



## Why people don't leave abusive situations

It seems clear to most people that anyone facing an abusive situation should leave and start a new life. In reality, it is much more complicated than that. In particular, abuse is characterized by power and control. Therefore, leaving is critical as it represents a loss of control for the abusive partner and will likely cause them to retaliate.

### There are many reasons why some people decide to stay, some of them are:

- **Fear:** they are uncertain about what a new life may hold and wonder what will happen if they do decide to leave the relationship. Another reason could be that they are afraid of being 'outed' if they are in a LGBTQ relationship.
- **Lack of resources or money:** they may be financially dependent on their abusive partner. Without money, access to resources or even a place to go, they are helpless and it can seem impossible for them to leave the relationship.
- **Abuse is normalized:** they may not be able to identify the abuse or what a healthy relationship looks like, perhaps this is a result from the environment in which they grew up in where abuse was common
- **Shame:** It's often difficult for people to admit that they have been abused. They may worry that their friends and family will judge them or blame them. They may also struggle with victim-blaming and feel they are wrong for becoming involved with an abusive partner.
- **Low self-esteem:** When an abusive partner constantly puts someone down and blames them for the abuse, it can be easy for the victim to believe those statements and think that the abuse is their fault.
- **Love:** The victim may feel love for their abusive partner, or they may stay in order to maintain their family and the children they have with them.
- **Cultural or Religious Reasons:** Gender roles supported by culture or religion may convince them to stay rather than end the relationship in fear of bringing shame and dishonor upon their family.
- **Language Barriers or Immigration Status:** If their status is not secure or undocumented, they may fear that reporting the abuse will affect their immigration status. Additionally, their first language may put them at a disadvantage, it can be difficult to express depth of their situation to others and appropriately seek the help they need.
- **Disability:** If they are physically dependent on their abusive partner, they may decide to stay.