



It Shouldn't Hurt to Go Home



The Domestic Violence Victim's Handbook



LOS ANGELES COUNTY
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Gloria Molina
First District

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Zev Yaroslavsky
Third District

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Fourth District

Michael D. Antonovich
Fifth District

“We’ve put together this guide as a resource for those afraid of, at risk for or endangered by the potential for domestic violence so that they will know there are people who care, and people who want to help.”

– ZEV YAROSLAVSKY, Chairman of the Board
Supervisor, Third District

IT SHOULDN'T HURT TO GO HOME

The Domestic Violence Victim's Handbook

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NOW IS THE TIME!

If you are a victim of domestic violence, now is the time to start thinking about protecting yourself and those who count on you for safety.

FACTS:

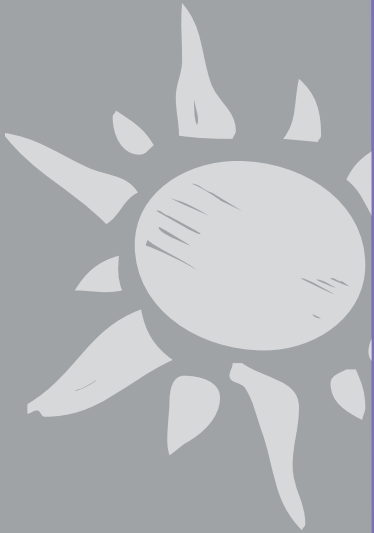
Every year in the United States there are over 3 million incidents of domestic violence. That means that every nine seconds someone is beaten by their domestic partner!

Every year over 4000 victims of domestic violence are killed.

Domestic Violence can happen to anyone, including you. Domestic Violence occurs in 25–33% of all relationships

The fact that you are reading this handbook is a very good sign! It means that you are seriously considering your situation.

We hope you will begin to explore the options that are available to you.



WHERE TO TURN



CALL 911 IF YOU ARE IN IMMEDIATE DANGER!

- LOS ANGELES COUNTY DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HOTLINE (24 HOUR) (800) 978-3600
- NATIONAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HOTLINE (24 HOUR) (800) 799-SAFE (7233)
- VICTIM-WITNESS PROTECTION PLAN (800) 380-3811
- 2-1-1 LOS ANGELES COUNTY INFORMATION CALL CENTER
- 3-1-1 CITY OF LOS ANGELES SERVICE HELPLINE

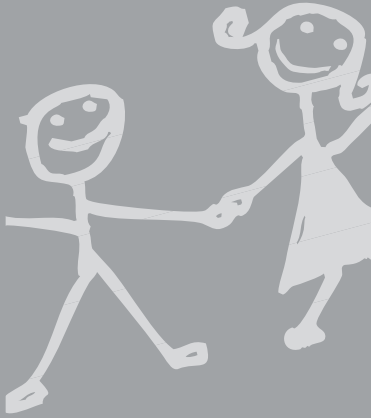
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SHELTERS

Los Angeles County funds 19 Domestic Violence Shelters. They are open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

These shelters offer many services to domestic violence victims, including:

- Temporary emergency shelter for victims and their children
- Transportation to shelters, with law enforcement back-up
- Counseling - individually and in groups
- Referrals to legal, medical, financial, child care and employment services
- Children's programs to help school age children
- Food, clothing and some household appliances to help set up a new household
- Drop-in centers for victims who need support services

WHAT IS



Domestic Violence can take different forms, but its goal is always the same: Batters want to control their domestic partners through fear. They do this by regularly abusing them physically, sexually, psychologically and economically.

Here are some of the forms domestic violence can take:

PHYSICAL ABUSE

Hitting • Slapping • Kicking
• Strangulation • Pushing •
Punching • Beating.

VERBAL ABUSE

Constant criticism • Making humiliating remarks • Not responding to what the victim is saying • Mocking • Name-calling • Yelling • Swearing • Interrupting • Changing the subject.

SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Forcing sex on an unwilling partner • Demanding sexual acts that the victim does not want to perform • Degrading treatment.

ISOLATION

Making it hard for the victim to see friends and relatives • Monitoring phone calls • Reading mail • Controlling where the victim goes • Taking the victim's car keys.

