

Digital Abuse in the Latina Community

A tip sheet for survivors

Technology and the Internet are [powerful tools](#) for anyone experiencing domestic violence. They can be essential resources to access help and information and valuable platforms to connect with friends, family members, advocates, and service providers.

Unfortunately, they can also be used by abusive partners to begin, continue, or escalate abuse. According [to a study](#), many Americans are connected to the world of digital information while “on the go” via smartphones and other mobile devices.

[Digital abuse](#), also known as technology-facilitated abuse, is something [Latina women](#) face today when experiencing intimate partner violence, among other challenges or barriers to getting support.

This tip sheet is designed to assist Latina survivors experiencing domestic violence, particularly digital abuse or harassment, with information on how to identify and ways to find safety within their communities.

What is digital abuse?

Digital abuse is the use of technology and the Internet to bully, harass, stalk, intimidate, or control a partner. This behavior is often a form of [verbal or emotional abuse](#) conducted online.

Types of digital abuse

Image-Based Sexual Abuse or [revenge porn](#), is when an abusive partner has threatened to distribute intimate images of a partner without their consent. It's called “revenge” porn because the images or videos are often used to retaliate against or blackmail a current or former intimate partner. Many states have laws that [make it illegal](#) to share or post intimate photos or videos online without your consent.



Digital Abuse: Common Barriers for Latina Women

Cultural Values

Familismo
Refers to the importance of family in most Latinx households.

Additionally, Latina women prioritize their children or being a mother over themselves.

Religious Values

Marriage
Among Latinas in the United States, 92% report that [religion](#) is important in their lives. Religious teachings shape Latinas' responses to abuse.

Religious beliefs can prevent them from leaving due to guilt or shame.

Sextortion is when the abusive partner has threatened to distribute [intimate images](#) of an intimate partner without their consent in exchange for the intimate partner meeting certain demands.

Intimate partner surveillance is when an abusive partner deliberately surveils an intimate partner with or without their knowledge. This is done by using apps, spyware, or in-home technologies like security cameras to monitor the survivor's movements and actions.

Internet of Things (IoT) abuse is when the abusive partner uses everyday technologies that are part of the Internet of Things (IoT), such as smart speakers, internet-connected thermostats or lighting systems, or wearable devices to monitor an intimate partner's activities and engage in abusive behaviors.

Cyberstalking or [online harrasment](#) occurs when an abusive partner misues the internet to stalk and harrass an intimate partner. The abusive partner may use different forms of techology such as email, social media, messaging apps, or other digital platforms to post or share messages, harrass, or scare their intimate partner.

Watch Out For These Signs

If you experience any of these signs, you could be experiencing digital abuse and harassment:

- Posting your intimate images in a group chat on a messaging app like WhatsApp without your consent.
- Using AI tools to create fake pornographic images using your face or real images without your consent.
- Using apps like "Find My Friends" or monitoring social media for posts where you are tagged.
- Installing spyware on your devices or vehicles.
- Accessing your bank accounts to see where you are spending your money.
- You are being watched or monitored remotely by your partner through the in-home security cameras or you are locked into certain rooms when your partner uses an app to control the digital door locks.



Learn how to document abuse, visit:
<https://bit.ly/DocumentAbuse>

If you experience one or more examples from this list, you could be experiencing digital abuse. Advocates at the [National Domestic Violence Hotline](#) are available 24/7 to offer you support and resources. Text "START" to 88788, call 1-800-799-SAFE (7233) or chat with an advocate at thehotline.org.

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