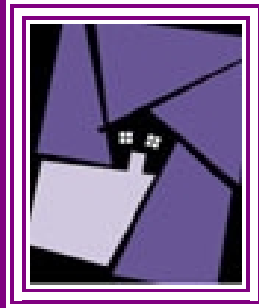


Domestic Violence



Survivor's Handbook

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—Table of Contents—

Note: You don't have to read all of this at once!

Go to the section that you are most interested in —each part can stand alone.

Section	Page
I Statement of Purpose, Acknowledgments, Author, Copyright	2
II Definition of Terms	3
III General Statement	4
IV Warning Signs of Abusers	5
V What Is Abuse?	5
VI Power and Control Wheel	7
VII Questions Survivors Ask	8
VIII What Can I Do To Be Safe?	12
IX Getting Help	13
X Safety Planning	15
XI What About My Children?	24
XII Child Abuse And Neglect	25
XIII Education And Counseling For Assailants	25
XIV Alcohol And Other Drugs	26
XV If You Are A Lesbian Or Gay Male Survivor	27
XVI If You Have A Physical Disability	28
XVII If You Are A Survivor And An Elder	29
XVIII If You Are A Woman of Color	29
XIX If You Are A Survivor of Dating Violence	30
XX If You Are Also A Victim of Sexual Assault	30
XXI If You Are a Battered Immigrant Woman	31
Web sites	33
Domestic Violence Programs in Michigan	36
Survivor's Affirmation	46

For legal information regarding criminal cases, personal protection orders (PPOs), divorce or suits for civil damages, please see the webversion of our Domestic Violence Survivor's Legal Handbook.

—SECTION I—

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

This is a handbook for battered women - to help them survive. Its purpose is to define abuse, to give support, encouragement, and information to survivors, and to provide information about legal rights and options. It is not intended to dispense legal advice. We elicit and encourage feedback. This handbook does not necessarily represent the viewpoints of the State of Michigan or the Michigan Domestic Violence Prevention and Treatment Board. The author is solely responsible for its contents.

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—SECTION II—

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Survivor or victim

Survivor and victim both mean the person in the relationship who is being hit, beaten, abused, raped and controlled. The legal system uses the word “victim.” In this booklet, we use the word survivor. We use the term survivor because it emphasizes that battered women are strong, courageous people who have survived terrible attacks.

Battered woman

A **battered woman** is any woman who has been assaulted or abused. Lesbians and men (gay and straight) can also be victimized by their partners. Partner means someone you’re dating, used to date, or with whom you have or had a romantic or sexual relationship. It doesn’t mean just married people. We use the term “battered woman” because the vast majority of people who are battered are women.

Local domestic violence programs offer services to **any person** who is victimized in a relationship. If you need help, call!

All of the laws discussed in this booklet also protect men battered by women, and most of them also protect lesbians and gay men.

Domestic violence, battering, abuse

Domestic violence, battering, abuse and domestic abuse mean the same thing in this booklet. They all describe a pattern of coercive control which one person exercises over another. Abusers use physical and sexual violence, threats, money, and emotional and psychological abuse to control their partners and get their way. **Spouse abuse** means domestic violence between people who are married. **Wife beating** also means domestic violence. We don’t use spouse abuse or wife beating because people who are living together, having sex, or dating can be in violent relationships, not just married people.

Domestic assault

Domestic assault refers to a type of abuse that is a crime. Something can be abusive, but not criminal. For instance, breaking dishes that you both own, or calling you a whore, are abusive, but are not crimes under our law.

Assailant and batterer

Assailant and batterer both mean the same thing in this booklet. It is the person in the relationship who is hitting, controlling and abusing his partner. We use the pronoun “he” or “him” when referring to assailants in this booklet, but as we said *before*, there are times when the assailant is a “she.”

Partner

In this booklet, the word partner means someone in an intimate relationship with another person. A partner could be a wife, husband, lover, boyfriend, girlfriend or date. A **domestic partner** is a person with whom you have registered a domestic partnership. Lesbians and gay men may register their partnership, and a few mixed gender couples do too.

Advocate

In this booklet, an advocate is a trained domestic violence counselor. She will provide you with support and information about your rights and options. Any communication with her is private and confidential. *She will NOT tell your assailant anything you say.* She will not tell you what to do nor will she judge or evaluate you, but will help you make your own decisions, and figure out how to best get what you need, deserve and want. She will *believe in you, encourage you and fight for you.*

—SECTION III—

GENERAL STATEMENT

Beating another person is a crime. It makes no difference if the person who beats you is a friend, a relative, your boyfriend, your lover, or your husband.

Domestic assault is against the law. Hitting, choking, shoving, slapping, biting, burning, or kicking someone is a crime. **Forcing someone to have sex is against the law** - even if the person who forces you to have sex is your husband. The person who hits you may tell you that it's your fault and that you made him do it. He may tell you he has a right to hit you because . . . you're crazy, drunk, a slut, a bad mother, a nag, etc. This is wrong.

Physical violence is **unacceptable** in intimate relationships. And, it's a **crime**.

Self-defense is not a crime. If you push your partner to get away while he's hitting you, or if you scratch his face while he's choking you, that's self-defense. Your batterer may tell you that you're just as bad because you tried to defend yourself. That's wrong.

Your batterer wants you to believe that you'll never make it on your own and that you'll never get away from him. Contrary to the newspapers and television, **battered women leave their boyfriends and husbands all the time.** It can be a long, hard struggle. Your batterer may be most dangerous and violent after you've left--when he's trying to get you back. Nonetheless, thousands of women who were once beaten are now safe.

***FOR HELP IN MICHIGAN, CALL YOUR
LOCAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PROGRAM
LOOK AT THE BACK OF THIS BOOKLET FOR A LIST OF
MICHIGAN PROGRAMS.***

***FOR HELP OUTSIDE OF MICHIGAN, CALL
THE NATIONAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
HOTLINE AT 1-800-799-7233
TTY: 1-800-787-3224***

You can always call back - even if you have called before. You don't have to be interested in shelter; you don't have to have made the decision to leave. You can call just to talk, or to get information. *You don't have to give your name when you call.*

—SECTION IV—

WARNING SIGNS OF ABUSERS

Many assailants come across as charming and pleasant people at the beginning of *the relationship*. They often continue to display these qualities in public while being abusive in private.

The following are warning signs of abusers BUT there is no sure-fire way to identify a batterer *ahead of time*.

- Is he very, very jealous?
- Does he want to know where you are every single minute?
- Does he drive away your friends and family?
- Does he have extreme highs and lows?
- Is he cruel to animals?
- Has he hit a former partner? Does he tell you in detail how terrible every former girlfriend was? Does he claim that former partners lied about him and put him in jail?
- Does he believe you belong to him? Does he tell you it's you and he against the world?
- When he gets angry, are you afraid of him?
- Did he grow up in a violent family?
- Does he say he can't "help" losing his temper?
- Does he say it's your fault when he is in a rage?
- Does he have contempt for women?
- Does he act like two totally different people? (Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde?)
- Does he tell you he has to restrain you for your own good?

—SECTION V—

WHAT IS ABUSE?

Abuse is a **pattern**. It's not just one hit. It's one person **scaring** the other person into doing what he wants her to do. It's about one person controlling the other. Abuse can be physical, emotional, and/or sexual. It usually is a whole lot of different methods of control (ways that one person makes the other person do what he wants). The Power and Control Wheel (see Section VI) shows *some of* the different tactics (or ways) that one person controls another. It was made up by a group of women who had been abused.

Many women don't think of themselves as being "battered." They don't see the things their partner does to them as abusive, and they don't see how they are part of a pattern. Assailants blame everyone and everything but themselves for the abuse. They try to convince their partners that they can't stop **or** that *they* have good reasons or excuses for the abuse.

A woman may be forced by her boyfriend to have sex, but she doesn't see it as rape.

Think about some of the following questions, and see if you may be abused. (You don't have to answer "yes" to all of them to have been abused.)

- Have you been hit? slapped? pushed?
- Has your partner pulled your hair out? **Restrained you?** Prevented you from leaving?
- Have you been grabbed? shaken? bit?
- Have you been **choked**?
- Has your partner used an object to hit you? Iron? Telephone? Belt?
- Have you had bruises from being hit, held or **squeezed**?
- Have you had a black eye, cut lip, or broken tooth from being attacked?
- Has your partner threatened you with a **weapon**?
- Has your partner used a weapon against you? Gun? Knife?

