

### Barriers to Leaving an Abusive Relationship

Many people ask “Why doesn’t the survivor leave? Why does the survivor stay?” as if it is that simple. It is important to understand that there are many barriers to safety in an abusive relationship. Leaving can sometimes be dangerous and there are many factors an abused partner must consider in the analysis of how to respond to an abusive partner. The better question is “Why does the abuser do this and how can I help the survivor gain access to safety?”

- Economic necessity
- Isolation: from friends, family, community support, resources
- Fear: fear of retaliation; of being alone
- Threats: the abusive partner may threaten to commit suicide or hurt their partner/children, other loved ones and/or pets, threaten to call INS (Immigration and Naturalization Services), threaten to take the children, threaten to “out” their partner to family or coworkers...
- Lack of resources or information about available resources
- Shelters are full
- Love and concern for partner’s well-being (fear that partner will be arrested, imprisoned, deported etc.)
- Hope/belief that partner will change
- Culture/ religion/ family pressures to stay together
- Shame and guilt
- Depression
- Belief that the abuse is their fault
- Immigration status: fear of deportation without partner’s support, fear of separation from children, law enforcement etc.
- Children: desire to provide them with a two-parent home, custody concerns etc.

*ADAPTED IN PART FROM CORASUPPORT.ORG*