

Resources

Someplace Safe: _____
www.someplacesafe.info

Law Enforcement: _____

County Attorney: _____

City Attorney: _____

Food Shelf: _____

Mental Health Services: _____

Medical: _____

Human Services: _____

Community Action: _____

Salvation Army: _____

Father's Resource: _____

HRA: _____

ECFE: _____

Suicide Hotline: _____

Work Force Center: _____

Legal Services: _____

Court Administration: _____

Court forms: www.mncourts.gov

Court Dates

Reparations

Restitution

Victim Impact Statement

All Advocacy services provided by Someplace Safe are completely free and confidential.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

If a client has concerns about a staff person, or a decision made by staff concerning you, you may file a grievance. If you need help with this, a volunteer can be called to assist you.

The steps that are involved in filing grievance are:

1. Put your grievance in writing.
2. Write what you think the solution to the problem should be.
3. Give it to the Supervisor.

As soon as possible, usually in a day or two, the Supervisor will meet with you directly. If you feel that there has been no resolution to your complaint, you can request in writing that the grievance go to the Director. The Director will respond in writing within 3 working days. If no satisfactory agreement can be reached, you can request that the grievance be submitted to the Personnel Committee of the Board of Directors. The grievance must be in writing and include pertinent information to the remedy being sought. The Personnel Committee shall review the grievance at the Board's next scheduled meeting.

We hope that the clients will request that the committee handle the grievance only after the client has tried to deal directly with the staff person involved or by working through options with the Director or Supervisor.

Financial Assistance for Crime Victims

As a victim of a crime, you have a right to request reimbursement for losses sustained as a result of the crime.

1. Restitution
2. Reparations
3. Civil Court

1. Restitution

Restitution is money that the judge orders the offender to pay to reimburse the victim of the crime. Restitution may be ordered in both juvenile and adult cases after the offender has been convicted or found delinquent. Restitution must be based on the amount of losses sustained by the victim as a result of the crime and the offender's income, resources, and obligation.

Requesting Restitution

The request for restitution should be made in writing prior to sentencing. The County Attorney provides an opportunity for the victim to submit an Affidavit of Loss to be reviewed by the Court.

If the full extent of the victims' loss is not known at the time of sentencing, and the offender is on probation or supervised release, the amount of restitution may be determined at a later date. The Judge does not have to order restitution and if the Judge does not order it, the Judge must explain the reasons. The offender will not be ordered to pay restitution for offenses of which he/she was not found guilty.

Amount of Restitution

Victims of crime have the right to request Restitution for all expenses which resulted from the crime. This may include, but is not limited to:

- * Medical bills
- * Counseling expenses
- * Transportation
- * Lost wages due to injury
- * Stolen or damaged property

The losses must be directly related to the crime.

In some cases, requests can be made for anticipated expenses. For example, an offender can be ordered to pay for counseling that the victim may need in the future. Some Judges will order restitution only for expenses not covered by insurance. The restitution order must include a payment schedule or structure.

2. Reparations

Reparations are financial compensation from the State of Minnesota Crime Victims Reparations Board for violent crimes. This program was enacted because of increased public safety concern for victims of violent crimes, and the recognition that the state bears some responsibility for the cost of crime. The purpose of the program is to restore victims economically to the fullest extent possible.

Reparations are different from restitution in that the state may pay the claim even if the offender is found not guilty or the offender is never identified.

Eligibility

To be eligible for compensation, a victim must meet certain requirements. The five primary requirements are:

- Claims must be for an injury or death as a result of a crime
- Claims must be submitted within three years of the crime
- Victims must have reported the crime to law enforcement within thirty days
- Victims must cooperate fully with law enforcement
- Victims must not have contributed to the crime through their own misconduct or criminal activity

There are exceptions to these rules, particularly for domestic abuse and sexual assault cases. Claim forms and assistance are available at Someplace Safe, the prosecuting attorney, or the Minnesota Crime Victims Reparations Board (1-888-622-8799).

Types of Coverage

The Reparations Board covers the following types of expenses related to the crime (if they have not been paid by other sources):

- Medical or dental care
- Prescription drugs
- Ambulance services
- Psychological counseling
- Loss of income
- Substitute child care
- Reasonable household services
- Funeral expenses
- Return of an abducted child
- Loss of support for dependents

Personal property losses and moving expenses are NOT eligible for reparations compensation.

As a victim of a violent crime, you should file a claim with the Reparations Board even though you are requesting restitution. You may have trouble collecting restitution from the offender, or you may be eligible for reparations, so it is a good idea to pursue both at the same time. If the Board pays your expenses and the offender also pays you restitution for the same expenses, you must reimburse the Board for the amount it paid.