- Have you had to **see a doctor** because of an injury?
- Has he threatened to **hurt the children** if you don't do what he says?
- Has he threatened to kill you? Your children? Your family? Your friends? **Your pets?**
- Has he demanded **sex to "make up"** after an attack?
- Has he forced you to have sex? Oral sex? Anal sex?
- Has he forced you to have sex with others?
- Has he **forced you to have sex** in front of the children?
- Has he put objects into you against your will?
- Has he forced you to have sex with an animal?
- Does he show **pornography** and force you to do what's in it?
- Has he stopped you from taking classes?
- Has he stopped you from getting a job?
- Has he **stopped you from going to work**, or shown up at work and abused or threatened you there?
- Does he keep/take your paycheck and give you a little bit back, or make you ask for money you need?
- Does he keep all the **money under his control**?
- Does he not let you go places - house of worship, to visit friends or family?
- Does he not let you use the car? Does he take your keys or **disable your car**? Does he put all the vehicles in his name?
- Does he not pay the bills?

- Does he fight with your friends and family, call them names and in general make it hard for them to see you?
- Does he make you tell him where you've been every minute?
- Does he make you **write down what you've done all day**?
- Does he call frequently to check up on you when you're not with him?
- Does he **call you names**? Does he tell you that you are ugly, fat, stupid, a bitch, a slut or a whore?
- Does he say that **no one would ever want you** if you left him?
- Does he tell you you're **not a real woman**?
- Does he accuse you of having sex with every man you meet, or smile at, or talk to?
- Does he repeatedly, and wrongfully, accuse you of being **unfaithful**?

- Do you change what you want to do or plan to do because you're **scared of his temper**?
- Do you feel like you're **walking on eggshells**?
- Are you afraid that if you left him he would kill you?
- Are you afraid if you left him, he would **kill himself**?
- Has he hurt or killed your pets?
- Has he made you do things that you're ashamed of?
- Has he made you commit a crime?
- Does he encourage you to **drink too much**?
- Does he make or force you to **use drugs**?
- Has he prevented you from using the toilet?
- Woke you up every few minutes or every half an hour? Withheld food from you for long periods of time?
- If you are sick, or have a chronic illness or developmental disability, does he **withhold medication** from you?
- If you are addicted to alcohol or other drugs, does he buy you liquor or drugs? Does he stop you from going to meetings?
- After he has hit you, does he act sweet and loving? Does he say he's sorry, buy you gifts, cry, and say he'll never do it again?
- Are you afraid of him? **Are you afraid of what he might do if you "crossed" him?**

If you are not sure you're being abused, call your local domestic violence program

—SECTION VI— POWER AND CONTROL WHEEL

This chart is a conceptual way of looking at the primary tactics and behaviors that individual abusers use to get and maintain control in their relationships. **Battering is intentional. It's used to gain power and control over another person.** Physical abuse is only one part of a whole lot of methods an abuser uses against his partner. Battering is **never one assault**. This chart uses a wheel to show the relationship of physical abuse to other forms of abuse. Each spoke represents a tactic used to control or gain power, which is the hub of the wheel. The rim that surrounds and supports the spokes is physical abuse. It holds the system together and gives it strength.



The wheel was designed by a group of battered women and their advocates including Ellen Pence, Susan Schechter, Barbara Hart, Joe Morse, Michael Paymar and Miguel Gil. Many thanks to the Duluth Abuse Intervention Project in Minnesota for allowing its free use.

—SECTION VII—

QUESTIONS SURVIVORS ASK

Am I really a battered woman?

A lot of women who have been assaulted don't want to think of themselves as battered. Our society has taught us to believe that battered women have low self-esteem, are weak, or masochistic. No one wants to think of herself in that way. In fact, battered women come from all races, are rich and poor and everything in between, have lots of education or none, and have no special personality characteristics.

The only thing that all battered women have in common is that their partner has caused them to live in fear and has tried to take control of their lives.

If you identify yourself as a battered woman, you might have to accept that you can't change your partner, and that he has a serious problem with violence. Many women don't want to think of their husbands or boyfriends as batterers.

If you can't figure out whether you have been battered, call our crisis line, and talk to one of our counselor/advocates.

Is it just the drinking?

No. If he stopped drinking, he wouldn't stop being abusive.

A lot of times assailants will drink so that they can have an excuse for assaulting their partners. Many batterers blame their drinking or drug use for their violence, and claim they cannot help themselves. That is not true. They have the choice not to batter. They also have the choice to seek help for their use of alcohol or other drugs.

A lot of batterers claim that they can't help what they do when they are drunk or high—that they are out of control and therefore not responsible for what they do. In fact, a lot of people drink, but only some assault their partners.

Batterers' judgment and physical ability may be harmed by their drinking or drug use. If he is trying to strangle you into unconsciousness, and he is drinking, he might misjudge and kill you. If he pushes you, he might miss, and push you down the stairs. But people will not commit acts that they feel are totally wrong even when drinking. For more information, see Section XIV.

Could I be killed?

Yes. Most battered women survive and many leave their assailants for good. However, one third of all female homicide victims are killed by their husband or an intimate partner. If you are battered, you are in danger of being killed. Most homicides occur after women have left or when assailants realize deep down that they are leaving for good.

Assessing Lethality

The following are signs or indicators that your partner might kill you. There is **no guarantee** that if he does not fit this picture, he will not kill you. If all the answers to these questions are no, that does not mean you are necessarily safe from death.

- Has he **threatened** to kill you, your children, or a member of your family?
- Has he threatened or tried to kill himself? Beware! Batterers often kill their partners **BEFORE** killing themselves?
- Does he have **fantasies** about killing you, or the children? The more details, the more danger.
- Does he own **weapons**? Has he ever used them or threatened to use them in the past?

- Does he believe he **owns** you and that you have no right to life without him?
- Does he see you as the **center of the universe**? Can he not think about life without you?
- Has he been seriously, acutely **depressed**?
- Does he talk about how you have stolen his children?
- **Can he find you?** Does he know where you are? (If he can't find you, he can't kill you.)
- If you have left, has he **tracked** your every move for days or weeks?
- Has he taken you **hostage**?
- Is there a lot of sexual violence, **rape and sexual humiliation** in the relationship?
- **Have you told him you're leaving?** Does he think you're leaving? Have divorce papers been filed? Has he just been served with a personal protection order? (This is a time of **great danger**—you need to take **special care**.)
- Has he been drinking or using drugs heavily? If so, you are in greater danger.
- Has he **killed or mutilated a pet**?
- Has his **behavior changed** a lot recently? Is he doing things that he wouldn't ever have done in the past? Is he radically changing and escalating his patterns of abuse?

The concept of lethality assessment was developed by survivor Barbara Hart, and modified by many.

Can I change him? Can I help him?

No. He has to make the decision to change. You cannot save him.

The only thing you can do for him is to give him a referral to assailants' counseling and hope he goes.

He says he's sorry and that he'll never do it again.

Can I trust that?

No. Many survivors experience a "honeymoon" or "respite" period after an assault. Many assailants say they are sorry after an attack. Often they will also cry, plead, apologize, and send gifts.

Some will enter counseling once or twice, and then drop out. He might share some of his grief and pain with you. He'll seem vulnerable and open to you. He will remind you of the man you fell in love with. However, eventually, you will be assaulted again. (In some cases, assailants decide that they can control their partners without physical assaults, and escalate the psychological controls — controlling money, controlling access to children, convincing their partners that they will lose their children if they leave. They don't have to hit any more, because their victims know that they are capable of brutality and violence).

Some survivors say that the apologies and gifts are just another method of control. He's afraid you will leave. Being abusive will strengthen your resolution to go, so he tries being sweet and loving instead.

Violence never goes away by itself. It usually increases in frequency and intensity over time.

Battering is a behavior that is learned. It's learned in families, and it's learned in our culture. It is developed and practiced over time. It takes specialized work by counselors trained to deal with this problem for batterers to have a chance to change. (For more information, see Section XIII)

Will he go to prison?

Usually he will not. In most cases, domestic assailants are charged with misdemeanor assault and battery. If convicted, the maximum sentence for a first offense in Michigan is 93 days in jail. (The second and third conviction might mean more time in jail). More often, they are put on probation, and often they are sentenced to batterers' counseling. If your assailant is charged with a felony, there is a possibility that he might go to prison.

It is not your fault if your partner is convicted of a crime and therefore **not your fault if he goes to prison or jail.** He committed the crime; it's his responsibility.

What about couples counseling?

Assailants often say that their partners are the crazy ones and need counseling. Survivors may think that they can save their marriage through couples counseling. They hope that contact with a therapist will help their partner realize he's violent, and that he'll stop abusing them.

When there is violence in a relationship, couples (or marital) counseling does not work. **Couples' counseling** assumes that the primary problem is "the relationship" or "communication" and that both people are responsible for making the changes necessary to make the relationship better.

This will not end the violence - it **increases the danger**. No matter what issues or problems there may be in a relationship, battering is one individual's problem - the one who is using the violence.

