

# Physical Abuse

There are several kinds of abuse (physical, sexual, emotional, financial) and each kind can take many different forms. Our society is so tolerant of abusive behavior that we often do not recognize some behavior as abusive. And because we have been told so often that if we are being abused it is our own fault, it becomes very painful and difficult to look at the abuse which we have endured. As we become safe from further abuse and began to feel more in control of our lives, we can allow ourselves to recognize the abuse that we have experienced. This is a painful process and we need the loving support of a safe person (non-abusive) when we are doing this. Throughout this process we need to be reassured (and gradually we will internalize the knowledge ourselves) that the abuse we receive was not our fault, that we did not deserve it and that we have the right to be treated with dignity and respect.

PHYSICAL abuse can take many forms. The following are *some* of them.

The abuser has:

- \*Pushed and/or shoved you.
- \*Held you down and kept you from leaving or getting up.
- \*Bitten you.
- \*Kicked you.
- \*Choked you.
- \*Hit or punched you once, twice or repeatedly which may or may not have resulted in visible physical injury.
- \*Tied or otherwise physically restrained you.
- \*Thrown objects at you which may or may not have hit you.
- \*Locked you out of your house.
- \*Abandon you in dangerous places.
- \*Refused to help you (ex. Get medical attention) when you were sick, injured or pregnant.
- \*Forced you to ride in the car when the abuser was driving recklessly and endangering your life and/or the lives of your children.
- \*Pulled your hair.
- \*Dragged you.
- \*Pulled your arms or legs or other body parts.
- \*Ripped your clothing.
- \*Forced you off the road or kept you from driving.
- \*Raped you.
- \*Threatened you with a weapon.
- \*Threatened to kill you.
- \*Used a weapon on you.
- \*Hit or beat you with other objects.
- \*Stabbed you.
- \*Burned you.

You will note that many of the above do not result in physical injury. Physical abuse does not always result in physical injury. The atmosphere of violence and fear that these acts create is abusive and results in emotional pain which always accompanies abuse.