3. Civil Court

Another option for obtaining compensation for your losses is by suing the offender in Civil Court. If the total amount of your claim is under \$7500, you may file a case in conciliation court. You do not need an attorney for Conciliation court, but a judge can grant permission if you want to hire an attorney to represent you. Conciliation court forms are available at the court administrator's office. If your total losses are greater than \$7500 you must file your case in district court.

The Criminal Justice System

All legal matters filed in the criminal justice system are broadly classified as civil or criminal.

Civil

Civil cases are usually disputes between private citizens, corporations, governmental bodies or other organizations. They may involve property or personal rights - for example, actions arising from landlord and tenant disputes, auto or personal injury accidents, breach of warranty on consumer goods, contract disputes, adoptions, marriage dissolutions (divorce), wills and guardianship.

Criminal

Criminal cases are brought by the government against individuals or corporations accused of committing a crime. The government makes the charge because a crime is considered an act against all of society.

The prosecuting attorney prosecutes the charge against the accused person (defendant) on behalf of the government (plaintiff). In criminal cases, the prosecution must prove that the defendant is guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

There are two major classifications of crimes: felonies and misdemeanors. Serious crimes are called felonies and possible punishment is confinement in a state prison. Examples of such crimes are arson, assault, larceny, burglary, murder, rape, robbery, kidnapping, and sale of controlled substances (such as illegal drugs).

Lesser offenses are called misdemeanors. There are three types of misdemeanors, depending on the seriousness of the crime. Possible punishment is confinement in a local jail and/or payment of a fine.

Examples of the most serious misdemeanors, called gross misdemeanors, include second or subsequent DWI (driving while intoxicated) violations and sale of tobacco or alcohol to children. Other misdemeanor offenses include disorderly conduct, prostitution, tampering with a motor vehicle, trespass, littering, writing bad checks and making harassing phone calls. Petty misdemeanors are not punishable by imprisonment but only by a fine. Examples include possession of a small amount of marijuana and most traffic and parking violations.

It is very important to remember that the government has the burden of proving the defendant guilty beyond a reasonable doubt. The defendant does not have to prove his or her innocence.

PROGRESSION THROUGH THE MINNESOTA COURT PROCESS

Gross misdemeanor or Felony

Misdemeanor

1st appearance

Rule 5

Sometimes called a bail hearing, given his rights, charges explained, may enter a plea, request for an attorney

Pre- Trial Hearing

Rulings by the court on probable cause and pre-trial issues

2nd appearance

Rule 8

He will enter a plea or request Omnibus hearing have attorney present or waive right. (may be combined with a rule 5 hearing)

Omnibus Hearing

Court rules on probable cause and pre-trial issues.

Sometimes plea agreements are done at this time.

Plea Hearing

Held only if defendant pleads guilty

Trial

If no plea was made, there is a trial to determine guilt or innocence. Sometimes a plea agreement is reached before this happens.

Pre-Sentence Investigation

Pre-sentence investigator will interview the assailant, the victim, prior incidents, and witnesses and make a recommendation to the judge at the sentence hearing.

Sentence

The judge will give a sentence after reading and hearing the recommendation of the prosecuting attorney, the defense attorney, and the pre-sentence investigator.

Protective Orders

WHAT IS A HARASSMENT RESTRAINING ORDER?

A harassment restraining order (HRO) is a court order that can prohibit contact. It provides protection from harassment and assault. It may prevent an abuser from entering your home, your place of employment, or educational institution.

An HRO is not a criminal court proceeding but takes place in a civil court proceeding.

You may qualify for a Harassment Restraining Order if the other party has engaged in “repeated unwanted acts, words, or gestures that are intended to have an adverse effect on the safety, security or privacy of another, regardless of the relationship between the actor and he intended target.”

HOW DO I APPLY FOR A HARASSMENT RESTRAINING ORDER?

You can apply for an HRO yourself in the county you live. You do NOT need an attorney. There is a filing fee of \$250 for all Harassment Restraining Orders.

Many victims of harassment find it helpful to have an advocate support them through the HRO process. An advocate is a person who helps you get what you decide is best for you. You can, however, apply for an HRO without the assistance of an advocate or attorney.

There is a filing fee of \$250 for all Harassment Restraining Orders. Advocates can speak with you about other options if you can not afford the fee. Certain individuals may qualify for a waiver called an In Forma Pauperis; this fee waiver is based on your ability to pay the fee. The court may also grant a Harassment Restraining Order fee waiver; this is granted by the Judge if your HRO meets certain criteria.