Usually, the survivor is afraid to say what is really going on because the assailant may punish her for doing so. The assailant usually uses the therapy as another means of keeping control over her.

Isn't divorce against God's Law?

Not necessarily. Consult a leader in your faith who also knows about domestic violence. If divorce is forbidden in your religion, you might want to consider an order for separate maintenance. Consult your religious leader for your house of worship's position about a marriage with violence in it. Often, the church believes that if one person is violent and abusive, then they have broken the marriage vow. Your religious leader may tell you that God does not want you to be hit or hurt.

A lot of battered women have strong spiritual beliefs and/or are very connected to their religious community. Some religious communities are very supportive of a woman's safety. Others are not. Sometimes they may counsel the woman to stay and try to work it out, or even actively support the abuser (usually because they don't understand about domestic violence). Try to find someone connected with your faith who is knowledgeable about violence against women.

Most women of faith make decisions in the context of their religious beliefs. Women won't decide to leave unless they believe it's the moral thing to do.

{A wonderful resource for women of faith is the National Center for the Prevention of Sexual and Domestic Violence, 936 North 34th Street, Suite 200, Seattle, WA 98103, USA; Phone --206-634-1903; fax--206-634-0115; CPSDV@cpsdv.org; Website--<http://www.cpsdv.org>. They publish a great booklet called "Keeping the Faith." They have recently added sections for Jewish women, Muslim women, Black women, and Asian women. Muslim women might look at Karamah, the Muslim Women's Human Rights Organization at <http://www.karamah.org> }

Why does he hit me?

People batter in order **to control** their partners. He may say it's because he was hit as a child. He may blame losing his job, or being discriminated against. He may say he's been treated badly in other relationships, or that what you do forces him to hit. Some women want to believe these "reasons" because they think that by changing what **they** do, they will be able to stop the violence. Unfortunately, batterers make a choice to assault because they want their partners to do as they say. If you change your behavior, he will still hit you

I feel like he makes up rules and punishes me for breaking them. Am I crazy?

No. Batterers do indeed make rules in relationships and then punish their partners for breaking them. Usual rules are:

- You cannot leave the relationship unless I am through with you.
- You may not tell anyone about my violence or coercive controls.

- I am entitled to your obedience, service, affection, loyalty, fidelity and undivided
- attention. You must prove to me that you are on my side.
- I get to decide which of the other rules are critical.

(These rules were first articulated by survivor Barbara Hart who has given permission for their reprint here).

Am I codependent? If I get therapy, will he change?

If you get therapy, it will not change his behavior.

Some women have been helped by thinking of themselves as “codependent.” They have learned through this label that they are valuable people, that they should take care of themselves, and that they cannot change or be responsible for other people. These things are true and very helpful.

However, other women have been told they are codependent and are somehow enabling or participating or colluding in his “sickness.” This is not true about battering.

What you do, or say, or think, whatever ways you may try to change yourself - these will not stop or reduce his violence. Only **he** can make the decision to change his behavior.

Counseling might help you decide what is best for you and your children, but it will not affect his behavior.

Is he mentally ill?

No. Many people believe that anybody who would beat and torture someone they claim to love is “crazy” and needs help.

Batterers may need help, but they are not mentally ill because they batter. Mental illness does not cause battering. Most people who are mentally ill are not physically violent.

What if I've hit him?

Doesn't that make me just as bad?

No. Battered women try all kinds of methods to stop the violence. They may do as the assailant tells them, try to calm him down and give him what he wants. They will try to argue and reason or cry and plead.

Most battered women try using force to get the assailant to stop hitting them. The most common things that survivors do are — bite the assailant or scratch his face to stop him from choking her or twisting her arm; grab a knife and tell him to back off; or push him away to run out of the room. All of these acts are self-defense, and not criminal.

Sometimes assailants will call the police and claim that they are the real victims, and show the police their scratches or bites. Sometimes battered women are arrested incorrectly. If this has happened to you, tell the police the whole sequence of events. If you've been arrested incorrectly, your local domestic violence program can help you set the record straight. Call your local domestic violence program.

—SECTION VIII—

WHAT CAN I DO TO BE SAFE?

Call the police!

Write down the emergency number for the police. It's usually 911. Call the operator if you don't know it. If you don't have a telephone, arrange a signal with neighbors so that they can call the police. When the police come, ask them to arrest your partner.

If you are scared to do that in front of your assailant, think about talking to one of the officers alone.

Get support from friends and family

Tell your family, friends and co-workers what has happened. Don't try to protect him. Ask for what you need.

Move out; move away

It's not fair. You should not have to leave your home because of his behavior. But sometimes the only way you will be safe is to leave. There are shelters throughout the country that can help you relocate. Your local domestic violence program can help you find them or you can call the Domestic Violence National Hotline at 1-800-799-7233.

Make a safety plan

Figure out what to do before or when the next attack happens (See below under Section X).

Get a Personal Protection Order

(See the Legal Section—Part II, Section X)

Keep Your Own Records of the Abuse

Keep a journal or log of all incidents of physical violence, threats, harassing phone calls, unwanted contacts, missed visitation, etc. You may also want to include promises your assailant made about getting help or changing his behavior.

Take pictures of any bruises or injuries you have. Take pictures or videotapes of any damage done to your home or property. Make sure you write the date of the incident and a description of what it is on any pictures. If you are taking pictures of bruises on a specific part of your body, take two pictures. One a close up that shows the bruise, and one further away which shows your face and that part of the body. That way you can prove the bruise was made on you. When taking pictures of a hole in the wall, put something next to the hole to show how big it is.

Keep copies of any email he sent to you. Record or make copies of any messages on answering machines or voice mail. Write down the name, address, and phone number of any witnesses to his violence.

Get medical help

If you have been injured, go to the emergency room, or urgent care unit, or see your doctor. Medical records may be important evidence in criminal or civil court cases. Medical records may

also help you get a personal protection order. Give all the information you feel safe to give. Medical records are supposed to be confidential and are not supposed to be given out to anyone but you.

SPECIAL MEDICAL CONCERNS

What seems like a minor injury could be a major one.

If your head gets hit and you lose consciousness, if you are groggier an hour after an attack, if a headache lasts more than two weeks or if you have a seizure, be sure to see a doctor. These could be signs of brain injury or bleeding in the brain, or a closed head injury.

If you are pregnant, and he has beaten you in your abdomen or back, tell the doctor. Many batterers injure unborn children. If you've been beaten in the belly, if you start to feel faint, or you notice bruising on your back, or large bruises on your stomach, you could also have wounds to your internal organs which could be life threatening.

If he's limiting your access to medication, try to see a doctor and ask for free samples. Most pharmaceutical companies have policies to provide low cost or free drugs to folks who cannot afford them, so if you have a chronic condition and are worried that you won't be able to pay for meds, this might be an option.

If your insurance is in your husband's name, be careful that it is not billed for medical care (if you don't want him to know about it).

—SECTION IX—

GETTING HELP

TYPICAL SERVICES OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PROGRAMS IN MICHIGAN

Call now! Help is available! One of the best places where you can get help is your local domestic violence program. At the end of this booklet, there is a list of programs throughout Michigan. You can also call the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-SAFE (7233) to find your local program. Their telecommunications device for the deaf is 1-800-787-3224. Immediate help is available in English or Spanish, 24 hours a day, seven days each week. They also have interpreters available to translate an additional 139 languages. Their web site is: <http://www.ndvh.org/>

Crisis Intervention/Peer Counseling

Most domestic violence programs have one-on-one face to face counseling. You do not have to be in a shelter, or on the way to one, nor do you have to make a commitment to leave the assailant in order to be eligible for this service. Whether you're not ready to leave, have left, or just want someone to talk to, you can get counseling for yourself. Some programs have counseling available for children as well. The counseling tends to be short term (six months or less) and is usually free. Counseling generally takes place at the domestic violence agency, however many larger counties and rural areas have satellite counseling facilities for greater accessibility. Child care and transportation are often provided. Call your local domestic violence agency to find out what services they offer.

Some domestic violence programs also have counseling or education programs for men who batter. Those who don't have such programs will be able to refer your assailant to such a program.

Support Groups

Many battered women say that the most helpful thing they've done is meeting other survivors and talking about common problems. All domestic violence agencies will have some

kind of support group. There may be a wide variety of groups run on related topics such as parenting, addiction, nutrition, employment skills, and other health issues. Many programs have drop in or time limited groups in the community that any survivor of domestic violence can attend.

One of the goals of most domestic violence agencies is to bring survivors together and help them help each other. There are women in all stages of the process—women who are still with their assailants; women who are deciding whether or not to leave; women who are in the process of leaving; and women who are long gone.

