

How To Write a History of Abuse:

In our experience in dealing with abusive relationships, we have found that it is a good idea to keep a diary of the emotional and physical abuse that has occurred in your entire relationship. This information may be needed if you engage in legal matters about restraining orders, child custody, divorce, or other legal matters. It is also useful in seeing that you are not “crazy” for questioning your relationship. This diary should detail all the cruel acts done to you and/or your children by your partner. Try to remember the exact words that were used and include threats, demands, obscene language, etc. This information is strictly confidential and cannot be revealed without your written consent. If you choose, we can retain a copy in your file so you will have it for future reference.

The following outline is provided to help you with this difficult task. Please follow it carefully.

1. List each act by number beginning with the first act of abuse and ending with the most recent.
2. State when it was done. Remember as best you can the day, week, and/or month of the year it occurred. Use holidays, anniversary dates, birthdays, or other indications of time to remind you of the incidents.
3. State the address where the incident took place.
4. Describe the incident in as much detail as possible: indicate if you were hit and how (such as with a fist, open hand, strangling, knocked down, etc.). If weapons were used, then identify what kind (such as gun, knife, other objects). Be specific and quote what was said, if anything (such as threats, obscene remarks, accusations).
5. If any witnesses (including your children) were present, list their names.
Remember: one can witness an incident by hearing from another room.
6. If the police were called, list which police department responded and how many officers. If you remember, include the police officer's name and/or badge number.
7. If you received any medical attention, list the name of the hospital and the names of doctors and nurses who treated you, when you went for treatment, who went with you, and if follow up was necessary.
8. Include other information, which you think would be important.

Example of history of abuse:

On or about the summer of 2022, in our apartment at 212 Washington Street, Morristown, New Jersey, Jamie. R. Anderson hit me on the face, chest, back, and arms with closed fists. No one was present at the time, but a neighbor heard the fight and called the police. Patrolman Brown responded. No action was taken at the time.

In August of 2022, Jamie pushed me down the stairs. Treatment for a sprained arm was obtained at Morristown Medical Center. Dr. Smith was the attending physician.

On or about Sept. 14, 2022, Jamie told me they would kill me if I ever told anyone that they hit me, or if I ever called the police. We still resided on Washington Street in Morristown.