What Happens At the Hearing?

Not every HRO petition (application for HRO) has a hearing. The Petitioner (person who filed the HRO) or Respondent (Person who the HRO is against) can request a hearing, or the Judge may set a hearing if they would like additional information. The Respondent(s) have the right to request a hearing if they disagree with any portion of the HRO, object to the HRO being issued, or wish to be heard. Either party may also request the HRO be dismissed or modified at any time throughout the period that the order is valid.

The Petitioner (Person who filed the HRO) must attend any court ordered hearings or the Order will be dismissed.

At the hearing, the court will ask to hear both sides talk about the abuse described in the Petition (all allegations listed on the HRO application), and will also hear any other relevant testimony. You have the right to have an attorney present if you wish.

You do not need an attorney for this type of a hearing, but if the other side does have an attorney, you can ask the judge for more time (called a continuance) so you can seek legal council.

It would be to your benefit to bring evidence such as police reports, medical records, photocopies, witnesses, etc., to support your claim.

You should also prepare a list of specific restrictions or limitations you want placed on the respondent, as part of the HRO. The Judge cannot order someone be barred from a house of worship or public places.

You should keep a copy of your protection order with you at all times. If you need assistance from law enforcement, show the officer your copy of the order.

What Happens If the Harassment Restraining Order is violated?

If the abuser harms you, threatens you, or comes to your home, they have violated the HRO. Call law enforcement right away.

This is the criteria needed to qualify for a Harassment Restraining Order

To file an HRO a Petitioner must have the NAME & LOCATION of Respondent. Without this information the Order will not be valid.

Unless the incident was a physical or sexual assault it needs to be repeated. It also helps if the Petitioner asks that the Respondent not contact them again.

- Respondent physically or sexually assaulted the Petitioner as follows:
- Respondent has followed, pursued or stalked the Petitioner as follows:
- Respondent(s) made uninvited visits to the Petitioner(s) as follows:
- Respondent(s) made harassing phone calls to the Petitioner(s) as follows:
- Respondent(s) made threats to the Petitioner(s) as follows:
- Respondent(s) frightened Petitioner(s) with threatening behavior as follows:
- Respondent(s) called the Petitioner(s) abusive names as follows:
- Respondent(s) damaged the Petitioner’s property as follows:
- Respondent(s) broke into and entered the Petitioner’s residence as follows:
- Respondent(s) stole property from the Petitioner(s) as follows:
- Respondent(s) took pictures of the Petitioner(s) without permission of the Petitioner(s) as follows:

WHAT IS AN ORDER FOR PROTECTION?

An Order for Protection (OFP) is a court order. It provides protection from abuse. It orders that the abuser not commit domestic abuse. It can also remove the abuser from the home you share. It can order the abuser to not contact you. It can also provide temporary custody, visitation, child support, spousal maintenance, and use of property.

An OFP is not a criminal proceeding; it takes place in the family court division of civil court.

WHO CAN GET AN OFP?

Family members or household members may request an OFP. This includes:

- People who are married
- People who used to be married
- People who are related by blood
- People who live in the same home together
- People who have a child together or a pregnancy together
- Dating partners – you do not need to have lived together or have a child

You can get an OFP before, during, or after a divorce case involving the abuser. The OFP court case is separate from the divorce case.

TO PROTECT A MINOR: If a child under age 18 has been abused, the parent or guardian or another family or household member may apply for an OFP on behalf of the child. Also, a reputable adult age 25 or older may apply for an OFP on behalf of a minor, if the court finds that it is in the best interest of the minor, even if that adult is not a family or household member.

DATING PARTNERS: The court looks at the length of the relationship, the type of the relationship, and – if the relationship has ended – how long ago it ended, to decide if you are "involved in a significant romantic or sexual relationship," and are able to request an OFP.

MINORS: Minors, age 16 or older, may get an OFP on their own, without a family or household member bringing the case in court, against the spouse, former spouse, or person with whom the minor has a child in common, IF the court finds the minor is mature, has good judgment, and it is in the minor's best interest.

HOW DO I APPLY FOR AN OFP?

You can apply for an OFP yourself. You do NOT need an attorney. The application does not cost anything. There is no filing fee.

Many victims of domestic violence find it helpful to have an advocate support them through the OFP process. An advocate is a person who helps you get what you decide is best for you. You can, however, apply for an OFP without the assistance of an advocate or attorney.

You may apply for an OFP:

- In the county where you live
- The county where the abuser lives
- In the county where other family court proceedings have occurred
- In the county where the abuse occurred

What Happens At the Hearing?