On-Call Services/Community Response Teams

An increasing number of domestic violence programs are now providing on-call teams that may respond to calls from police or hospital workers. Usually they are a 24-hour service, with trained counselors who will come to your house to give you information and assistance. They can give you information about the legal system, and what to expect. They may offer you shelter, transportation to medical help, and give you support. You do not have to talk to them if you don't want to.

Shelter

All domestic violence programs offer shelter. They provide a place where battered women can come by themselves or with their children, and find a safe environment. At shelters, you will get the chance to meet, talk, and share support with other battered women. There will be counseling and people to talk to.

To go to a shelter, you do not need to decide to leave your assailant forever. Shelters are places where families learn about options. Assailants often tell lies about shelters so that their partners will be too scared to go there. The truth is that shelters are not luxurious. They are run by agencies that do not have a lot of money. They may be crowded and noisy.

Most shelters have rules. The most common rules are no weapons, no alcohol, no other drugs, no violence, and no telling anyone the names of other families staying there. The survivors who read this book and gave suggestions wanted to tell you: "Shelters are wonderful places. We're worried you'll be scared to go to a shelter. We have been in the same boat and we know what you have been through. You'll be welcomed and you'll be safe. There are people at the shelter who really care about you."

Children's Services

Most domestic violence programs offer some kind of services for your children. Some have individual counseling, some have support groups, and some offer assistance with child care. Some have licensed day care centers that you can use.

Many children find it helpful to talk about their feelings and experiences with trained counselors and other children with similar family backgrounds. They will be told that they did not cause the violence and there was nothing they could have done to make it stop. Most agencies require children in shelter to attend school. Some programs provide services to children not in shelter, such as counseling or groups.

Referrals

All domestic violence programs have good information about battering that they will share with you. All programs can refer you to other community services for help you may need.

Housing

Some programs have transitional housing where you can live after you leave the shelter, for one to two years. All programs offer you concrete help and support in finding a new place to live if you need it.

Confidentiality

Domestic violence programs will keep your name and counseling records confidential.

There are three exceptions:

- Signed release by the resident allowing the shelter to talk to someone else;
- Potential homicide or suicide;
- Report to Children's Protective Services if child abuse or neglect is suspected.

More About Domestic Violence Shelters

Most domestic violence shelters are not like most homeless shelters. Domestic violence shelters usually have bedrooms, and adjoining bathrooms; they do not require adults to leave the shelter during the day.

Most residents ARE out of the shelter during the day looking for work, going to court, or searching for housing. Many residents have jobs and continue to work during their shelter stay.

Mothers and children are usually housed in the same room. Adult residents usually take turns doing chores – keeping their own rooms and bathrooms clean, sharing the cleaning of commons rooms and sharing cooking, etc.

Length of stay in shelter varies. Most shelters allow a shelter stay of between 30 and 40 days.

Shelters in Michigan vary greatly in size, from the large shelters that may have up to 61 beds to small programs with less than ten beds.

All domestic violence shelters in Michigan shelter children. Most require children to be in school, although a few allow tutorials in the shelter. Most shelters will accommodate home schooling. Most shelters believe strongly that children should have as normal an environment as possible, and that includes school.

Most shelters in Michigan are still in private, or secret locations. Those shelters will ask you not to reveal the location of the shelter to anyone.

A few shelters are in public locations. The shelters in public locations have found that batterers understand that by coming to a shelter that they will not succeed in finding, talking with, intimidating or recapturing their partner or children. In general, they do not go to shelters.

All shelters in Michigan have carefully designed and updated security systems to provide security and protection for residents and their children.

—SECTION X—

SAFETY PLANNING

Safety Planning When You're Still Living With Your Assailant—Or When You Are Leaving

Here are some things to consider when you suspect your partner is about to assault you again.

- Try to figure out the “warning signs” that come before an assault (drinking, taking drugs, pay day, a bill collector, a bad day at work). Are there physical signs that he is going to hit you (clenched fists, threats, heavy breathing, a flushed face, destruction of property, etc.)?
- Try to get out or get help before the assault.

- Are there any weapons in the house? Where? Can you remove the weapons? The ammunition? Lock them up?
- When an assault occurs, try to move to a room or area that has access to an exit. Avoid a bathroom, kitchen, or anywhere near weapons.
- Can you figure out a signal for the neighbors to call the police? Can you teach your child(ren) to call the police? Or can you go to a neighbor's and call?
- Can you and your children memorize telephone numbers to call for safety?
- Can you hide a cell phone if your assailant destroys the phone in your house? (You can get a special cell phone that calls the police and/or the shelter from your local police or from your local domestic violence program)

**Think ahead and prepare for situations
where you may need to leave in a hurry**

- How will you get out of the house? Some women take out the garbage, or walk the dog, or get the newspaper, or offer to go get him cigarettes. Set up a routine where it's normal for you to leave for a short period of time.
- Where will you go when you get out of the house? Where is the nearest telephone?
- Try to collect and hide money.
- Put important documents in one place where they can be grabbed easily.
- If possible, leave copies of documents, spare clothes, spare keys to the car and the house, and money with a neighbor or trusted friend.
- Think about taking money from any bank accounts. This is not stealing. You can always give it back. Our experience is that if you don't take it, your assailant will take it all.
- Reach out for help. Enlist your friends, family, co-workers, neighbors and professionals in your safety planning.

WARNING! VIOLENCE OFTEN GETS WORSE WHEN YOU TRY TO LEAVE or show signs of independence, such as taking a class, getting a PPO or filing for divorce. Your assailant may believe that he is actually losing control of you and become desperate. Or he may decide that you have left for good, and will take revenge out of malice and spite. TAKE SPECIAL CARE.
BEWARE OF ASSAILANTS WHO ASK FOR
"ONE LAST MEETING" WITH YOU OR THE KIDS!

WHAT ABOUT THE KIDS?

TAKE YOUR CHILDREN WITH YOU!

If you do not have your children with you, you will NOT be able to file for temporary custody of your children. The parent who has physical possession of the children will almost always get temporary custody.

Assailants often kidnap children or threaten to harm them in order to get their partners to return. If the assailant has physical possession, he can get temporary custody. If he gets temporary custody, you cannot legally take the children from him. You will have to go to court and contest the temporary custody.

Even if you know your assailant has been abusive to the children, if there is not presently an open child protective services case against him, the court will probably NOT give you temporary custody if you do not file first.

Safety plan with your children! **Teach them to call 911**; practice what they should do during an assault; decide on a code word that means they should get help.

Tell your children's school and day care what is happening, and who has permission to pick them up (and who doesn't).

WHAT TO TAKE WITH YOU

Your **life** and your **safety** are most important.

Trying to bring your **children** is important.

Everything else is **secondary**.

If you **can** do it, here is a list of things you should take with you.
(If you're worried about taking something of his - remember, you can always give it back.)

1. Identification. Driver's license, birth certificate for you and the kids, voter registration card, credit cards, work identification, unemployment card, green card, passport, baptismal certificate, marriage license, adoption records.
2. Social security numbers for you, your partner, and your children. Bring your own and your children's cards if available.
3. Medical records. Health insurance information.
4. Keys to the car and to the apartment or house.
5. Any welfare records.
6. Financial information such as bankbooks, checkbooks, savings records, stocks, insurance, pensions, etc.
7. Prescription drugs. Copies of prescriptions for you and the children.
8. Spare eyeglasses or contact lenses for you and the children.
9. Money.
10. Photos, diaries, address books.
11. Clothes and toys are the last priority. They are replaced most easily.
12. Automobile. If the car is in your name, take it. If it's in both your names, take it. If it's in his name, and he has another car, and you're married, take the car.

When your assailant finds that you are gone, he will probably destroy things that are important to you. **IF** you can, take things that are not replaceable, things with significant sentimental value. Assailants usually take any money that is in a joint account, and if they have access to your credit cards, they will use them. If you think your assailant knows your credit card numbers, you might want to change them.

SAFETY PLANNING AFTER YOU'VE LEFT THE ASSAILANT — STALKING AND HARRASSMENT

- Change the locks.
- Find a neighbor you trust who would call the police if the assailant is around.
- Get motion sensor lights.
- Consider a large dog.

