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Keeping Spouses or Partners Safe From Abuse

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Are you being abused? Do you know a friend or family member who is being abused? Whether you are married or a single in the dating scene, be aware of the signs of physical, sexual and/or emotional abuse in your relationship and the relationships of your close relatives and friends. If you have teens, have you discussed dating abuse and ways to avoid violence? Do you know the warning signs? **Blue Cross Blue Shield Health Insurance** offers the following information to protect you from domestic violence. This is serious stuff that could save your life.

If you suspect abuse, assess your relationship with a spouse or partner. (Or, if you suspect abuse suffered by a relative, friend or neighbor, please give them this information.) Does the spouse or partner:

Embarrass you (or your friend) with put-downs, belittle you, or make fun of the way you look or talk?

Look at you or act in ways that scare you?

Control what you do, who you see or talk to, or where you go? (Or excessively control your friend?)

Stop you (or your friend) from seeing your friends or family members?

Take your money, (or your friend's money), payroll checks, make you ask for money or refuse to give you money?

Make all of the decisions for your life?

Tell you (or your friend) that you're a bad parent or threaten to take away or hurt your children?

Prevent you (or your friend) from working or attending school?

Act like the abuse is no big deal, it's your fault (or your friend's fault), or even deny doing it?

Destroy your property (or your friend's property) or threaten to kill your pets?

Intimidate you (or your friend) with guns, knives or other weapons?

Shove you (or your friend), slap you, choke you, or hit you?

Force you (or your friend) to drop charges if you called the police?

Threaten to commit suicide or threaten to kill you?

If you answered 'yes' to even **one** of these questions, you (or your friend) may be in an abusive relationship. You need a plan to seek protection for yourself and your children. While emotional abuse is a threat to your mental health and well being, physical abuse and violence require careful planning to leave the relationship safely. For support and more information please call the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-SAFE (7233) or at TTY 1-800-787-3224.

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