At the hearing, the court will ask to hear both sides talk about the abuse described in the Petition, and will also hear any other relevant testimony. You have the right to have an attorney present if you wish.

You do not need an attorney for this type of a hearing, but if the other side does have an attorney, you can ask the judge for more time (called a continuance) so you can seek legal council, as well.

It would be to your benefit to bring evidence such as police reports, medical records, photocopies, witnesses, etc., to support your claim.

You should also prepare a list of specific restrictions or limitations you want placed on the respondent as part of the OFP.

You should keep a copy of your protection order with you at all times. If you need assistance from law enforcement, show the officer your copy of the order.

What Happens If the Order for Protection is violated?

If the abuser harms you, threatens you, or comes to your home, they have violated the OFP. Call law enforcement right away.

The police are mandated to arrest the abuser if they violate the OFP. Violation of the OFP is a misdemeanor – the Respondent could be jailed for up to 90 days, fined \$700, or both.

Federal law makes your OFP enforceable in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, tribal lands, and U.S. territories, as well as throughout the State of Minnesota.

What Happens If You Invite the Abuser Back Into Your Home?

If you get an Order for Protection, it is not made invalid because you let the abuser into your home. The purpose of the OFP is to keep the abuser away from you because you fear you may be harmed.

However, you should know that the abuser may still be held in violation of the court order and still may be fined, jailed, or both. Also, you should know you put yourself in an extremely vulnerable position since law enforcement may not take you seriously later on when you really need their help.

Domestic Violence Programs

The domestic violence program of Someplace Safe is operated by staff or volunteers who have been trained to help victims/survivors cope with a wide range of needs and responses to domestic violence. **All Advocacy services provided by Someplace Safe are completely free and confidential.**

24 Hour Crisis Line

There is a crisis line available to anyone at any time, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The line is staffed by individuals trained to listen, offer information, and make referrals to cooperating emergency agencies if necessary.

Advocacy Services

Advocates are trained staff and volunteers who offer help for victims, survivors, family and friends who have been affected by family violence. Advocates are available 24 hours a day and will assist survivors of abuse or assault at the hospital or law enforcement center. Advocates will also be available to accompany the survivor and/or family through the criminal or civil court systems.

Shelter

An emergency shelter is available for Battered women and their children. There are advocates at the shelter 24 hours a day to support you and look for options and resources. Referrals, transportation, and accompaniment to appointments are available. Shelter advocates are committed to supporting you in whatever choices you make. Only you know what is best for you.

Someplace Safe provides Safe Housing to male victims of domestic violence.

Support Groups

Support groups are offered at each Someplace Safe location for survivors of domestic assault. This service is a completely confidential environment in which survivors can explore, discuss, and understand the impact of the assault.

Parenting Time Centers

Someplace Safe Parenting Time Center provides a safe, neutral environment to visit or exchange children. Intakes are required. Parenting Time Center offices are located in Fergus Falls, Perham, Ortonville, Morris, and Glenwood. Sliding fee scale used for services.

Community Education

The goals of community education are prevention and awareness. Presentations are designed to increase awareness about domestic violence and sexual assault. Our speakers include trained staff and volunteers who will speak to clubs, schools, or organizations. Informative programs are available on domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and child abuse; these focus on raising awareness and prevention of future violence. Presenters also discuss all services available through Someplace Safe.

Volunteers

Trained volunteers are directly involved in providing the services that Someplace Safe offers. All volunteers complete an initial 40 hour training program and receive on-going training. If you are interested in volunteer opportunities, call Someplace Safe for more information.

Crime Victims Rights

As a victim of a crime, you have the right to be informed and participate in prosecution. You also have the right to:

- Request a speedy trial.
- Receive notice of changes in the schedule of court proceedings if you are required to testify.
- Have a safe waiting area separate from the defendant during court.
- Not give out your home or work address in open court unless the judge finds that this is necessary.
- Take time off work to testify without your employer disciplining you.
- Be notified of any plea agreement or deposition before it is finalized.
- Express to the judge orally or in writing any objection you may have to the proposed plea agreement or disposition, or have the prosecuting attorney do so on your behalf.
- Be present at the offender's sentencing hearing. You, or the prosecutor on your behalf, can submit a victim impact statement, orally or in writing, at the sentencing hearing.
- Be notified of the final disposition of the case.
- Receive restitution. You must submit requests for restitution in writing.
- Request a probation review hearing if the offender fails to pay restitution as ordered.
- Know when an offender is released or escapes from jail, prison, or any other facility, or is transferred to a minimum-security setting. You must request this in writing from the Commissioner of Corrections or the head of the facility where the offender is confined. If VINE service is available in your area, you may call to see if the offender remains in custody.
- Victims of Criminal Sexual Conduct may ask the prosecutor to request the court to order a convicted sex offender to submit to testing for HIV or AIDS if certain conditions occurred in the crime.
- Victims of domestic assault or harassment have the right to input in a pre-trial diversion decision.
- Injured victims may receive financial compensation from the Crime Victim Reparations Board for certain costs incurred as a result of crime such as medical care, counseling costs, lost wages, childcare, or funeral expenses – NOT property damage or loss. Claims must be filed within two years of injury except cases involving domestic child abuse. For application information, call 1-800-247-0390, TTY (612) 282-6555.