COERCION

Making the victim feel guilty • Pushing the victim into decisions • Sulking • Manipulating children and other family members • Always insisting on being right • Making up impossible "rules" and punishing the victim for breaking them.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE?

HARASSMENT

Following or stalking • Embarrassing the victim in public • Constantly checking up on the victim • Refusing to leave when asked.

ECONOMIC CONTROL

Not paying bills • Refusing to give the victim money • Not letting the victim work • Interfering with the victim's job • Refusing to work and support the family.

ABUSING TRUST

Lying • Breaking promises • Withholding important information • Being unfaithful • Being overly jealous • Not sharing domestic responsibilities.

THREATS and INTIMIDATION

Threatening to harm the victim, the children, family members and pets • Using physical size to intimidate • Shouting • Keeping weapons and threatening to use them.

EMOTIONAL WITHHOLDING

Not expressing feelings • Not giving compliments • Not paying attention • Not respecting the victim's feelings, rights and opinions • Not taking the victim's concerns seriously.

DESTRUCTION OF PROPERTY

Destroying furniture • Punching walls • Throwing things • Breaking dishes.

SELF DESTRUCTIVE BEHAVIOR

Abusing drugs or alcohol • Threatening self-harm or suicide • Driving recklessly • Deliberately doing things that will cause trouble (like telling off the boss).



DON'T BELIEVE THESE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE MYTHS

You can't believe everything you read and hear about Domestic Violence.

Here are eight common "myths" about domestic violence.

They are not true.

MYTH #1:
Domestic Violence is just a momentary loss of temper.

Domestic abuse is just the opposite of a "momentary loss of temper". The batterer makes a conscious decision to batter. It is an ongoing technique used by the batterer to enforce control through the use of fear.

MYTH #2:
Domestic Violence only happens in poor families.

Domestic violence occurs throughout all levels of society. There is no evidence that suggests that any income level, occupation, social class, or culture is

immune from domestic violence. Wealthy, educated, professionals are just as prone to violence as anyone.

MYTH #3:
Domestic violence is just an occasional slap or punch that isn't serious.

Victims are often seriously injured. Over 30% of the women seeking care in hospital emergency rooms are there because they have been injured by their domestic partners. Battered women are more likely to suffer miscarriages or to give birth prematurely. Battered men also suffer physical injury.

MYTH #4:
Heads of households have the right to control the people they support.

No partner in a domestic relationship has the right to control the other partner.

MYTH #5:
The victim can always walk away from the relationship.

Victims usually do not have any place to go where they will be safe from the batterer. Because of the ongoing history of the abusive relationship, the batterer knows all of the victim's options and can follow the victim there. It takes money, a support network, and time for detailed planning to ensure that a victim can escape - luxuries often not available to victims. Sometimes it's safer for the victim to stay with the batterer for the time being than to try and escape. When family or friends are not an option, the victim may need help from a domestic violence shelter.

MYTH #6:
If the batterer is truly sorry and promises to reform, the abuse is going to stop.

Remorse and begging for forgiveness are part of the

method used by batterers to control their victims.

Batterers rarely stop battering without intervention.

MYTH #7:
If the violent episodes don't happen very often the situation is not that serious.

Even if the violence doesn't happen often, the threat of it remains as a terrorizing means of control. No matter how far apart the violent episodes are, each one is a reminder of the one that happened before and creates fear of the one that will happen in the future.

MYTH #8
Victims have the types of personalities that seek out and encourage abuse.

A number of studies have determined that there is no set of personality traits that describe victims of domestic violence. It is the batterer who is responsible for the battering, not the victim.



WHO ARE THE ABUSERS?

ABUSERS TYPICALLY:

- Have very short fuses and become immediately angry with their partners.
- Deny that the abuse has occurred or minimize of a violent episode.
- Blame the victim, other people or outside events for the abusive behavior and/or violent attack.

ABUSERS DON'T ACT BECAUSE THEY ARE "OUT OF CONTROL".

