them to act.

KEY TAKEAWAY

You don't have to wait for a bruise to take someone seriously.

LEARN MORE

Assaulted Women's Helpline — Is this abuse?
awhl.org/is-this-abuse

Women and Gender Equality Canada — 16 Days of Activism
canada.ca/en/women-gender-equality/commemorations-celebrations/16-days.html

NEED SUPPORT?

You don't have to work out next steps alone.

Women's Habitat 24-hour crisis line: 416-252-5829

Assaulted Women's Helpline (24/7): 1-866-863-0511 · #SAFE (#7233) on a Bell, Rogers, Fido or Telus mobile

In immediate danger, call 911.