REMEMBER: Tampering with a witness is against the law. If you are threatened, call your local law enforcement agency and/or your prosecuting attorney.

What is Domestic Abuse?

Abuse is using force to gain power and control over another. Domestic Violence is when a partner is abused. The abuse can be physical, emotional, and/or sexual.

Physical Abuse: Pushing, shoving, slapping, strangulation, punching, kicking, using an object or weapon, using force to cause pain or injury.

Emotional Abuse: Name calling, threatening to harm partner, partner's family, friends, pets or possessions, using insults (verbal abuse), isolation and harassment

Sexual: Sexual contact or acts without consent or forced through threats of physical harm

Power and Control Wheel

The Domestic Abuse Intervention Project staff in Duluth, Minnesota developed the "Power and Control Wheel." It is a tool used by victims of domestic violence and advocates describing the reality of battering relationships.

As the diagram illustrates, abuse can take many forms. The abuser (usually a spouse or partner) dominates the relationship by controlling the victim through a series of physically and emotionally abusive behaviors. The abuser manipulates and intimidates the victim with threats and abuse. The abuser tries to force the victim to stay in the relationship by using threats and fear that should the victim leave someone they love will be hurt or killed.

The victim's self-esteem and self-confidence often collapse due to the emotional and/or verbal abuse. The terror of living with an abuser may leave the victim feeling depressed, despondent, and defeated. Physical abuse (such as hitting, shoving, hair pulling, burning, stabbing, etc.) reinforces the abuser's control and dominance over the victim. In addition to physical abuse, a victim may be subjected to other types of abuse. These abuses include emotional or verbal abuse (name calling, mind games, or verbal harassment), sexual abuse (rape, sexual degradation), threats (to hurt or kill, take the children, to harm loved ones), intimidation (property destruction or treating as a servant), economic abuse (refusing to allow victim to work outside the home, putting all of the assets in the abuser's name only), and isolation (not allowing the victim to leave the home without the abuser, not allowing the victim to drive, use the telephone, or have contact with family or friends). In short, abusers try to gain complete power over the life and actions of their victim.

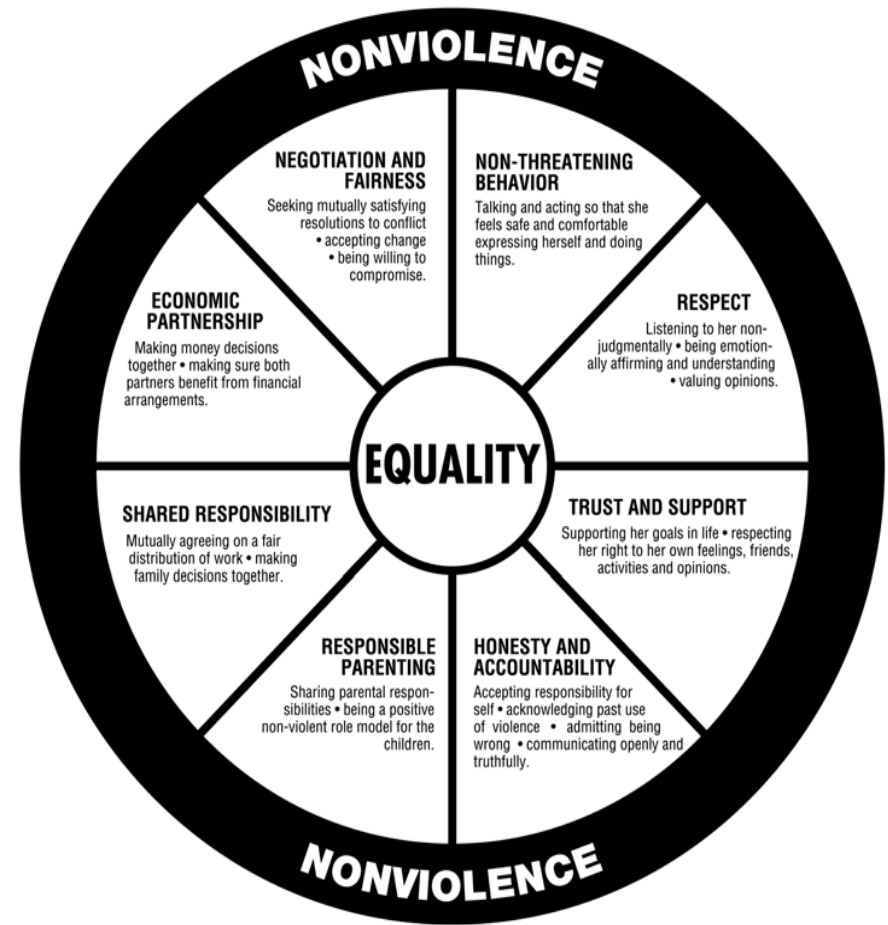
It is common for a victim to experience severe levels of abuse in every area described on the "Power and Control Wheel". Through identifying the abuser's practices and abusive behaviors, victims can realistically evaluate their relationships, making plans for change and safety planning.

