

- \* If you've been strangled, choked or your partner has cut off your breathing in any way, you should seek immediate medical help! If you are coughing or clearing your throat a lot, or you notice small red dots on your face or in your eyes, seek medical help. Even if you feel fine, you may have suffered internal injuries that could cause sudden, severe consequences, including death, in the coming months. If you're pregnant, you could miscarry.

## When It happens again

If your partner strangles you once, they're very likely to do it again.

### When they do:

- Try to stay calm.
- Tuck your chin and raise your shoulders to help support your neck and protect your airway. This is called the turtle shell technique.
- If you can, fall to the floor and let yourself go limp. The abuser may let go of you and either leave or give you a chance to escape.
- If the abuser releases their grip on you, run to safety and call 911.

If you belong to the deaf, deafened, hard of hearing, or speech-impaired (DHHSI) community, you might be able to register for Text with 9-1-1. It's not available everywhere in Canada yet. See <https://www.textwith911.ca> for more information about how it works and how to register.

### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

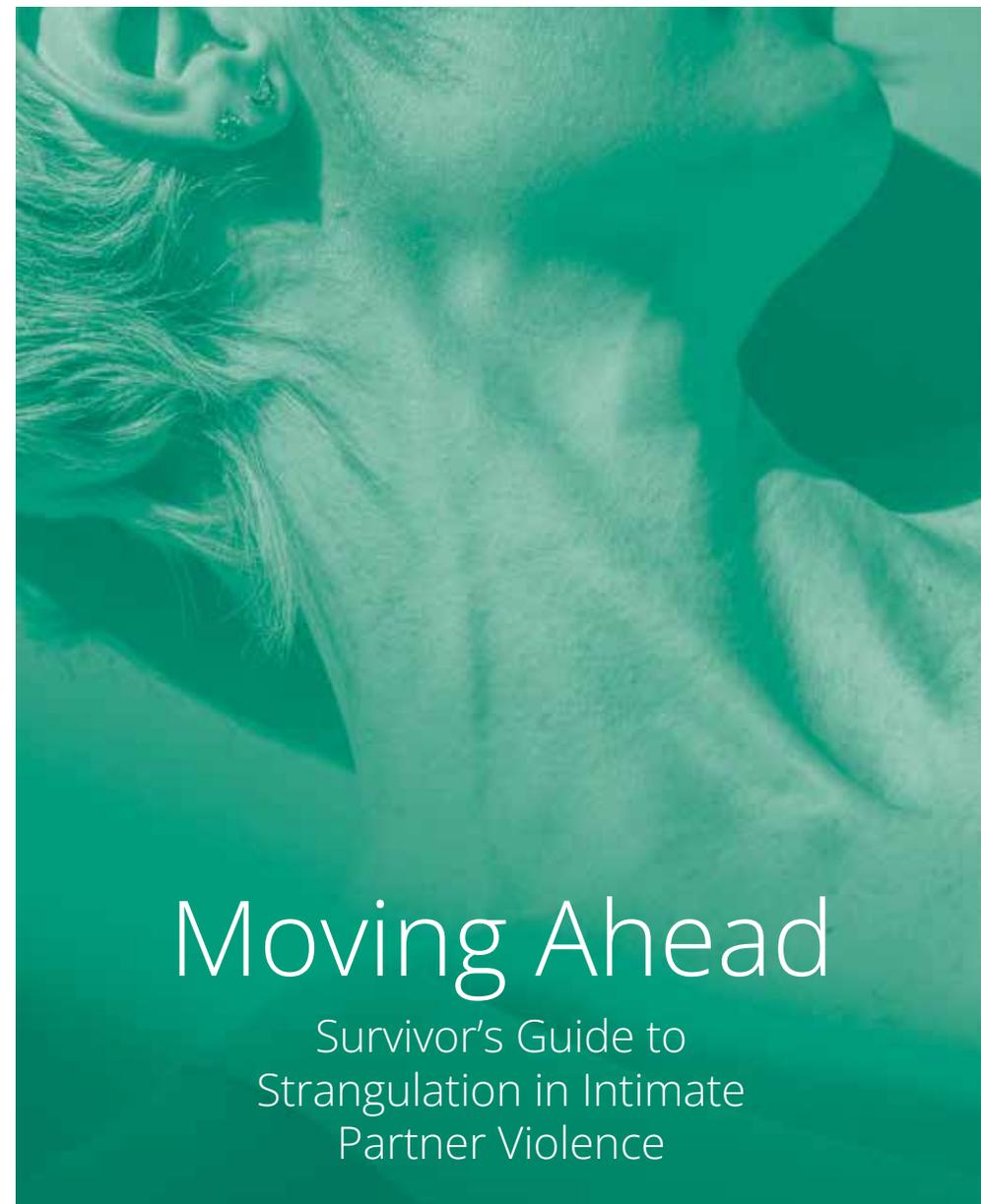
<https://www.strangulationtraininginstitute.com>



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# Moving Ahead

Survivor's Guide to  
Strangulation in Intimate  
Partner Violence



SUPPORTING SURVIVORS  
OF ABUSE AND BRAIN INJURY  
THROUGH RESEARCH

[www.soarproject.ca](http://www.soarproject.ca)

# Did you know?

More than half of women who experience intimate partner violence (IPV) are strangled.

Strangulation is one of the deadliest forms of IPV. It can cause **loss of consciousness** within seconds, and **brain injury and death** within minutes.



**750**

A woman who has been strangled is 750 times more likely to be murdered.

## HOW HIGH IS THE RISK?

If you've been strangled you're **750 times more likely to be murdered** in a subsequent attack. Strangulation is about power. The abuser literally holds your life in their hands.

## WHAT IS STRANGULATION?

People often use the words "choked" and "strangled" interchangeably, but they're not the same.

When you're choking, you have something stuck in your airway, which makes it hard or impossible to breathe. In strangulation, pressure is applied to your neck from the outside, blocking necessary blood and oxygen to the brain.

Strangulation can be **manual**, where the abuser uses hands, an arm, or a knee to squeeze or press the neck, or can be done with a **ligature**. That's when the abuser uses a tie, belt, rope or cord, or even a hard object such as a baseball bat or broom, to squeeze the neck.



Most physical IPV involves blows to the face, head and neck, and strangulation.

## Consider this

Strangulation can cause brain injury, an invisible wound that is often unnoticed, mislabeled, or misunderstood. It can cause physical, mental, and emotional difficulties, as well as changes in behaviour that are not your fault.



**33 lbs.**

The amount of pressure required to close off the windpipe.

It only takes 20 lbs. of pressure to open a can of pop.

## Signs and Symptoms

### YOU MAY EXPERIENCE:

- Raspy voice
- Trouble swallowing/breathing
- Ringing in the ears
- Red spots (called petechiae) in eyes or on skin
- Scratches/bruising on neck, chest, or shoulders
- Swollen or cut lips/tongue
- Loss of memory
- Bloodied or broken nose, or bleeding from the ears
- Nausea and vomiting
- Trouble concentrating, or sleeping
- Loss of consciousness
- Uncontrolled urination/defecation
- No visible signs/symptoms