

Barriers to Leaving an Abusive Relationship

- **Economic dependence**
Who will support me and the children?
- **Parenting**
Wanting a second parent for the children.
- **Religious belief**
Pressure to keep the family together.
- **Extended family**
Pressure to keep the family together.
- **Fear of being alone and on one's own**
Fear that I can't cope with home and children by myself.
- **Loyalty**
If partner had cancer, I'd stick with him/her.
- **Pity**
Partner is really so much worse off than I am. I feel sorry for him/her.
- **Rescue complex**
If I stay, I can "save" him/her, help him/her get better.
- **Fear of his/her suicide**
Partner says he/she will kill him/herself if I leave.
- **Denial**
It is really not so bad.
- **Love**
I love him/her, and he/she is often quite loving and lovable when he/she is not being abusive.
- **Duty**
I said I would stay married to him/her "till death do us part".
- **Guilt**
I feel and partner claims that the marital problems are my fault; I caused his/her difficulties and his/her problems.
- **Responsibility**
It is up to me to work things out and save the marriage.
- **Shame, Embarrassment, Humiliation**
I don't want anyone to know.
- **Security**
Belief in the American dream of growing up and living happily everafter.
- **Identity**
Many people feel that they need a partner in order to be complete.
- **Optimism**
Things will get better.

- **Low self-esteem**

It must be my fault, I must deserve it, I'll never find anyone better. A little love is better than no love at all.

- **Sex role conditioning**

This is just the way men/women are.

- **Survival**

Fear about my own physical safety if I leave because he/she has threatened to find me, and to kill me, the kids, and/or my family.