

Why women don't "just leave"

Some issues to consider when ending and leaving a non-abusive relationship

- A future alone
- Can I stay in this house? This area? Possibly have to move house and / or area
- Education – will the children have to move schools?
- Income – may have to start work, increase or reduce hours
- Childcare – costs if work hours change?
- Child contact – how often? When? Where?
- Effects of separating on children
- Possessions – who is getting what?
- Pets – who gets custody?
- Transport – will I be near public transport? Can I afford a car?
- What family will think (stigma, religion)
- What to tell to whom?
- Impact and effect of possible changes in lifestyle
- Can I cope on my own?
- Your own feelings of grief, loss, possibly guilt and shame, sadness, panic, fear, etc.

Additional issues to consider when ending and leaving an abusive, controlling and violent relationship

- No money, nowhere to go, victim doesn't believe there are any choices or options
- No time to plan safely
- Isolation – no family or friends support
- Victim will often feel undeserving of anything different or better
- No co-operation or negotiation to sort things out (money/house/possessions/children)
- Nowhere suitable for children (only choice may be refuge who don't take boys over the age of 14 years)
- Changing children's childcare and / or schools
- Is it safe for children to have contact?

- Fear of being judged as an unfit mother for failing to protect her children
- Fear of having her children taken off her and into care (perpetrator will tell her this will happen)
- Can't take possessions (no way of moving anything, or storing them)
- Leave pets behind (who may also be being abused and mistreated by perpetrator)
- Leave family, friends, neighbourhood, community behind and sometimes it's not safe to stay in touch
- Possibly lower standard of living
- Depression or lack of confidence
- Victim doesn't believe there is any way to keep the perpetrator away
- **Fear of being found and fear of being killed (perpetrator will probably have threatened this)**

On average it takes **seven years** for a victim to go from identifying the relationship is abusive to leaving. If a victim has additional issues (e.g. disabilities, learning difficulties, mental health illness) this *increases to* eleven years.

Leaving a relationship **does not** mean the victim is safe.

Post separation abuse is very common and most victims of domestic abuse will experience it in some form.