

# Crime Prevention and Domestic Violence

Domestic violence is abuse between family members or related persons. Domestic violence may come in many forms: actual physical abuse, threats of physical abuse, emotional abuse, threatening telephone calls, disturbances at a place of employment, stalking, and other forms of dominance and control.

Domestic violence is the leading cause of injury to women, surpassing rape, mugging and auto accidents combined. The following statistics relate to domestic violence in America.

- Every 9 seconds a woman is beaten in America.
- At least two million women a year are assaulted by husbands or boyfriends. Of these women, 25 - 45% are battered during pregnancy.
- Three-four million women will be physically battered at least once in their lifetime.
- Twenty percent of emergency room visits by women are for injuries caused by battering.
- Of men who batter women, 45 - 75% also batter children.
- Ten women are killed every day in domestic violence.
- Three out of four women murdered are killed by their husbands.

## Symptoms of Abuse — The Abuser Will:

- “Track” all of the victim’s time.
- Constantly accuse the victim of being unfaithful.
- Discourages the victim’s relationships with family and friends.
- Prevents the victim from working or attending school.
- Criticizes the victim for little things.
- Angers easily when drinking or using drugs.
- Controls all finances and forces the victim to account in detail for what they spend.
- Humiliates the victim in front of others.
- Destroys the victim’s personal property or sentimental items.
- Hits, punches, slaps, kicks or bites the victim.
- Uses or threatens to use a weapon against the victim.
- Threatens to hurt the victim or the victim’s children.
- Forces the victim to have sex against her will.

## The Cycle of Abuse

Domestic violence predictably follows three phases:

- In **Phase One**, the tension builds. The offender belittles and criticizes the victim until he or she is emotionally broken.
- In **Phase Two**, the tension peaks and the offender attacks. This acute battering incident releases the tension and leads into Phase Three.
- **Phase Three** is marked by kind, contrite, loving behavior. Commonly the offender may promise that the assaults will never happen again. Without treatment, this is seldom true. It is usually only a matter of time before Phase One kicks in all over again.

## What Should A Victim Do?

- First and foremost, it is important for the person to get away from the aggressor. That person should seek the assistance of a friend or a neighbor. In the event of domestic violence, immediate police assistance should be requested.
- A victim of domestic violence should never try to “go it alone.” The usual profile of an abusive person is an aggressive, dominant personality that is both manipulative and controlling. The victim of domestic violence is often very vulnerable and can be persuaded from attempting to obtain assistance. Outside assistance is often essential in protecting a victim of domestic violence.
- A victim of domestic violence should never shy away from requesting assistance because of a perceived stigma attached to being a victim of domestic violence. Whatever their background, if they have been abused, they should get assistance with a domestic violence situation immediately for their own health and safety, as well as the health of those around them.

## Escape Plan

Persons who have been the victim of domestic violence should have an escape plan to enable them to get away from the aggressor.

- Avoid arguments in spaces hard to escape from.
- Leave money, car keys, clothing and copies of documents with someone you trust.
- Keep change with you at all times.
- Rehearse an escape plan with your children, including a meeting place.
- Teach children to call 9-1-1.
- If you have a restraining order, keep copies at multiple locations. Always keep a copy with you; keep a copy in the car; give your children copies. Give copies to teachers and police, with a photo of the offender.
- Memorize the National Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-799-SAFE and/or how to reach local domestic violence resources.
- Pack these items in advance:

Birth certificates - yours and children's	School records
Social security cards	Driver's license & car registration
Medications and prescriptions	Medicare or medical insurance cards
House deed	Mortgage payment book
Pictures & items of sentimental value	Current unpaid bills
Credit cards	Food stamps
Cellular phone	Identification
Medical records	Keys to house, car, and office
Clothing, toiletries, and blankets	Bankbooks
Passports	Address book and maps
Insurance papers	Children's favorite toys or blankets
Jewelry	Green cards and/or work permits
Restraining order	

## Restraining Order Safety Checklist

The Danvers, Massachusetts Police Department has developed the following checklist for persons who have obtained a restraining order from abuse.

Taking steps to protect yourself from abuse may cause an increase in the level or type of abuse or retaliation from your abuser. Please trust your instincts. If you are afraid something may happen, take your feelings seriously and protect yourself. You know your situation better than anyone else. We are only making suggestions that may work in your situation.

- Be alert when leaving the courthouse. If you have any reason to believe the defendant named in your restraining order may be waiting for you, please ask someone from the District Attorney's victim/Witness Program to help you.
- It may not be a good idea to go directly home. You may want to spend a few hours or a few days at a family or friend's home.
- If there are any guns or weapons of any kind in your home, the Judge can order the abuser to surrender the guns, the license to carry the guns and the FID card. The police can search for and take custody of a gun or weapon if you request it and give them permission to search your home.
- You may want to consider changing the locks on your home. The Judge can order the defendant to turn over the keys to your home and/or your car; or, the police may take the keys when the defendant is served with notice of the abuse prevention order. It may also be helpful to keep an extra set of keys for your car and home hidden in a safe place.
- It is also suggested that you have extra copies of originals of important documents kept in a safe place. Documents would include license, birth certificate, social security numbers, bank account numbers and important phone numbers.
- This is a very difficult and confusing time and it is not a good time to be alone. Seek the company of supportive friends and family. You can call a Battered Women's Hotline day or night for emergency services or shelter; or attend a battered women's support group in the community. You do not have to seek shelter or be a resident to receive support services from the battered women's shelter staff. The services are free and may be very helpful to you at this time.
- Inform your neighbors of the situation and let them know the defendant is not allowed on your property or near your apartment or house. Encourage them to call the police if they see the defendant or suspect something is wrong.
- If the defendant appears, call the police immediately! **Violation of the restraining order is a criminal offense.** Sometimes it helps to dial the police and hang up before it rings, so that the re-dial button will automatically call the police if you need to call the police quickly.
- If it is not safe for you to stay at your home, at a friend's or with family, there are shelters and "safe homes" available.
- You may want to pack an emergency bag with clothes and needed items, (including toys for the kids) and hide them or give them to a friend or family member in case you need to leave your home quickly.
- If the defendant is threatening to kidnap the children, consider sending them to a safe place with friends or family for a while.
- Always keep a copy of your restraining order with you. If your children are named in the order, give copies to the school, daycare, baby-sitter, etc.