How to be a Violence Free Family

- Each person has strengths of his or her own. Identify them, and build on them. Give each family member a reason to feel important.
- When your feelings are escalating, and stress is getting the better of you, get the help you need – before you lash out at someone.
- Discourage abuse of drugs and alcohol. Use of drugs and alcohol has been associated with incidents of violence. Be a role model for responsible use.
- Carefully choose toys and entertainment that reflect non-violence.
- Learn about your family's history, culture or race. Celebrate it. Learn about and respect the culture of others.
- Encourage play that teaches a child to be a good sport. Show children how to have fun without fighting and name-calling.
- Treat your pets kindly.
- Use alternatives to spanking. Do not hit. Nonviolent discipline strategies, such as time-outs, have been proven to be more effective than hitting.
- Negotiate – work out problems together by looking at alternative solutions and compromises. Make it your goal to defeat the problem, not the person.
- Build connections with your school, other families and friends. A positive student connection with school is an important protective factor in keeping kids from becoming violent.
- Teach your children the ways their religious tradition/spirituality promotes non-violence. If you grew up in a home where violence was common, make it your mission to break the cycle of violence. Get help...no one should have to do it alone.
- Examine your own prejudices and fears. Fear of homosexuality can lead young men to be violent in order to prove masculinity.
- Spend time together – talk, listen, and never stop getting to know each other.

Power & Control Wheel

Equality Wheel



DOMESTIC ABUSE INTERVENTION PROJECT

202 East Superior Street
Duluth, Minnesota 55802
218-722-2781
www.duluth-model.org

DOMESTIC ABUSE INTERVENTION PROJECT

202 East Superior Street
Duluth, Minnesota 55802
218-722-2781
www.duluth-model.org

Personalized Safety Protection Plan

A safety/protection plan is a means to help you protect yourself and your children from future violence by using your own, as well as, community resources.

The following people/resources I can turn to for support: (names/phone numbers)

Friends: _____

Relatives: _____

Neighbors: _____

Outreach office/shelter: _____

I can tell my neighbors _____ about the violence and ask them to call law enforcement if they hear suspicious noises coming from my home.

I can teach my children to call 911. Comments: _____

If I leave home, I can go (list two places): _____, _____,

I can leave or hide extra money, car keys, and important documents:
Comments: _____

I can get a Post Office Box. Comments: _____

I will keep change for phone calls or a calling card; I can open my own savings/checking account (ask that the bank does not send statements). Comments: _____

I can change the locks; install metal doors; install a security system; get a cell phone/Emergency phone (from the shelter or Outreach Program); install smoke detectors; get an outside lighting system; get poles to wedge against the door/windows. Comments: _____

I will inform _____ and _____ that I am no longer with my abuser and ask them to call law enforcement if s/he is observed near my residence, in my place of employment, or near my children.

I will tell the individuals who care for my children the names of those who have permission to pick the child(ren) up. Those to be informed are: (school; daycare; babysitter; Sunday school; any sport coach or extra curricular activity leaders). Comments: _____

If I have a Court Order allowing me custody, I will ask those I have listed above to call 911 if my abuser shows up. I can also leave a copy of my Custody Order, Harassment Order, or Order for Protection (not the affidavit) with them. Comments: _____

I can tell the following people at work about my situation. I can leave a copy of my Order for Protection or Harassment Order (without the affidavit). Comments: _____

I may be able to obtain a protective order from _____ court, I will keep it on or near me at all times. I will leave additional copies with _____ and _____.

