Magiczny Kraków

Are you experiencing abuse?

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When abuse occurs and your life or the life of a close relative or partner are at risk, act immediately! Are you experiencing abuse? When abuse occurs and your life or the life of a close relative or partner are at risk, act immediately: call the 24-hour helpline on 112!

- The Police have a duty to respond to a call regarding domestic abuse: to intervene, determine the situation and take appropriate action, including initiating the *Blue Card* procedure.
- If the situation poses a danger to life or health, police officers are required to take action to isolate the perpetrator from the injured person; in addition, they will conduct an investigation.
- If you have suffered bodily injury due to abuse, the ambulance service will provide you with the necessary medical assistance.
- **If you need psychological or legal assistance or temporary shelter, use the support of an institution that is close to where you live.** In the area of Kraków the following facilities are available:
  - **Domestic Abuse Specialized Support Centre (tel. 12 425 81 70, 606 618 014 - from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.),**
  - **Crisis Centre (24-hour hotline: 12 421 92 82),**
  - **Municipal Social Welfare Centre in Krakow** - **find the nearest center in the search engine.**

If you are looking for legal or psychological assistance, you can also call:

- the 24-hour "Blue Line" advice helpline: **22 668 70 00** and **116 123**, any day of the week,
- the 24-hour Domestic Abuse National Helpline, the "Blue Line": **22 668 12 00** and 116 123, any day of the week,

Domestic abuse is not only a difficult, but also a complex problem that affects the most intimate sphere in a person's life. Tackling it requires determined action, but also sensitivity and careful diagnosis.

Find out how to report domestic abuse - step by step.

I have experienced abuse

Reporting makes a difference and will enable the relevant services to help you and keep you safe.

Go to the nearest police station and tell a police officer that you are experiencing abuse from a person close to you.

- During the interview you will be asked questions such as who is harming you, what forms of abuse you wish to report, how long the abuse has been going on, and whether children or other

people besides you are also experiencing abuse.
- If there are witnesses to the reported situations, state this during the first conversation.
- If you have a medical certificate stating the cause and type of bodily injury, show it to the police officer.
- A police officer will fill in the Blue Card A form with you and give you a copy of the Blue Card B form, which contains detailed legal information on domestic abuse, as well as details of institutions and organizations where you can get help.
- Once you have filled in the Blue Card form, a diagnostic and support group set up by the interdisciplinary team will start to act. The group will include specialists who will take action to help you and a close relative or partner. They will take action to stop the abuse, give you the right help, and will also work with the person who is hurting you.
- If the violent situation you are experiencing is a criminal offence, you can report the crime or go to the diagnostic and support group for them to take this step.

If you are afraid to go home:

go to family or friends or to domestic abuse support centers . Get support from the Domestic Abuse Specialized Support Centre - tel. **12 425 81 70** and **606 618 014** (between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m.) or the **Crisis Centre**

REMEMBER! If a violent person is endangering your life or health, the Police are required to take action to apprehend the perpetrator, to order them leave the shared premises, or to issue a restraining order which is valid for fourteen days (this can be extended a court upon the request of the victim of abuse).

If you need support:

If you need psychological or legal assistance or temporary shelter, you may use the support of the Domestic Abuse Specialized Support Centre - tel. **12 425 81 70** or **606 618 014** (between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m.) or the nearest **Crisis Centre**

You can go to the nearest Social Welfare Centre

- During the interview you will be asked questions such as who is harming you, what forms of abuse you wish to report, how long the abuse has been going on, and whether children or other people besides you are also experiencing abuse.
- If there are witnesses to the reported situations, state this during the first conversation.
- A social worker will fill in the Blue Card A form with you and give you a copy of the Blue Card B form, which contains detailed legal information on domestic abuse, as well as details of institutions and organizations where you can get help.
- Once you have filled in the Blue Card form, a diagnostic and support group set up by the interdisciplinary team will start to act. The group will include specialists who will take action to help you and your loved ones. They will take action to stop the abuse, give you the right help, and will also work with the person who is hurting you.
- If the violent situation you are experiencing is a criminal offence, members of the diagnostic and

support group will report the crime if you are not ready to take this step on your own. They may also ask you if you have any documents proving that you have experienced abuse (a medical certificate, a report from a medical examination, recordings of threats or written threats made against you).
- If you are afraid to return home where the perpetrator of abuse may be, contact the Crisis Centre or the Domestic Abuse Specialist Centre Support. There you will receive shelter and the support you need.