- Abusers choose to respond to a situation violently. They are making a conscious decision to behave in a violent manner.
- They know what they're doing and what they want from their victims.
- They are not acting out of because they have anger management issues.
- They are not reacting to stress.
- They are not helplessly

under the control of drugs and alcohol.

ABUSE IS A LEARNED BEHAVIOR.

- It is not a "natural" reaction to an outside event.
- It is not "normal" to behave in a violent manner within a personal relationship.
- It is usually learned from seeing abuse used as a successful tactic of control often in the home in which the abuser grew up.
- It is reinforced when abusers are not arrested or prosecuted or otherwise held responsible for their acts.

ABUSERS MAY:

- Express remorse and beg for forgiveness with seemingly loving gestures.
- Be hard workers and good providers.
- Be witty, charming, attractive and intelligent.
- At times, be loving parents.

WHO ARE THE VICTIMS?

SOME EXAMPLES OF VICTIMS

- A large majority of all reported heterosexual victims are women. However, heterosexual men can be victims as well. In lesbian, gay, & transgender relationships men and women are equally victimized.
- Teens, pregnant women and elderly are especially at risk.

CHILDREN CAN BE DIRECT OR INDIRECT VICTIMS

- They may be battered themselves.
- They may be forced to see their parent battered in front of them.
- The batterer may use threats to harm them as a means of controlling the victim.
- They grow up seeing battery as the natural way for domestic partners to relate to each other.
- They grow up in an insecure environment filled with tension and violence.

TEENAGERS EXPERIENCE DATING VIOLENCE

- Teenagers are just as vulnerable to intimate partner violence and it is just as dangerous.
- Teenagers may not seek help because they distrust adults.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE OCCURS IN LESBIAN, GAY AND TRANSGENDER HOUSEHOLDS.

- Gay and lesbian relationships are not immune to the pattern of abusive and coercive behaviors that constitute domestic violence.
- Victims often will not seek help because they fear that no one will believe that violence occurs in lesbian, gay, and transgender relationships and they fear that they will experience homophobia and transphobia among service providers.

ELDERLY PEOPLE CAN BE VICTIMS

- They may be battered by their intimate partners
- They may be physically unable to defend themselves or escape from the abuse.
- They may be physically or mentally unable to report the abuse to anyone.

VICTIMS ARE NOT TO BLAME FOR THE VIOLENCE.

- Studies have found no characteristic link between personality type and being a victim
- Victims can not stop the abuse by simply changing how they behave
- Victims deserve to be safe from violence, regardless of age or sexual orientation.

BREAKING THE CYCLE

The Power and Control Wheel

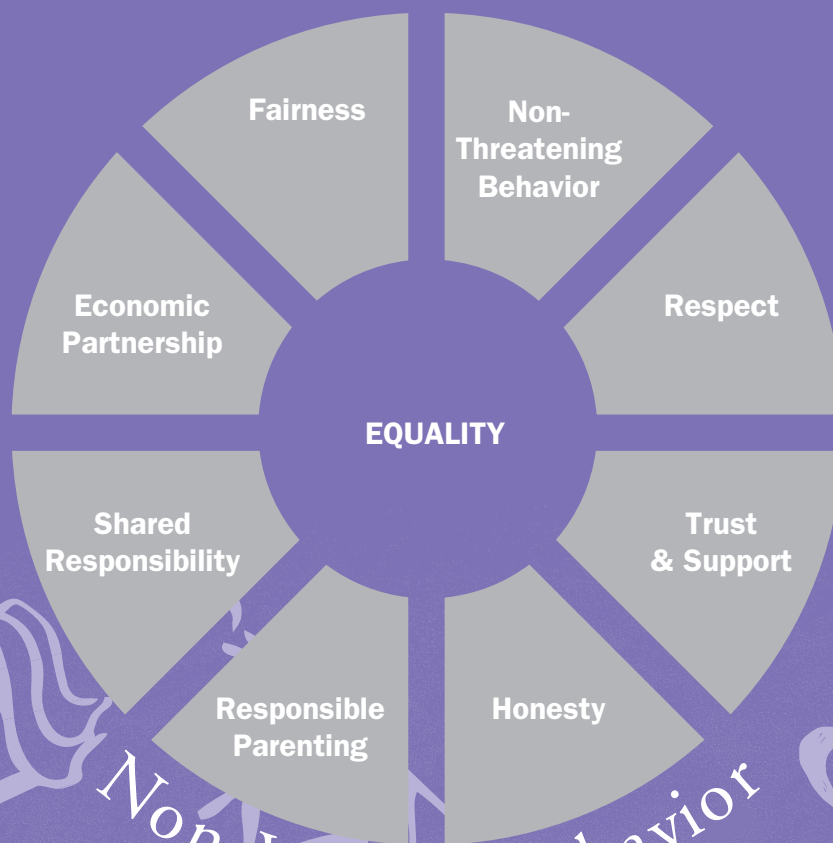
This Power and Control Wheel helps link the different behaviors that together form a pattern of violence. It shows the relationship as a whole - and how each seemingly unrelated behavior is an important part in an overall effort to control someone.