- Set up a routine with a friend or family member who will check in with you on a regular basis. Agree on a code word that means you're in danger.
- Vary your regular routine to avoid the assailant following you. Leave for work at different times; don't always go to the same grocery stores.
- Use a private post office box such as Mail Boxes, Etc. They have post office boxes that have a street address. File a change of address card with the U.S. Postal Service. Use it for all mail, packages, and magazines.
- Get an unpublished and unlisted telephone number.
- Order line blocking for your telephone number.
- If you have a personal protection order, keep a copy with you at all times.
- If you live where there's security, or a manager, give them a picture of your assailant and a copy of the PPO. Give a picture, a copy of the PPO, and any custody documents to your child's school as well.
- Try to live in an apartment complex with an outside door to each building that is locked.
- Ask your neighbors not to buzz someone in.
- If you can, keep your car in a garage to avoid the assailant messing with it.
- Document all contacts by the assailant. Save letters and cards, tape voice mail messages, and phone calls. Make copies of emails. Keep a journal of all strange occurrences.
- If your assailant must get something from your home or you need to get something from his residence, call your local domestic violence program. They may be able to request that the police do a "civil standby" so that you can be safe.
- Have your name removed from reverse directories. The entries in these directories are in numerical order by phone number or by address. These books allow anyone who has just one piece of information, such as a phone number, to find where you live.
- Be careful who you tell where you are. Unfortunately, assailants usually find their victims through family members. Your sister may tell his sister who tells him.
- If you can, install your phone line in another residence and use call forwarding.
- After you leave, remember to change the password on any voice mail that you use, and change the retrieval code for a telephone answering machine. Change your email password.
- Remember that anyone with a radio scanner could listen in on a cell phone conversation or on a cordless telephone if they are within two miles distance. Digital phones may offer greater privacy but they are more expensive and not foolproof. Be careful not to reveal any private information on a cell phone or on a cordless phone.

RETRIEVING BELONGINGS AFTER YOU HAVE LEFT

If you need to get something from your assailant's home (or your former home) or if your assailant must get something from your home, call the police to request a "Civil Standby". (Your local domestic violence program may be able to help you get a civil standby). This is a request for the police to come and stand by to ensure that there will be no violence or harassment during property transfer. Usually the police can only stay for 15 – 20 minutes, so if you need more time, you might have to do it more than once. Remember, that police are not **required** to do civil standbys.

SAFETY IN THE WORKPLACE

- Inform your boss, co-workers, and any security of the situation. Provide them with a picture of the assailant, and a copy of the personal protection order.
- Ask that your calls be screened or sent directly to voice mail.
- Ask that your office be locked or make sure that the front desk does not let him in.
- Ask that your current home address or phone number not be given out.
- Carpool to work with someone, or ask security to walk you to and from your car each day.
- Ask if you can vary your work schedule.
- Suggest to your boss that someone from your local domestic violence program come and consult with them and/or do a talk for employees about domestic violence. This may help them take your situation more seriously.

SAFETY FOR SURVIVORS AND THEIR CHILDREN DURING VISITATION

- If visitation is ordered by the court, try to have visitation arrangements made through a third party with whom you feel comfortable.
- Work on having drop off and pick up happen in a public place (police station, near mall security, post office lobby) or have it happen at a third party's home.
- Try to avoid arriving at or departing from the drop off/pick up site at the same time as the assailant.
- If the exchange of children must happen at your home, try to have the custody order specify that the assailant must wait in his car across the street, and that he cannot come to the door.
- Arrange for a supportive, calm and mature friend to be present during the exchange.
- Have the kids all ready to go before he arrives.
- Keep the door locked in case he shows up early.
- Document all problems with visitation and report them to the Friend of the Court.

(The concept of safety planning was originally developed by Barbara Hart. Thanks to Erin House for major contributions to the section on safety planning.)

SAFETY USING THE TELEPHONE

CALLER ID ISSUES

Many assailants use Caller ID as a way to monitor their partners' conversations. By reviewing the incoming calls on the Caller ID, assailants can find out who has called while they were gone. Even assailants who no longer live with their (ex-) partner may insist on reviewing or sneaking a peek at the Caller ID when they come over. Monitoring who you talk to and interrogating you about what you say is a tactic your assailant is using to control you and to isolate you from other people.

If you have Caller ID and you are concerned that your partner may give you a hard time about who has been calling you, there are a few things that you can do.

- You can disconnect your Caller ID from the phone but not from the power source so that the machine cannot record incoming calls.
- You can ask people to **“block” their number when they call you by dialing *67** before they dial your number. When *67 is dialed, only the word “private” will appear on the screen. Sometimes only the word “unavailable” will appear on your Caller ID; this indicates that the machine is unable to determine the number and/or name of the person who is calling. Unavailable numbers are often telemarketers or people calling from other areas without Caller ID service. If someone calls you from a cell phone the name will appear as “unavailable” but the number will be displayed.
- If you want to call your assailant but do not want him to know where you are, **always dial *67 before calling his number**. More and more people have Caller ID and if you are concerned about not revealing your number, it is important to get in the habit of **always** dialing *67 before you call any number. If you call from a pay phone the name of the business where the pay phone is located, as well as the number of the pay phone, will appear on Caller ID. Your assailant will be able to determine what area you are in, if not your exact location. If you call your partner from another county or state, the name is more likely to come up as unavailable. Usually the phone number where you are calling from (with the area code) will be displayed on Caller ID. Many cell phones have Caller ID on them, so if you contact your assailant on his cell phone your number may appear.

If your assailant is stalking you by calling you repeatedly, you can use your Caller ID as evidence. (You can also use messages recorded on an answering machine or voice mail.) You can call the police and have an officer come look at the Caller ID at your home. Or you can take your Caller ID machine in to the police station to have them verify the numbers on the machine and to make a police report about the harassing, repeating calls. If your partner always “blocks” his number when he calls you, you can contact the police department and the telephone company to get a trace put on your phone. If you agree to follow through with criminal charges if the trace identifies repetitive and harassing calls, the phone company should not charge you for this service. You can also contact the phone company and ask that they set your phone so that it will not receive “blocked” calls. This means that anyone that dials *67 will not get through to your phone but will instead hear a recording that says, “This number does not accept blocked calls.” Consequently, people calling you would have to reveal their number in order for the call to ring into your home.

Dialing *69

If you or your assailant dial *69 your phone will call back the **last** incoming call into your home. If your assailant is trying to find out who just called you, he can dial *69 and call the person back without knowing the phone number. In some areas, the phone company will tell you who called and/or what phone number just called your house before directly connecting you to the other number.

If the person calling blocked Caller ID by dialing *67, when you dial *69 the call will ring through but it should not reveal the name or number of the caller. However, if an answering machine identifies the name or number of the person or business it is possible to determine where the call came from even if the caller “blocked” Caller ID initially. If a number appears as “Unavailable,” usually dialing *69 will not give you any information but will tell you, “This service is not available for this number.”

(Erin House wrote the above section)

SAFETY USING A FAX MACHINE

When you receive a fax, it usually has the telephone number of the fax machine used to send the fax. It also has the day and time. So if you send your assailant a fax, it will let him know the general area where you sent the fax from, and when and where.

USING YOUR COMPUTER SAFELY AND PRIVATELY

Change your password often, and don't tell anyone what it is. Set up a program that you need a password even to get ON your computer, and change it often. Don't use anything the assailant would guess.

When you use a computer on the Internet, it records a lot of information about what you have been doing. This is meant to make it easy for you to go back to places you have been on the Web, or to recall what someone said in a Chat room. Unfortunately, others can look at this information too, if they have physical access to your machine. So you need to know how to clean up after your software, and keep information that could put you at risk in your own hands alone.

If you don't feel comfortable with this task, consider going to an Internet cafe, or library, to access the Net instead. Set up a yahoo or hotmail address that only you know about for email.

NEW! “Spy” software is now very inexpensive and sophisticated. Products such as Spector or KeyKey will monitor your email messages, instant mail, every keystroke, chat, and websites visited. E-Blaster can be installed once and information will be sent to an email address at another location.

Web Browsers

When you use a browser, like Internet Explorer or Netscape, it records the URLs of the sites you visit, and information about those sites, in several places. For some things, like “cookies”, it's best to prevent the browser from storing them. For other things, like the browser “cache” or “history”, this cannot be done, so you must do some cleanup whenever you finish a Net session.

Netscape

To prevent Netscape from accepting cookies, go to Options | Network Preferences, pick the Protocols tab, and check the box for “(Alert before) Accepting A Cookie”. Then you will be asked whenever a site you visit tries to set a cookie, and can refuse it. Do this **before** you start browsing.

For Netscape 4, go to Edit | Preferences. To clear the cache, select Advanced, then Cache, then press the “Clear Disk Cache” button. To clear the History, press the “Clear History” button.

Earlier versions of Netscape, 2.x and 3.x, are a bit more complicated to clear. To clear the Disk Cache, **after** you are done browsing, go to Options | Network Preferences, the Cache tab, and push the “Clear Disk Cache Now” button. Clear the indication of which links have been visited with Options | General Preferences, the Appearance tab, where you press the “Expire Now” button in the lower right.

That still leaves the “History” window. Unfortunately, there is no button for it. You will need to close Netscape, then go to the directory where Netscape is really installed, and delete the file “NETSCAPE.HST” that you find there. If you don’t know where Netscape is installed, do a search for the NETSCAPE.HST file in Windows Explorer (not Internet Explorer).