Have you experienced abuse? See a doctor

- If you have a bodily injury or feel pain - see your GP, and if you need medical assistance at night or while on holiday, go to a night and holiday healthcare center or hospital emergency department.
- Remember that contacting your doctor is important for the sake of your health and your life. The doctor also has a duty to initiate the Blue Card procedure, through which you will receive comprehensive support.
- The doctor also has a duty to issue a free-of-charge certificate stating the causes and type of injuries related to domestic abuse (regardless of whether you seek help within the National Health Service or privately). It is a good idea to take a hard copy of the certificate [PDF] with you to your appointment. A certificate can be important evidence, and should be shown to the Police.
- A medical certificate is not the same as a report from a medical examination - this is the findings of a specialist medical examination that can only be performed by a forensic doctor.
- If a medical examination is ordered by the Police during the investigation of a suspected violent crime, the examination is free of charge for you. If you decide to go to the forensic doctor yourself to have a medical examination, then you have to pay for it.

How to report a suspected violent crime?

- You can do this in person - at your nearest police station, and you can also submit a request to prosecute the offender - or in writing by reporting the crime in a letter. You can also send a letter or report the crime in person at the public prosecutor’s office.
- If you want to write a letter to report a crime, but you do not know what it should contain - use this template [DOC].
- The members of the diagnostic and support group and the relevant institutions, such as the Crisis Centre or Municipal Social Welfare Centre (MOPS), can help you to report the crime.

What happens if you tell a police officer about the abuse you are experiencing?

- A police officer will initiate preliminary enquiries due to suspicion of a crime.
- A police officer will fill in a report and question you as a witness, document your injuries and refer you for a medical examination (if this has not already been done by a doctor).
- Mention any witnesses who can confirm the abuse.
- You will be asked to sign the crime report form. Read it and correct any errors or ask for

corrections.

If you witness abuse, react! You can save someone’s life!

If you see that someone is being abused (marks on their body indicating abuse), hear arguing, cries for help, crying, unusual noise indicating that someone may be hurt, or know that someone is being subjected to domestic abuse because the victim has confided in you, react!

Reporting matters and is crucial in helping and keeping the victim safe. Your report will immediately be passed on to the relevant emergency services: Police and/or Ambulance Service.

If the life or health of a person experiencing abuse is at risk, call the 24-hour helpline 112!

How can you help someone experiencing abuse?

- Talk to the victim, showing support and listen, while not criticizing and avoiding your own interpretation.
- Ask how you can help at that moment, e.g. by helping them get to a place of refuge or helping them to report a suspected crime at the nearest police station or public prosecutor’s office.
- If in doubt, contact the consultants of the 24/7 Domestic Abuse National Polish Blue Line on freephone 800 120 002 for advice on how to help a victim of abuse.
- Notify the Social Welfare Centre or go to the nearest police station, stating the address of the victim of abuse.
- You can contact the staff of the Domestic Abuse Specialist Support Centre (os. Krakowiaków 46) tel. 12 425 81 70 and 606 618 014 (between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m.) or the Crisis Centre in Krakow (ul. Radziwiłłowska 8b) tel. 12 421 92 82.
- Offer shelter to a victim.

REMEMBER! Take care of yourself. The role of a witness is a difficult one and can cause a lot of doubt, stress and anxiety. Help from professionals is always at hand. Consider what kind of commitment you are ready for and whether you want to remain anonymous. If you are in doubt as to whether a situation you have observed is abuse, you can consult representatives of the relevant institutions or NGOs.

There are many hurtful myths and stereotypes concerning abuse:

- talking about domestic abuse is not “airing dirty laundry in public” or “meddling in other people’s business”. Abuse is unacceptable and action must always be taken!
- abuse does not always leave visible traces, physical abuse is not at all the most common form of abuse,
- a victim of abuse is not to blame for his/her situation, the perpetrator is to blame,
- abuse can happen in any family, regardless of the wealth or education status of its members

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What to do when a child is a victim of abuse

Abuse against minors can scar them for life. The key, in the first instance, is to ensure the child's safety, protect them from abuse and provide extensive support.

If:

- Your child is a victim of abuse,
- Your child witnesses abuse, e.g. against one of the parents or abuse of other family members,
- You are a witness to child abuse, or you have noticed worrying symptoms in a child's behavior or appearance - you can help! Reporting matters and is the only way to protect those who are most vulnerable.

React! Reporting abuse can save a child from suffering and fear!

If the life or health of a child who is a victim of abuse is at risk, call the 24-hour helpline 112! Your report will immediately be passed on to the relevant emergency services: Police and/or Ambulance Service. If the situation is not life-threatening but you suspect that a child is a victim of abuse, you can:

- Notify the nearest police station, prosecution service or family court (you can do this in person, by mail or by e-mail); describe the situation of the child, giving his/her details: full name and residential address (if known to you). You can do this anonymously.
- You can notify the Municipal Social Welfare Centre (MOPS) or the school/preschool/nursery. It is guaranteed that the staff of these units will begin to take action. You can do this anonymously.

Report suspected abuse of a minor by calling the free 24-hour helpline run by the Polish National Domestic Abuse Referral Service "Niebieska Linia" tel. 800 120 002.