CYCLE OF VIOLENCE

Equality Wheel

This Equality Wheel offers a view of a relationship that is based on equality and non-violence. Use this chart to compare the characteristics of a non-violent relationship to those of an abusive relationship in the Power and Control Wheel. The Equality Wheel is helpful in setting goals and boundaries in personal relationships.





HOW TO HELP A FRIEND WHO IS A DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIM

1. Bring up the subject.

Don't be afraid to let victims/survivors know your concerns. Say that you can see what's happening and that you want to help. Let them know they are not alone.

2. Acknowledge that they are in a very difficult, scary situation.

Let them know that it's not their fault that they are being battered. Encourage them to express their feelings of hurt or anger or humiliation. Remind them that the batterer, not the victim, is responsible for the abuse. Remember that it may be difficult for them to talk about what they are experiencing.

3. Don't buy into their denial.

If they refuse to acknowledge that they are in a dangerous situation, express your concern for their safety.

4. Respect their right to make their own decisions.

Let them

make their own decisions. Don't start with what you think they should do, or insist that your plan be followed.

5. Discuss this handbook with them.

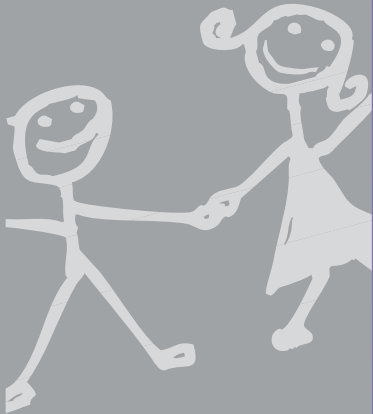
Help them identify the abusive behavior they are experiencing. Go over the *Power & Control and Equality wheels*. Talk about services and the hotline.

6. Go with them.

If they need medical care, go with them. If they are going to the police, to court, or to see a lawyer, offer to go along. But let them do the talking.

7. Plan safe strategies

with them. If they are contemplating leaving an abusive relationship, help them to develop a "safety plan". Make sure they're comfortable with the plan. Never encourage them to follow a plan that they don't consider "safe".



HOW TO LET YOUR FRIENDS HELP YOU

If you are the domestic violence victim, let the people who care about you help you.

1. Confide in someone you trust.

If you have a friend or relative who cares about your safety, tell them about the abuse. Sharing a burden with someone makes it lighter. If you've left your abusive relationship and are feeling lonely and tempted to return, talk it out with a friend who knows the situation.

2. Don't get talked into taking action that doesn't feel right to you.

You are the only one who knows if you're ready to leave your relationship, or go to the police, or seek emergency shelter. Make your own decisions, based on your own comfort level.

3. Leave an "emergency supply" with a friend. This could include extra money, a set of car keys, a change of clothes and copies of important documents that may come in handy in an emergency. Think of what you might need if you have to leave your home in a hurry.

4. Ask a friend to accompany you to important appointments. If you have medical appointments, or are going to the police, or to court, or to see a lawyer, take a friend along for moral support.

5. Discuss this handbook with a friend. Go over the Power & Control and Equality wheels. Discuss the types of abuse you are experiencing. Discuss your emergency plans.

6. Make sure a friend knows about your Personal Safety Plan. Pages 16 and 17 show you how to start making your own Personal Safety Plan. Go over them with a friend and give that friend a copy of the plan.



