

Domestic violence

Domestic violence (Häusliche Gewalt) is forbidden. It is subject to criminal prosecution. It is important to seek help in the event of domestic violence. Various contacts can provide information, advice and support. The advice services are typically confidential and free of charge. An interpreter can translate if necessary.

In an emergency

Help in emergencies is available here:

- Police emergency hotline (24 hours), tel. 112 or 117, www.polizei.bl.ch
- Women's Refuge of Basel-Stadt and Baselland (24 hours), tel. 061 681 66 33, www.frauenhaus-basel.ch
- Medical emergency hotline (24 hours), tel. 061 261 15 15, www.mnzbasel.ch
- Kantonsspital Baselland emergency units (Liestal, Laufen, Bruderholz, 24 hours), www.ksbl.ch/notfall
- Psychiatry service of Baselland (24 hours), tel. 061 553 56 56, www.pbl.ch/notfall

What is domestic violence?

Domestic violence (Häusliche Gewalt) refers to violence in the family or partnership: between married people or people who are or were together. It does not matter if they live together. Violence between parents and children or between siblings is also domestic violence.

There are different forms of domestic violence – physical, psychological, sexual and economic violence. For example: constant insults, forbidding contact, confinement, pushing, controlling, forcing someone to have sex, taking away money, forbidding someone to learn a language and neglecting children. Threats are also domestic violence. Domestic violence is forbidden.

Everyone can be affected by domestic violence: young and old people, people with and without a Swiss passport, rich and poor families. It's important for victims to get help.

Counselling for victims

Confidential and with translation if necessary:

- Victim support in Basel-Stadt and Baselland, tel. 061 205 09 10, www.opferhilfe-beiderbasel.ch
- Victim support chat counselling, www.opferhilfe-beiderbasel.ch/chat
- Women's Refuge of Basel-Stadt and Baselland (24 hours), tel. 061 681 66 33, www.frauenhaus-basel.ch
- Men's counselling in the Basel region, tel. 061 691 02 02, www.mbrb.ch/beratung
- Helping Hand (24 hours), tel. 143, www.143.ch

Help for violent people

The educational programme against domestic violence teaches participants how to resolve conflicts without violence. The programme is for adults. The programme is free of charge.

Anyone who needs someone to talk to immediately can contact Helping Hand (Dargebotene Hand) by phone, text message, chat or email. There is always someone there. Even at night. They can be contacted without disclosing one's name (anonymously).

Children

Children who experience violence at home need help. When children experience domestic violence at home, it has a negative effect on their development. Even if children aren't direct targets of the violence. Children who experience violence at home should talk about it with someone outside the family. For example: teachers, school social workers, parents of friends or neighbours.

Some children suffer silently, while others present symptoms. For example: difficulties at school, bed-wetting, headaches, eating or sleeping disorders, problems in dealing with other children or aggressiveness.

Victim Support (Opferhilfe) advises children when they experience domestic violence. Children and youths can call Pro Juventute day and night (tel. 147) or contact them by SMS, chat or email. Their specialists do not tell anyone about the conversation. They listen and help victims find solutions. Calls are free of charge. Callers do not have to give their names.

Sexual violence

Sexual assault also occurs in a partnership and the family. Sexual violence is a form of domestic violence. It can be reported to the police. Even if a victim does not want to report it to the police, it is important to get a medical examination after the assault. The Cantonal Hospital of Baselland (Kantonsspital Baselland) carries out treatment confidentially:

- The doctor does not tell anyone.
- Any violence is documented.
- The documents can be given to the police later as important evidence.
- The doctor can network with victim support services.

Between the violence and the investigation:

- Victims should not shower or wash – not even their hands.
- If possible, victims should not go to the toilet.
- Victims should bring their clothes for examination (not washed).

Reporting assault to the police:

Some domestic violence offences are automatically investigated by the police. It is therefore important that you seek advice from the victim support service (Opferhilfe) before you submit a report to the police. This way, you can take your decisions in an informed manner, knowing all the options. The police have experience with reports of sexual violence. Interviews are conducted by a person of the same sex. The complaint can be filed at the police station. You can bring along a trusted person or a specialist from a victim support agency.

Right of residence

If a person is in Switzerland due to a marriage and experiences domestic violence, this person can remain in Switzerland even after the separation, depending on the situation. Every situation is different. That is why seeking advice is important. The victim support service (Opferhilfe) can provide support. Advice is free of charge and confidential.

It is important to have evidence of the violence. For example: photos of injuries, screenshots of threats or abuse on WhatsApp, Facebook, etc. The evidence should be kept in a safe place. For example, at a friend's house or at work. It is also good to let people in the surroundings know about the violence.

What is stalking?

Stalking is the excessive watching, contacting, following and harassing of a person being stalked against their will. For example: sending a large number of text messages, emails and other messages, lurking around at work or at home, harassment over the phone, unwanted gifts and seeking information from the person's environment. Those who commit stalking are often people from the environment (ex-partners), but can also be strangers.

It is important that the stalking can be proven. For example, victims could keep a diary of the individual stalking actions (e.g. gifts, notes and phone calls), victims could inform the people around them and could take screenshots/photos of any messages (WhatsApp, Facebook, etc.).

What is forced marriage?

If a person marries another under pressure from the family and against the person's own will, this is called forced marriage (Zwangsheirat). The marriage may be declared invalid. People also have the freedom to choose whether they want to stay in a marriage or separate. If a person stays in a marriage against that person's will, it is also called a forced marriage. Examples of forcing are: threats, blackmail, psychological pressure or physical violence. Forced marriages are prohibited in Switzerland.

What is female cutting (circumcision)?

In female cutting/circumcision (Mädchenbeschneidung, FGM/FGC), the female genitals are cut. There are different forms and practices. Circumcised girls and women often suffer health and psychological consequences of circumcision. Female cutting (circumcision) is prohibited. Parents are also liable to prosecution if they organise the cutting (circumcision) of their child outside Switzerland.

Additional information (links, addresses, information sheets, brochures)

www.hallo-baselland.ch/en/emergencies-and-counselling-services/hausliche-gewalt