Some versions of Netscape may also have a list of recently accessed URLs in their preferences file. After you exit Netscape, look for that file (one that has a real recent date/time in the Netscape directory), and see if such a list is in it (using Notepad). Delete whatever you need to.

Internet Explorer

You can clear Internet Explorer from its Internet Options panel, the General tab, which is under View in some versions and under Tools in others. Press the button “Delete Files”; in the History section, press the “Clear History” button. It’s also a good idea to change the amount of disk space used to store temporary files; move its slider all the way to the left. Finally, change the days-to-keep-page setting to zero.

Under Internet Options, Advanced, turn off “Use Autocomplete”, as that can also clue someone in about visited locations.

Chat and Instant-Message Programs

If you use ICQ, AOL Communicator, Excite PAL, or the like, make sure you clean out the history information. You may also want to use aliases for some of the names of the people you connect with. Remember that these programs store every word you send or receive, just like email.

Chat programs like MIRC can also have logs that you need to delete. Even worse, many chat rooms have archives that can be accessed later by anyone; AOL is known for this. And people may be lurking who you’d rather not talk to. Be very careful what you say in such places, and use an alias that only your good friends know.

E-Mail

There are many different e-mail programs, and they all have different ways of storing messages. You may need to check the “Outbox”, the “Sent” folder, and any other folders you did not create yourself to see what is kept there.

If you use Netscape Mail, empty the Trash folder to keep your deleted messages from coming back to haunt you. To do so, go to the File menu and choose Empty Trash Folder.

If you use Eudora, make sure that you “compact” the mailboxes after you delete messages. Otherwise the messages are really still in there, and can still be retrieved. The mailbox might show 0/0/119K in such a case; make sure it says 0/0/0K when you are done.

Word Processing Files

If you write a letter in a word processor, like Word or Works, make sure you know exactly where the file is being saved; if you need to delete it, you must know the “path” to the file. If you have a good hiding place for floppy disks, you may want to keep all your files on them, so that you never have anything on the hard disk that could put you at risk.

Some word processors **save a temporary copy of the file** you are working on, so that they can recover it for you if you forget to “save” before turning off your computer. If you think this may have happened, you can check by shutting down the word-processor, then starting up again without choosing a document first. If it has a “recovered” document on disk, it will usually load it automatically then. If you close the document and tell the word processor **not** to save it, that should remove the “recovered” version. Otherwise, it may “**pop up**” in front of the next person to use the word processor.

Another “helpful” feature that can leave full, readable copies of your files around is the “**backup**” **feature**, which saves the previous version of your file someplace with the same name and extension .back or (for Word) .wbk. In Word, check the Tools | Options | File Locations tab to see where such

copies of your files may be kept. You can also use Tools | Options | Save tab to stop the backup process entirely; just uncheck the “Always Create Backup Copy” and “Automatic Save” boxes.

Many word processors let you save your file with a password, so that nobody who doesn't have the password can read them. The “encryption” used is not real strong but may be good enough to stop someone who isn't real computer-savvy. Unfortunately, people do lose passwords, and so there are many tools on the net to help you “recover” the lost password. Somebody who wanted to read your file could use one of those programs, and defeat the password. So this is **not** a very good way to protect your documents.

Watch out for the File menu, too. Many Windows word processors, as well as spreadsheets and other applications, keep a list of recently used documents on their own File menu. In Word, you can change this with Tools | Options, the General tab, by setting the number for the Recently Used File List to zero (4 is the default). If the list disappearing would be a problem, you can also just open and close files until they push the hazardous names off the end of the list.

Deleting Files

When you delete a file on Windows 95 or 98 or the Mac you may think it is gone. But it's not. It's merely in the Trash (or Recycle Bin), and can be hauled out any time up until you “empty the trash”. Even then, someone with computer knowledge can use tools that resurrect the deleted file much of the time. **It's really best to use floppy disks whenever you can**, so that you can physically put the disk with the files someplace safe.

In Windows 95, 98 and 2000, you will also see references to the documents you create under the Start button, Documents. You can clear the whole list by right-clicking on a blank part of the Taskbar, and choosing “Properties.” Pick the “Start Menu Programs” tab, and click on the “Clear” button under the “Documents menu.” Note that this does not remove the document itself, just the mention of it in the Documents list.

If you want to minimize suspicion by leaving the list, but just removing one or more particular documents, you can do that using Windows Explorer. Go to your Windows directory, and open the Recent folder in it. You will see a shortcut for each entry on the Documents list. Right-click on each one you want to get rid of and select Delete from the pop-up menu. Then go empty the Recycle Bin to finish the job.

Thanks to the Spiderwoman list for their help on this section.

ON AMERICA ON-LINE

If you're still living with the assailant, he can read your email if he knows the password on the master account. The master account is the first screen name created when the account was opened. He can change the password of any other screen names on that account if he has access to the master account. If he knows the credit card number you set up the account with, he could have someone call, pretending to be you and change the password. (If you don't store your password, but enter it every time you sign on, you would know that the password had changed).

If you've left him, buy your account with a credit card that lists the mailbox address (of a place such as Mailboxes, Inc.) and give AOL the mailbox address as well. AOL is not supposed to release information about subscribers, but mistakes happen. You can create different screen names and unless the assailant has physical access to your computer (or knows someone who does), he won't know what those screen names are. Therefore, he can't set up his “Buddy List” to track you whenever you are online.

If you know his screen name, you can block him from tracking you through Buddy List, and you can also use keyword “mail controls” to block email from him.

Save any email he sends you. If you receive “instant mail” from him, print it out and save it. All of these things are evidence that he is stalking or harassing you.

If you use a provider other than AOL, consult directly with them about the best way to secure your account.

—SECTION XI—

WHAT ABOUT MY CHILDREN?

Children are in danger in homes with a batterer for many reasons. A lot of assailants hurt the children physically, and some sexually abuse the kids. Your assailant may kidnap your children to try to get you back, or to get revenge on you. Batterers seek custody of children for the same reasons.

Children can be hurt “indirectly”. Your batterer may be trying to shoot you and “accidentally” shoot a child. Or he may push you down the stairs while you are holding the baby, and the baby may be hurt. Children may get hurt trying to protect you or restrain the batterer.

Children in homes where there is violence may start behaving in negative ways, or develop psychological problems. Some children become the perfect kids -- they take care of everything, and became overachievers. Others act out--get involved in gangs, or start having a lot of sex, skip school, drink or use other drugs. Kids may be either very withdrawn or very aggressive. Boys start thinking that it’s okay to use violence in intimate relationships and are in danger of doing it when they are adults.

Some survivors think their children don’t know about the violence, and therefore aren’t going to be hurt by it. Children from violent homes tell us that they almost always know about the violence, even when they weren’t present when it occurred.

Many survivors wonder how their children are doing and what they should say to them about the violence.

We recommend that you talk to your children about the violence and what is going on AND we recommend that you find some other helpful adult to talk to your kids.

Here are some suggestions:

- violence is always wrong, and what dad (or step-dad or boyfriend) is doing is not right;
- the violence is NOT their fault -- nothing they did or didn’t do caused the violence;
- if you’re separated from the assailant, that’s not the kids’ fault;
- the assailant does it because he wants to get his way and he has a problem;
- safety plan with your child -- what to do during the attack; how to keep safe during an assault; how to call 911; where to run for help; what to do during visitation if something goes wrong.

Don’t blame yourself because of what the assailant’s violence has done to your kids. Take inventory of the ways that you’ve protected your children, and build upon that.

Some children from violent homes do extremely well later in life, particularly if there is early intervention to help them sort out what’s happened to them.

International Parental Abduction

Sometimes a batterer will threaten to take the minor children out of the country, or will actually attempt to do so. U.S. citizens must enter and depart the US with a valid US passport, except when traveling to countries within the Western Hemisphere (e.g., Canada, Mexico, and other Central and South American countries). If your children are citizens of the United States, and you are concerned that your partner may take them out of the country, you can participate in the “Children’s Passport Issuance Alert Program” run by the State Department. This program enables the State Department to notify a parent or legal guardian that a passport has been requested for the child(ren). You must submit a written request to the State Department for entry

of a child's name into the program.

To participate in the Children's Passport Issuance Alert Program, you can: (1) call 1-202-736-7000 and request copies of the Request form; or (2) download the Request form from the State Department website at http://travel.state.gov/pia_program.html. Simply fill out the request form and fax it back to the number indicated on the form.

Submitting this request does not necessarily mean that a passport request for your child will be denied. In order for the State Department to deny a passport for your child, you must submit a complete copy of a temporary or permanent court order that states either: (1) that you have sole legal custody; or (2) that you have joint legal custody; or (3) that there are restrictions on the child's travel.

—SECTION XII—

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

If you believe your partner has sexually or physically abused one or more of your children, what do you do?