I will ensure that law enforcement in the areas I live, work, and visit frequently, have a copy of my Order. Comments: _____

I will work out alternative ways to keep safe if Law Enforcement response time will be long. I will make sure they know directions to my residence. Comments: _____

I can avoid stores, banks, bars, etc., where my abuser frequently goes.
Places: _____

I will reprogram or reset my pass codes for my cellular phone and/or answering machine. I will not tell anyone my new pass codes. Comments: _____

I will take extreme caution when using computers or the Internet. I will clear all of my temporary Internet files, Cookies, and Caches in my computer. I will also clear my Internet History. I will do these things every time I am finished using a computer.
Comments: _____

I will remember to disconnect from the Internet as soon as I am finished with it. (Leaving the Internet connected for a long period of time will enable hackers to access your computer files.) Comments: _____

I will leave an extra set of car keys with a trusted person, in case I have to leave mine behind for any reason. Comments: _____

If I have a vehicle with remote access or a keypad entry, I can leave my ignition key in the ignition of my car. Comments: _____

If my abuser knows the unlock code for my vehicle, I can change the code.
Comments: _____

I can leave an envelope or blank piece of paper on my dashboard to cover the VIN number of my vehicle. (By leaving your VIN number visible, any person can copy it down and contact the company that made a vehicle, and get replacement keys sent to them.)
Comments: _____

If I feel down and ready to return to a potentially abusive situation, I can call _____ or _____ for support. I can attend support groups to gain support and strength. Groups I may attend: _____

Checklist—What I May Need to Take With Me When I Leave:

____ Identification	____ Drivers License/Car Registration	____ Birth Certificates
____ Money, ATM/Credit cards	____ Lease, Rental Agreement, Deed	____ Bank Books
____ Medications	____ Address Book	____ Insurance Papers
____ MA Cards	____ House and Car Keys	____ Checkbook
____ Pictures	____ Social Security Cards	____ MFIP Id
____ School Records	____ Green Card, Passport	____ Divorce Papers
____ Eye Glasses	____ Personal Items You Value	____ Last Year's Taxes
____ Medical Records for All Family Members		____ Protection Order

Stalking

Victims of stalking include individuals presently at risk for *imminent* danger to their physical and/or emotional welfare, and those with danger continually pending, but not *immediately* at risk for harm. In addition to becoming familiar with stalking laws that presently exist, victims of stalking should be informed about the resources and procedural precautions available to assist and protect them. It is important for stalking victims to recognize that their victimization is *not* their fault. Stalking is a crime that can touch anyone, regardless of gender, race, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, geographical location, or with whom a person may associate. Unfortunately, there is no single psychological or behavioral profile for stalkers. Every stalker is different. This makes it virtually impossible to devise a single effective strategy for victims to cope with stalkers' behavior which can then be applied to every single situation and all circumstances. This is why it is so vital that victims of stalking immediately seek the advice of local victim specialists who can work with them to devise a safety plan or action plan to address their unique situation and circumstances. Victim specialists can be found in local domestic violence and rape crisis programs, as well as in victim assistance programs in local prosecutors' offices and in some law enforcement agencies.

The following is *not* intended to be a set of strict guidelines for stalking victims, but rather practical information to assist them. There is *no guarantee* that if you follow all, or some, of these strategies that you will be safe; however, implementing these strategies may reduce your odds of physical or emotional harm from your stalker. Any persons who suspect or believe that they are currently being stalked should report all contacts and incidents to their local law enforcement authorities.

Victims in Imminent Danger

The primary goal of a victim in imminent danger should be to locate a safe place for her/himself. Safety for stalking victims can often be found in the following places:

- Police stations;
- Residences of family/friends (location unknown to perpetrators);
- Domestic violence shelters or local churches, etc.; and/or
- Public areas (stalkers may be less inclined toward violence or creating a disturbance in public places).

If departure from the current location is not possible, but a telephone is accessible, a victim may contact local law enforcement at 911 or any other law enforcement or emergency number. If the police do not respond, a victim can ask to speak to the police unit or division supervisor, or have someone who has assisted them in the past contact police.

In dangerous situations, family members or friends can assist in a victim's departure from their home or office. It is advised that as much caution as possible always be exercised when directly confronting the offender, as stalking sometimes escalates into violence.

