

# DOCUMENTING ABUSE

learn  
look out  
**step up**  
speak out  
adults  
network

[documentation] is a method of recording specific information about abusive events.

[documenting abuse] can help survivors of violence feel more in control and remember details of specific events. Documentation also creates a timeline of events and draws a picture of the pattern of abuse a survivor has experienced. Documentation may provide supporting evidence if reporting an incident to the police or testifying in court.

If you are living with your abuser, or if they have access to your space (including computers), it is important to think about safety before you begin documenting any events.

Consider where you will store your information. Will you create a word document on a computer or write in a journal? Consider the abuser's access to your personal space when making this decision. *If you decide to use a computer, please make a back-up copy (on a disk or flashdrive) in case your computer crashes or is stolen.*

Store your information in a safe place that is easily accessible only to you. If you are working with a domestic violence advocate, they may be able to store a copy for you.

## [what to record]

It is important to be as specific as possible when documenting abuse. Here are some things to record:

[when] date & time the incident occurred

[where] location (town, address, room- if in residence)

[who] people involved, any witnesses

[what] detailed account of the incident, including:  
how did it begin,  
what did it look like  
(*verbal, physical, sexual, financial, stalking*)  
what was said & by whom  
description of any physical attacks  
how did it end  
what happened after  
any resulting injuries

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