SAFETY MEASURES WHILE YOU'RE IN AN ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIP

If you are living with the person who is battering you, here are some things you can do to ensure you and your children's safety.

1. Memorize the numbers of friends and relatives whom you can call in an emergency. If your children are old enough, teach them important phone numbers, including when and how to dial 911.

2. Keep this handbook where your batterer won't find it, but where you can get it when you need to review it.

3. Keep change or a calling card for pay phones with you at all times.

4. If you can, open your own bank account.

5. Stay in touch with friends. Get to know your neighbors. Resist any temptation to cut yourself off from people - even if you feel like you just want to be left alone.

6. Rehearse your escape plan until you know it by heart.

7. Leave a set of car keys, extra money, a change of clothes and copies of the following documents, with a trusted friend or relative.

- You and your children's birth certificates
- Your children's school and medical records
- Bank Account(s) Information
- Welfare identification
- Passports or green cards
- Your social security card
- Lease agreements or mortgage payment books
- Insurance papers
- Important addresses and telephone numbers
- Any other important documents
- Keep a diary of the abuse you have suffered.

SAFETY AFTER YOU HAVE LEFT THE RELATIONSHIP

Once you no longer live with the batterer, here are some things you can do to enhance you and your children's safety.

1. Change the locks - if you're still in your home and the batterer is the one who has left.

2. Install as many security features as possible in your home. These might include metal doors and gates, security alarm system, smoke detectors and outside lights.

3. Inform neighbors that your former partner is not welcome on the premises. Ask them to call the police if they see that person lurking around your property or watching your home.

4. Make sure the people who care for your children are very clear about who does and who does not have permission to pick up your children.

5. Obtain a restraining order. Keep it near you at all times, and make

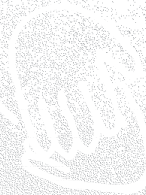
sure friends and neighbors have copies to show the police.

6. Let your co-workers know about the situation - if your former partner is likely to come to your work place to bother you. Ask them to warn you if they observe that person around.

7. Avoid the stores, banks, and businesses you used when you were living with the batterer.

8. Get counseling. Attend workshops. Join support groups. Do whatever it takes to form a supportive network that will be there when you need it.

9. Keep your children safe. If your batterer abuses you, there is a strong possibility that he will abuse your children also.



YOUR PERSONAL

These pages will help you plan for your safety. If you don't have some of this information, now is the time to get it. **IMPORTANT! KEEP THIS INFORMATION IN A SAFE AND PRIVATE PLACE WHERE YOUR BATTERER CANNOT FIND IT!**

1. Important phone numbers:

Police: **911** or _____

Domestic Violence Hot Line: **(800) 978-3600**

My attorney: _____ Other: _____

2. I can call these friends or relatives in an emergency:

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Name: _____ Phone: _____

3. These neighbors will call the police if they hear me being battered:

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Name: _____ Phone: _____

4. I can go to these places if I have to leave my home in a hurry:

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address _____

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address _____

SAFETY PLAN

5. I have given copies of the documents checked below to a friend for safekeeping:

- My birth certificate
- My children's birth certificates
- My social security card
- My children's school records
- My children's medical records
- Bank Account(s) Information
- Welfare identification
- My passport or green card
- My children's passports or green cards
- Insurance papers
- My lease agreement or mortgage payment book
- Important addresses and telephone numbers

Other: _____

Other: _____

Other: _____

6. The following are hidden in a safe place:

- An extra set of car keys
- Some extra money
- An extra change of clothes for me and my children



Resources:

911 – For all Immediate emergencies

**LOS ANGELES COUNTY
DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S
OFFICE**

(213) 974-3785

**LOS ANGELES
CITY ATTORNEY'S OFFICE**

(213) 485-2352

**ATTORNEY GENERAL
OF CALIFORNIA
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE**

Public Inquiry Unit
P.O. Box 944255
Sacramento, CA 94244-2550
(916) 322-3360 or
Toll-free in California
(800) 952-5225
<http://ag.ca.gov/index.php>

**LOS ANGELES GAY AND
LESBIAN CENTER**

(323) 860-5806
(323) 993-7670

**CITY OF LOS ANGELES
DEPARTMENT ON DISABILITY**

(213) 202-2764
(213) 847-0652 TTY

**CALIFORNIA VICTIM
COMPENSATION &
GOVERNMENT CLAIMS
BOARD**

P.O. Box 3036
Sacramento, CA 95812-3036
(800) 777-9229
Hearing Impaired
(800) 735-2929
www.boc.ca.gov/contact.aspx

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Additional information about Domestic Violence is available from these sources.