Technology Safety

1. **Trust your instincts.** If you suspect the abusive person knows too much, it is possible that your phone, computer, email, or other activities are being monitored. Abusers and stalkers can act in incredibly persistent and creative ways to maintain power and control.
2. **Plan for safety.** Navigating violence, abuse, and stalking is very difficult and dangerous. Advocates at the National Domestic Violence Hotline have been trained on technology issues, and can discuss options and help you in your safety planning. Local hotline advocates can also help you plan for safety.
3. **Take precautions if you have a “techy” abuser.** If computers and technology are a profession or a hobby for the abuser/stalker, trust your instincts. If you think he/she may be monitoring or tracking you, talk to a hotline advocate or the police.
4. **Use a safer computer.** If anyone abusive has access to your computer, he/she might be monitoring your computer activities. Try to use a safer computer when you look for help, a new place to live, etc. It may be safest to use a computer at a public library, community center, or Internet café.
5. **Create a new email account.** If you suspect that anyone abusive can access your email, consider creating an additional email account on a safer computer. Do not create or check this new email from a computer your abuser could access, in case it is monitored. Use an anonymous name, and account: do not provide detailed information about yourself.
6. **Check your cell phone settings.** If you are using a cell phone provided by the abusive person, consider turning it off when not in use. Also many phones let you “lock” the keys so a phone won’t automatically answer or call if it is bumped. When on, check the phone settings; if your phone has an optional location service, you may want to switch the location feature off/on via phone settings or by turning your phone on and off.
7. **Change passwords & pin numbers.** Some abusers use victim’s email and other accounts to impersonate and cause harm. If anyone abusive knows or could guess your passwords, change them quickly and frequently. Think about any password protected accounts - online banking, voicemail, etc.
8. **Minimize use of cordless phones or baby monitors.** If you don’t want others to overhear your conversations, turn baby monitors off when not in use and use a traditional corded phone for sensitive conversations.
9. **Use a donated or new cell phone .** When making or receiving private calls or arranging escape plans, try not to use a shared or family cell phone because cell phone billing records and phone logs might reveal your plans to an abuser. Contact your local hotline program to learn about donation programs that provide new cell phones and/or prepaid phone cards to victims of abuse and stalking.
10. **Ask about your records and data.** Many court systems and government agencies are publishing records to the Internet. Ask agencies how they protect or publish your records and request that court, government, post office and others seal or restrict access to your files to protect your safety.
11. **Get a private mailbox and don’t give out your real address.** When asked by businesses, doctors, and others for your address, have a private mailbox address or a safer address to give them. Try to keep your true residential address out of national databases. Use “Safe At Home” Program Address to protect your information.
12. **Search for your name on the Internet.** Major search engines such as “Google” or “Yahoo” may have links to your contact information. Search for your name in quotation marks: “Full Name”. Check phone directory pages because unlisted numbers might be listed if you have given the number to anyone.

The Effects of Domestic Violence on Children

Children are used in domestic violence by the abuser as a tactic to gain power and control over their loved-one. It is estimated that each year a minimum of 3.3 million children witness domestic violence.

What does it mean to witness domestic violence?

Children witness domestic violence in different ways. What people normally think of when referring to “witnessing” domestic violence is when a child actually observes their loved-one being:

- Shoved
- Kicked
- Punched
- Slapped

However children may also witness their loved-ones being emotionally abused by:

- Put downs
- Name calling
- Threats
- Being swore at

The aftermath of a violent attack is another form of witnessing domestic violence. This may include:

- Bruises
- Broken furniture
- Phone being torn out of the wall
- The tears

Witnessing domestic violence does not mean that a child needs to witness the violent acts against their loved-one to become emotionally harmed. The unseen effects are just as damaging:

- Tension in the air
- Hearing the slaps
- Hearing the cries
- Sensing their loved-ones fear
- Hearing the screams

Hearing the cries of a frightened, abused loved-one strains a child’s memories. Though these may not be visually witnessed, they leave a lasting scar.

Each Child is affected differently by domestic violence and adapts their own coping skills to survive.

Physical Effects:

- Sleep disturbances
- Body Aches
- Regression to earlier stages of development
- Nervousness and tension
- Neglect of personal hygiene
- Directly hurt physically by the abuser or hurt while trying to stop the abuse against the loved-one

Behavioral Effects:

- Acting out/withdrawn
- Under or over achiever
- Aggressive/Passive
- Attention seeking
- Suicidal
- Excessive caretaking – role reversal
- Exhibits low self-esteem
- Running away
- Chemical Abuse
- Pre-delinquent

Social Effects:

- Distrustful
- Poor conflict resolution skills
- Poor social skills/difficulty making friends
- Excessively involved socially to avoid going home

Cognitive (Thinking) Effects:

- Learn unhealthy relationship skills
- Learn anger is a bad feeling
- Learn that it’s okay to use violence to solve problems