

What to Do When Domestic Violence is Present

HOW TO FIND/CONTACT A LOCAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PROGRAM

- **National Domestic Violence Hotline**
 - 1-800-799-SAFE (7233)
 - 1-800-787-3224 (TTY)
 - <http://www.ndvh.org/>
 - Translators are available
- **State Coalitions**
 - Start with the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence (www.ncadv.org). Use their links to get to your state. From the state domestic violence coalition's website, look around to find a listing of local programs. This link may be under "programs," or "members." Just look on that website -- or call them to find a local program.
 - Also look on the state coalition's website to see if they have a legal program. Legal programs are often funded under a Legal Assistance to Victims grant, so you might look for those terms.
- **Phone books**
 - Domestic Violence
 - Family Violence
 - Crisis Intervention
- **Call 411 (or call 211, if your community has this service)**
- **Law enforcement**

CHARACTERISTICS OF LOCAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PROGRAMS

- **Small programs / rural programs**
 - Often under-funded
 - Possibly bare-bones services
 - Shelter
 - Advocacy
 - May nor may not have ability to provide interpretation, but may have access to a language line
- **Large programs / urban programs**
 - Most will have a shelter program, or can refer for this
 - May have a transitional living program (one year of supported housing and other services)
 - May have lawyers on staff
 - May not be able to represent everyone, but may have developed legal guides for those representing themselves

- May have a provision for providing brief services including case review without taking on representation
- May be able to represent clients on specific matters (not taking on all possible cases that may come up)
- Will probably have staff members who speak a language in addition to English, if not will likely have access to a language line

ADVOCACY FROM A LOCAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PROGRAM

- Should be able to help file an emergency protective order
- Should be able to help file a longer term protective order
- Can provide information about requirements for both kinds of protective orders including:
 - The length of time for which protective orders are generally granted
 - Under what conditions children are included on protective orders
 - Whether visitation and custody are addressed in protective orders
- May have "pro se" packets for those representing themselves without an attorney
- May have a pro bono program established for free legal representation
- Likely will know local attorneys who are experienced in these cases
- May have knowledge of local legal habits/procedures
- May be able to advise on how to successfully approach the court
 - Some courts may not allow custody cases to proceed without an attorney of record; some courts are more welcoming of parties representing themselves
 - May be able to advise about local court rules and practices (whether court records are easily accessible -- so you can model your filings after those seen in other cases; whether children are generally allowed to testify)
 - May be able to give anecdotal information on the success of certain motions, filing complaints against judges, attorneys, etc.
 - May have a list of attorneys who are willing to take pro bono or reduced fee domestic violence cases
- May be able to recommend guardians ad litem, parenting coordinators, etc., in a custody case, if you have a choice in these matters
- May be able to connect you with other local people who have been parties in similar cases -- for support and for sharing of information
- May be able to make active referrals to other legal aid programs or law school legal clinics -- be sure to let them know if you are in any of the following groups, as there may be special assistance in your community for these groups:
 - Sexual assault survivor
 - Over 50
 - Native American
 - Disabled
 - Recovering from alcohol or substance abuse
 - Formerly incarcerated
 - Gay, lesbian or transgender