CALIFORNIA PARTNERSHIP TO END DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

P.O. Box 1798
Sacramento, CA 95812-1789
(800) 524-4765
(916) 444-7163
www.coedv.org

National Clearinghouse for the Defense of Battered Women

125 S. 9th Street, Suite 302
Philadelphia, PA 19107
(215)351-0010
(800) 903-0111, #3
<http://www.ncdbw.org/>

NATIONAL COALITION AGAINST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

One Broadway
Suite B-210
Denver, CO 80203
(303) 839-1852
www.ncadv.org

NATIONAL COALITION OF ANTI-VIOLENCE PROGRAMS

240 West 35th Street Suite 200
New York, NY 10001
(212) /14-1184
www.ncavp.org/

FUTURES WITHOUT VIOLENCE

100 Montgomery St.,The Presidio
San Francisco, CA 94129-1718
(415) 678-5500
www.futureswithviolence.org



THIS HANDBOOK WAS BROUGHT TO YOU BY:

LOS ANGELES COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
Domestic Violence Council
500 West Temple Street, Suite B-50, Los Angeles, CA 90012
Olivia G. Rodriguez, Executive Director
213-974-0829, 213-974-2799 and/or dvc@bos.lacounty.gov

**Los Angeles County
Domestic Violence Council
Michele L. Daniels, Council Chair
Head Deputy
Family Violence Division
District Attorney's Office
(213) 974-3785**

The Domestic Violence Council provides a coordinated effort in stopping domestic violence. The Council also develops public policy on domestic violence and provides training, education, and networking opportunities.

**Los Angeles County
Domestic Violence Council**
Provides phone resources, and referrals to L.A. County domestic violence agencies, for victims, advocates and the general public.

**Los Angeles County
District Attorney's Office
Jackie Lacey, District Attorney
(213) 974-3785 or 1-800-978-3600**
The office prosecutes domestic violence cases and has a specialized Family Violence Division.

**Los Angeles County
Commission for Women
Veda E. Ward, Ph.D., President
(213) 974-1455**
The Commission represents the special interests and concerns of women of all races, ethnic, sociological and economic backgrounds, religions and sexual orientation.

**LOS ANGELES COUNTY
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
24 HOUR HOTLINE
(800) 978-3600**

*Remember: "There's no excuse for
Domestic Violence"*

LOS ANGELES COUNTY DOMESTIC VIOLENCE 24-Hour HOTLINE
1 (800) 978-3600
Provided by the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office

Los Angeles County Commission For Women

First District

Olivia G. Rodriguez

Second District

Gerda Govine, Ed.D.

Third District

Norma L. Gallegos
Veda E. Ward, Ph.D.

Fourth District

Carolyn Aoki-Hyatt
Charlotte lesser

Fifth District

Reiko Duba
Alice S. Petrossian
Becky A. Shevlin

*Special thanks to the Los Angeles County Commission for Women
for funding this great handbook for the constituents of the
Los Angeles County!





For copies of this handbook please contact

Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors
Domestic Violence Council
500 West Temple Street, Ste. B-50, Los Angeles, CA 90012
(213) 974-2799 - dvc@bos.lacounty.gov
<http://dvcouncil.lacounty.gov>

Contributions help with the printing order for the
“It Shouldn’t Hurt to go Home” The Domestic Violence Victim’s Handbook.

Your donation will be used to print the handbooks to be distributed to victims of
domestic violence, to agencies, departments and all those that help victims.

Available in English, Spanish, Russian, Armenian, Farsi, Chinese,
Korean, Vietnamese, Cambodian and Loatian.

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