Believe your child. Children almost never lie about abuse. Tell your child you're glad she or he told you, and that you will try to help them be safe in the future.

Be aware that some institutions may assume that your child is lying or they may assume you are lying to get revenge on your husband, to get child custody, or to win a court battle. Keep a log and write down all incidents and all statements about the abuse.

Get your child some counseling. Call your local domestic violence program for a referral.

Get some support for yourself.

Make a Children's Protective Services (C.P.S.) report. Your local government has a 24-hour number where you can report child abuse and neglect. It is usually under the Family Independence Agency. You can find your county's 24 number on line at <http://www.mfia.state.mi.us/CFSAdmin/cps/numbers.html>. You can also call the police. Give C.P.S. and the police as many concrete details as you can. Understand that they cannot take action based on what your child has told you. They will have to hear it directly from the child.

If your child has been sexually assaulted or abused, he or she should have a medical exam. Ask your local physician for a referral to medical facilities that specialize in child sexual abuse.

—SECTION XIII—

EDUCATION AND COUNSELING FOR ASSAILANTS

All survivors want the violence to stop, but not all want the relationship to end. Ideally, they'd like the relationship without the violence. The hard truth is that almost no assailants stop being violent towards intimate partners. If they do reduce or eliminate their violence, they do so over a long period of time, and with intensive counseling, education and sanctions for continuing the violence (like probation, the threat of jail, or the threat of losing a job).

Many survivors want their batterer to get help, and some want to save him. **Nothing you do**

makes him abuse you; nothing you do can make him stop. He chooses to be violent. He must make the choice to stop and he must stick with that choice no matter what happens.

To stop being violent, batterers must really want to change and must make a long-term commitment. They must take full responsibility for their violence without making excuses or blaming others. The very few batterers who do change were forced to because of serious consequences (jail works the best!). Interventions that do work take one year or longer. It will not happen overnight.

We worry about assailants going to counseling, because one of the reasons some battered women stay in abusive relationships is that they believe their partners will change. If the assailant enters treatment, counseling or a batterers' intervention program, the survivor may stay longer in the relationship in the hope that the violence will end.

A lot of batterers go to counseling one, two or three times. They use the counseling to convince their partner to return to them. Then they drop out of counseling.

They have lots of excuses for dropping out such as: the fee is too high; I'm not like those other men; they want to brainwash me; they blame men for everything; the hours are not reasonable, etc., etc. Some assailants lie and say that they are going to counseling and they are not.

What does NOT work:

Traditional counseling that seeks a solution to violence by looking at and resolving the batterer's personal problems (such as violence in the home where he grew up).

What does NOT work:

Traditional counseling that sees the survivor as having any role in the violence.

What does NOT work:

Marital or couples counseling. In addition to almost never working, this can be dangerous for survivors. Batterers often push for this type of counseling, because they insist that the violence is caused by their partner, or is a mutual problem.

What does NOT work:

Programs that concentrate solely on reducing stress or managing anger.

What does NOT work:

Quick fix programs that are short-term and promise immediate results.

For information about standards that have been developed for batterers intervention programs, you can contact the Batterers Intervention Services Coalition, 4925 Packard Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48108-1521. 734-971-9781 x 329. Email is adainfo@csswashtenaw.org and the url is <http://comnet.org/bisc>.

—SECTION XIV—

ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUGS

Many people believe that alcohol or other drug use causes men to assault their partners. This is not true. Battering and alcoholism or other drug addictions are two separate problems.

More than half of the men that batter who are in counseling at the batterers' program in Washtenaw County also have alcohol and other drug problems. If your assailant has an alcohol or other drug problem (or if he drinks heavily or uses other drugs, especially crack) you are in greater

danger of being more seriously hurt when he is using.

Getting him into treatment for his alcohol or other drug problem will not stop his violence.

What if you are using?

We recommend that you not use alcohol or other drugs during the time that you are trying to get free of an abusive relationship. It may stop you from carrying out your plans and/or from getting the best response from people you need to get help from.

But, what if you are?

A lot of batterers encourage their partners to drink or use drugs, and prevent them from stopping, or getting help to stop. This keeps you easier to control.

Some survivors have been prescribed minor tranquilizers by doctors. Few know that minor tranquilizers are extremely addictive. Used with alcohol they can be fatal. Some women who are being battered use alcohol or other drugs to numb the pain - the physical and emotional pain that they experience in violent relationships.

A lot of women have problems with alcohol or other drugs. Our culture looks down on women who are addicted. But - it's nothing to be ashamed of - it's not your fault. It's a common experience. Addiction/alcoholism is a physical response to the alcohol or other drug. You're not a bad person, or weak, or immoral.

Think about getting some help. You can talk to a domestic violence program counselor about your use. Or you can go directly to an agency that specializes in helping people with alcohol or other drug problems.

You could go to an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting or another self-help group. (Note: Some self-help groups may tell you that you are as sick as your batterer and enmeshed and responsible for his violence. This is not true. Stick to their message about alcohol, and forget their ideas about battering.)

—SECTION XV—

IF YOU ARE A LESBIAN OR GAY MALE SURVIVOR

Physical and sexual violence happens in lesbian and gay relationships. Many of the same things happen that occur in heterosexual battering relationships -- isolation, psychological abuse, sexual violence, physical assaults. If you are a lesbian or a gay man who is being battered by your partner, you will probably have additional special issues when your partner batters you.

The bottom line is--getting help for the violence usually means coming out. Coming out is dangerous. It could mean death, physical violence, loss of family, being thrown out of housing, losing your children to the state or to the batterer, or being fired from your job. Your partner may threaten you with outing if you decide to leave. S/he may use the special concerns and issues of the lesbian and gay community to keep you under control. S/he may tell you that by letting others know about the abuse you're reinforcing the homophobia of the straight culture, and are selling out lesbians and gay men. If this is your first sexual relationship with someone of the same gender, s/he may lie and tell you that all same gender sex involves humiliation, force, or coercion. Lesbians and gay men cannot routinely turn on the television and find portrayals of positive lesbian and gay relationships. This leaves them more vulnerable to partners telling them that "all gay men" do this, or they are not "real lesbians".

You may be afraid to tell your family because this may reinforce their views that you're in a "sick" lifestyle. You may not want your partner to lose her/his job or family by reporting her or him to the police, and therefore revealing her or his orientation. You may not want to expose the lesbian or gay male community to more criticism. You may be new to relationships, and may believe this is just the way they are.

Helping professionals may be homophobic and may not view your relationship as valid or as legitimate as heterosexual intimate relationships. You may encounter a therapist or religious leader or other professional who actually believes that lesbian and gay relationships are really sick or sinful.

If you're a lesbian, you may have trouble identifying that you are being battered because you believed that only men use violence in intimate partnerships. Your partner may tell you that she is not "butch" and you have to be "butch" to batter.

If you're a gay man, you may think that real men don't get beat up, or that you should be able to protect yourself because you're a man. If you practice anal sex, you may be at higher risk for contracting HIV. There also may be more danger if your partner refuses to practice safe sex, rapes you, or causes cuts or abrasions. If you are HIV positive, your partner may threaten to tell people. You may have heard the myth that shelters don't help or accept men, and may not see a domestic violence agency as a potential source for help.

You may be particularly concerned about confidentiality because of how small the lesbian and gay male community is. All information given to any employee or volunteer of your local domestic violence program is confidential. However, you may want to use a different name. You might also want to get counseling or support in a different county.

You may be concerned about encountering homophobia from staff, volunteers or straight survivors.. If you feel that the counselor you're talking to is not as sensitive as you would like, ask to talk to a supervisor. Our experience has been that lesbian and gay male survivors are usually treated sympathetically by heterosexual survivors in our programs. The commonalities of being battered seem to outweigh the differences of your partner being male or female.

You CAN get a personal protection order and you CAN get an anti-stalking civil order. Your partner can be prosecuted for criminal assault.

You may have heard that domestic violence programs don't accept anyone but heterosexuals. Call your local domestic violence program and ask what they have done to be welcoming to lesbians and gay men.

—SECTION XVI—

IF YOU HAVE A PHYSICAL DISABILITY

Assailants may perceive people with physical disabilities as easier to control, and some assailants may choose people with disabilities to batter. Assailants often use the disability as another method of control. You may be being battered by your personal care attendant or you may be dependent on your batterer for personal care. He might withhold food, or might not help you use the bathroom. He might give you too much medicine or might refuse to give you your meds.

Because of environmental barriers (buildings, bathrooms, buses that are not accessible), people with physical disabilities are already isolated. The batterer may be increasing that isolation through such tactics as removing the wheelchair ramp, removing the T.D.D or not helping you get places. If you are unable to drive a car, use a bus, or take a cab, it will be more difficult for you to escape.

