

**If you think you may
be in an abusive
BDSM relationship:**

- You may feel no one will understand what you are going through.
- You may feel alone.

**YOU ARE NOT ALONE AND THERE ARE
PEOPLE WHO UNDERSTAND!**

Intimate partner abuse in BDSM relationships can occur even in well-negotiated relationships. Abuse against **anyone** regardless of their role in this Lifestyle is **never** acceptable.

You do **NOT** deserve to be abused and you *cannot* prevent abuse with more control or better service.

Locate a BDSM sensitive therapist on-line through KINK-Aware Professionals list at:

<http://www.ncsfreedom/kap/index.htm>

CALL: 1-800-799-SAFE
1-800-787-3224 TTY

Email: dvchair@nla-i.com

Trust your instincts.



Make a plan.



Get Help so you can get out.



NLA-I Domestic Violence Project Website:
<http://www.nlaidvproject.us>

E-Mail: dvchair@nla-i.com



National Leather Association: International

**P.O. Box 423
Blacklick, Ohio
43004-0423**

NLA-I Hotline, Anita Jensen: 1-780-454-1922
Website: <http://www.nla-i.com>

E-Mail: membership@nla-i.com

**PLEASE REPRINT AND
DISTRIBUTE FREELY**

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**Abuse Versus
Healthy BDSM
Know The
Difference...**



NLA-I DVP MISSION STATEMENT

The National Leather Association-International (NLA-I) calls on the leather/SM/Fetish community to take the lead in reducing domestic violence through education.

No group is free of domestic violence, assault, or abuse; but fear, denial and lack of knowledge have slowed public response to this serious social problem. The NLA-I is committed to reducing this violence by attempting:

1. To show that community action can reduce violence.
2. To hold offenders/abusers accountable for choosing to be violent. To encourage victims to take legal action against the offender/abuser. To use drugs or alcohol as an excuse for domestic violence, assault, or abuse, is unacceptable. To encourage the offender/abuser to seek treatment and the victim to seek support.
3. To listen and support those who have the courage to tell us.. to help them end their shame and isolation.
4. To educate the legal and social service system about the difference between consensual SM and domestic violence, assault, and abuse, and to encourage their appropriate intervention.
5. To take the responsibility of educating our community about the forms of domestic violence, assault, and abuse, its extent and severity.
6. To promote information about where to go for help. Domestic violence takes many forms: physical violence, assault, isolation, out right or subtle psychological and emotional abuse, economic control, sexual assault, and abuse as well as the destruction of personal property. Non-consensual manipulation and assault are not part of SM. The NLA-I advocates relationships based in personal responsibility, honesty and integrity...in which power and pleasure is derived from mutual respect.

WHAT IS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE?

Since there is very little education or support in mainstream society about the BDSM lifestyle it may be hard for some individuals to define the line between what is domestic violence and what is not. Many individuals still have a tendency to label our activities, lifestyle, and BDSM practices as insane or abusive no matter how highly skilled we become or how long we have studied the techniques to master specific "crafts."

Domestic violence is when one person harms or misuses another, with the intent to control in non-consensual ways. Domestic violence can occur between any two or more intimates. Many people believe domestic violence can only happen to submissives or novices. **THIS IS NOT TRUE.** Domestic violence can happen to anyone regardless of their race, gender, or role in the BDSM lifestyle. Non-consensual dominance and control, also known as "domestic violence", may come in many forms: physical abuse, threats of physical abuse, emotional abuse, threatening phone calls, disturbances at a place of employment, and stalking.

WHAT IS A HEALTHY BDSM?

Healthy BDSM is when two or more consenting adults consent to exchange energy, power, sensations, or experiences (however extreme) in ways that fuel their mutual happiness and increase self esteem. In a healthy BDSM relationship all parties involved are actively invested in the well-being of each other and themselves.

Many individuals use "safewords" as a way to distinguish their level of agreement. However, there are a number of other healthy BDSM practitioners who do not. The use of safewords is **NOT** the only way to distinguish consent.

If you would like to have a Regional Coordinator present a workshop for your group/event, obtain pamphlets or other NLA-I Materials for your group/event please e-mail: dvchair@nla-i.com

WHAT ARE SOME SIGNS OF AN ABUSIVE BDSM RELATIONSHIP?

If you are having lingering feelings that "this isn't right" or that "something is wrong with this picture" then there is a cause for further consideration. It may not be abuse, but it is important to listen to your internal alarms and explore any areas that you are concerned with. An unhealthy BDSM relationship will have one (or more) partners acting in ways that create harm to someone. This harm can be physical, emotional, mental, spiritual, sexual, social, or economic. In an abusive relationship you may notice the following:

- Abuser may coerce or force a victim into agreements without their full informed consent, especially long-term contracts with newcomers.
- Abuser may manipulate a victim into financial or emotional dependence without taking precautions should conflict occur or the need to leave arise.
- Abuser may exert non-consensual control, dominance or abuse of a partners children or make demands that go against maternal or paternal responsibilities. (I.E. Restricting access to children as punishment.)
- Abuser may use threats of abandonment or loss of current contract if new demands are not met.
- Abuser may force victim to do things alone, together, or with others in ways that violate or compromise previous negotiations.
- Abuser may use name calling, mind games, denial of human necessities like food, water, shelter as needed, health care and so forth, especially in ways that reduce a victim's self-esteem.
- Abuser may threaten to expose victim or your lifestyle to "vanilla" co-workers, family members, or children.
- Abuser may initiate Inappropriate or harmful punishments or withhold appreciation or affection as punishment.
- Abuser may deny a behavior is abusive and/or may minimize abuse. The abuser may also accuse you of making abuse up, not being submissive/Dominant enough, and so forth.