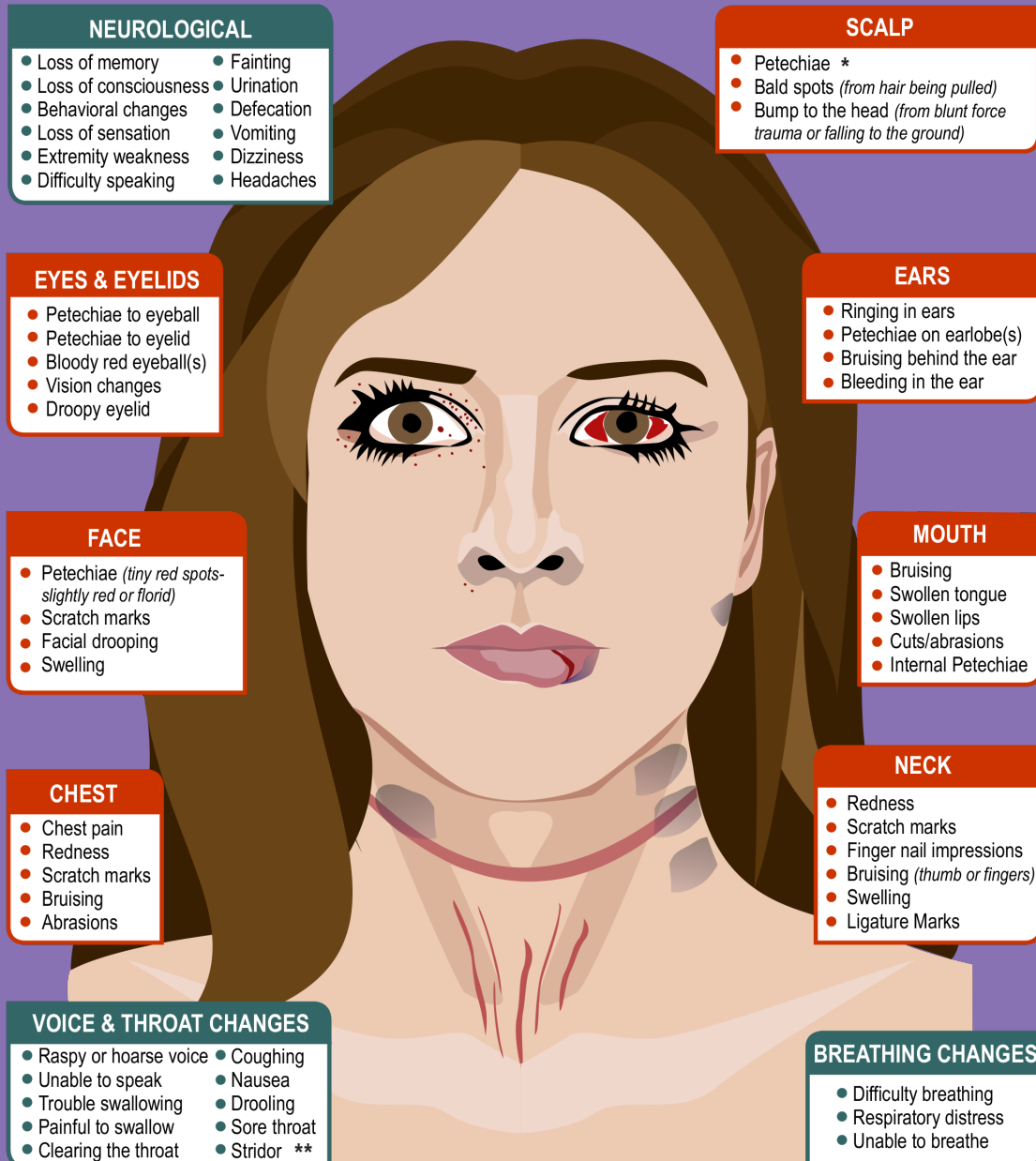


SIGNS and SYMPTOMS of STRANGULATION



Source: *Strangulation in Intimate Partner Violence, Chapter 16, Intimate Partner Violence. Oxford University Press, Inc. 2009.*

* Petechiae = small (1–2 mm) red or purple spots on the skin

** Stridor = abnormal, high-pitched breathing sound

STRANGULATION FACTSHEET

Laws have been passed in Queensland that make non-fatal strangulation and suffocation a separate offence.

Strangulation is the restriction of air caused by something **outside** the throat. Choking occurs when something **inside** blocks the airway.

Strangulation has only recently been identified as one of the most deadly forms of domestic violence: unconsciousness may occur within seconds and death within minutes. When domestic violence perpetrators strangle their victims, not only is this a form of assault, but it may be an attempted homicide. Strangulation is an ultimate form of power and control, where the perpetrator can demonstrate control over the victim's next breath. Strangulation can have devastating psychological effects or a potentially fatal outcome.

Conscious victims of strangulation will first feel terror and severe pain. If strangulation persists, unconsciousness will follow. Before lapsing into unconsciousness, a strangulation victim will usually resist violently, often producing injuries to their own neck in an effort to claw off the perpetrator, and frequently also producing injury on the face or hands of their perpetrator. These defensive injuries may not be present if the victim is physically restrained, or drugged before the assault.

For emergency assistance please call 000 now. For free confidential assistance call DVConnect on 1800 811 811 (24 hours).

The US-based Training Institute on Strangulation Prevention (Institute), a program of Alliance for HOPE International, was developed in response to the increasing demand for Intimate Partner Violence Strangulation Crimes training and technical assistance from communities across the world. In Australia the Red Rose Foundation has established the Bianca Faith Girven Institute for Strangulation Prevention and QCDFVR acknowledges the role and work of the Red Rose Foundation in developing multi-disciplinary best practice training, awareness resources and research in strangulation prevention. This factsheet is subject to amendment to best reflect the emerging Queensland context.

For more information visit www.redrosefoundation.com.au

Losing Consciousness

Victims may lose consciousness by any one or all of the following methods:

- blocking of the carotid arteries in the neck (depriving the brain of oxygen),
- blocking of the jugular veins (preventing deoxygenated blood from exiting the brain), and
- closing off the airway, making breathing impossible.

Observing Changes

Taking and keeping photographs over a number of days after the assault is very helpful in establishing a journal of physical evidence.

Victims should also seek medical attention if they experience:

- difficulties breathing, speaking and/ or swallowing,
- nausea and/ or vomiting,
- lightheadedness,
- headache, and/ or
- involuntary urination and/or defecation (loss of bladder and/ or bowel control).

A medical evaluation may be crucial in detecting internal injuries and saving a life.

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