There is a myth that caretakers batter people with disabilities because they are frustrated with taking care of them. This is not true. Assailants batter in order to control their partners.

Helping professionals may think that people with disabilities are sexless, and may have trouble perceiving your relationship with your assailant as legitimate.

You may want to get additional assistance if you have a physical disability. We recommend you contact your local Center for Independent Living. If you do not know the center closest to you, contact the Michigan Association Center for Independent Living (MACIL) at 517-333-2435/Voice/Tty for assistance.

Domestic violence programs are working to improve their accessibility to those with physical disabilities. Call your local domestic violence programs for information about their accessibility.

—SECTION XVII—

IF YOU ARE A SURVIVOR AND AN ELDER

Survivors who are older adults may face some additional obstacles or challenges. Most people assume that “elder abuse” only means adult children hurting or exploiting their parents, so if you’re being battered by an older partner it may be ignored. Some may think that “old” men are not physically strong enough to batter or rape, so you couldn’t be being abused.

You may have special concerns about losing your home or income from social security, or health insurance if you were to leave your assailant. Shelters, which tend to be noisy and chaotic, may appear particularly unwelcoming. You might be concerned about losing your independence, or being institutionalized.

If you are in poor health, or experiencing problems with a disability, your assailant may capitalize on them. He may withhold medication necessary for you, or give you too much. If you rely on your assailant for personal care, he might withhold food, or water (see section on disability). If you’re not working outside the home, he might find it easier to isolate you from supportive friends. You may be particularly worried about your assailant’s poor health, or destructive behavior, and wonder what would happen to him if you were to leave.

You may not think of yourself as “battered”, but if you’re being hurt and controlled you probably are. Your local domestic violence program can help you find resources to become safe and to stay independent.

—SECTION XVIII—

IF YOU ARE A WOMAN OF COLOR

Women of color are much less likely to receive help from systems than white women because of racism. Women of color are less likely to be believed. Society still thinks that violence is “normal” in communities of color, and that battered women therefore do not need help.

Professionals may use the excuse “well, battering is acceptable in that culture” to not help women of color.

Your assailant may use your common experiences with racism, and understandable fear of racism, to keep you under control. He may tell you that if you “have him arrested,” he may be beaten or killed by the police. If you know that this is a real possibility, it makes it harder for you to make the decision to call the police.

He may suggest that you are “selling out” to the white man by seeking help from outside your own community. He may ridicule you by saying that you’re going to a bunch of white women for help.

He may tell you that because of racism, you should do what he tells you so that he can feel like a real man.

If you don’t speak English, or if English is not your first language, or you are from another country, you may face more barriers to help.

You may be concerned about encountering racism from staff, volunteers, or white battered women. If you feel that the counselor you are talking to is not as sensitive as you would like, ask to talk to a supervisor.

As in any place in our society, women of color sometimes get treated in a racist way by white women using domestic violence programs. Our experience has been that in general women of color and white women have supported each other when they have been using services, and that the commonalities of being battered seem to outweigh the differences of race.

—SECTION XIX—

IF YOU ARE A SURVIVOR OF DATING VIOLENCE*

For a long time, people didn't realize that domestic violence happened among young people in high school or in college who were dating. They believed – incorrectly -- that domestic violence only occurred among people who are married.

One problem is the term “dating”. High school students today may not describe their relationships with other kids as dating. You may all hang out in a group together, or may never go out on a “date”. But whenever there are romantic, or sexual relationships, there's the possibility that there could be violence or abuse.

Young people face additional obstacles to getting help when they're being abused. If this is the first time you've had a serious boyfriend or girlfriend, the friend may tell you “This is the way it is -- all relationships are like this.” If they are intensively jealous and possessive, they may say--“this is what real love looks like”. You may be confused because he says he can't live without you, and wants to be with you every single moment. He may convince you that it's your fault because you dress in a certain way, or like to dance or flirt. He may threaten to ruin your reputation if you break up with him, and you may be afraid you won't get another boyfriend. You may not want to tell your parents or other adults about the abuse because they don't approve of the relationship. You may have broken rules in seeing your friend, and you don't want to get yourself or him in serious trouble, or be saddled with more rules and restrictions.

Adults may not take your relationship seriously. They may tell you you're too young to know anything about love, or that you are going through a phase. Your boyfriend may have cut off relationships with your friends, and it may be hard to approach them for help. The law doesn't protect survivors of dating violence in the ways it protects those who are married, living together or who have a child in common. For example, police cannot arrest without a warrant in misdemeanor assault cases if the only relationship that exists is a dating relationship.

If you're being hurt and abused in a dating relationship, please call your local domestic violence program. Survivors of dating violence **can** get a personal protection order, and assailants can be prosecuted. You can get an anti-stalking personal protection order, and your assailant could be criminally charged with stalking. ***There IS help available, and healthy, non-violent relationships can happen!***

***We recognize that people other than high school and college students are in dating relationships. This section focuses on the special issues of young people.**

—SECTION XX—

IF YOU ARE ALSO A VICTIM OF SEXUAL ASSAULT

A large percentage of survivors of physical violence are also sexually abused. Sexual abuse can happen in a number of different ways in domestic violence relationships. He might target your genitals or breasts in an assault. Many assailants demand sex after a beating to “make up”. He might force you to do things you don't like sexually, or that physically hurt. He might force you to have sex with others, or to act out what happens in pornography. He might take pictures or videotapes of you, and threaten to use them against you in the future. He might deliberately give you a sexually transmitted disease, force you to end a pregnancy, or prevent you from terminating a pregnancy.

It's sometimes hard for survivors to recognize sexual abuse. Your assailant might tell you that he's your husband and you're supposed to give him what he wants sexually. If you have sex to keep the peace, or to avoid a beating, you may not see that as coerced sex. You may feel too ashamed, soiled, or degraded to talk to someone else about it.

It's always wrong for someone to force another person to have sex, and it's never the fault of the victim.

If you've been raped or sexually abused, you may have some special worries. If this has just happened, please call us at our crisis line and let us help you.

You may not want to bathe or change clothes (if you do, at least save what you were wearing).

Think about getting medical attention. Medical professionals will want to do a standard sexual assault kit. This may involve: getting a saliva sample; cleaning under your fingernails; combing your pubic hair for evidence; taking your underwear; photographing any cuts or bruises; and conducting a pelvic exam. The police may come and take a report from you.

In two or three weeks, you may need a test for pregnancy (if you were raped vaginally by a penis), and tests for sexually transmitted diseases. In six months, you should be tested for HIV.

Many domestic violence programs are part of the same organization as local sexual assault programs. You can get help that is designed for sexual assault survivors there, or your local domestic violence program can make a referral for you.

—SECTION XXI—

IF YOU ARE A BATTERED IMMIGRANT WOMAN

If you are a battered immigrant woman you may have special concerns or issues with which you need help.

First, some people in the United States may think that battering and abuse is "normal" in your culture, and therefore may not make vigorous attempts to stop the violence or help you. In fact, battering abuse occurs in **ALL** cultures and it is ALWAYS wrong.

Second, if you do not speak English, you may have trouble getting help. The National Hotline has a language line and a telecommunications device for the deaf. They will know which local programs also have these resources.

If your immigration status depends on your husband who is abusive, you will need special assistance. Don't believe anything your abuser says about the INS or laws in the United States. Assailants often lie, and particularly in this arena (because it's so confusing). Assailants can and will use threats of deportation to keep you under control.

As part of the 1994 Violence Against Women Act, Congress allowed abused women who are married to a U.S. citizen or lawful permanent resident to file their own application for lawful permanent residency. Abused women are not supposed to be forced to obtain permission or help from the abuser. This process is called self-petitioning. Congress also allowed immigration judges the discretion to waive the deportation of abused women who have been married to U.S. citizens or lawful permanent residents, a process called VAWA cancellation.

As you may already know, immigration issues are tricky to navigate.

You will need to find an immigration attorney who knows about domestic violence. Your local domestic violence program will help you find one. We recommend that you ask your attorney to consult with one of the following national organizations.

Ayuda

1736 Columbia Road, N.W.

Washington, D.C. 20009

(202) 387-4848

FAX (202) 387-0324

E-mail: clayuda@erols.com (domestic violence)

National Immigration Project of the National Lawyers Guild

14 Beacon Street, Suite 602

Boston, MA 02108
617-227-9727
617-227-5495

Email: Nip@nlg.org

Web: <http://www.nlg.org/nip>

Then click on domestic violence. The web site has newly updated sections. One includes an Application for Immigrant Status Under the Violence Against Woman act.

--Affirmation—

I celebrate my courage in coming here.
I was alone, but now I am not alone.
I was victimized but I am no longer a victim.
I name the violence in my life — and declare it wrong.
I name that I need help, and that I am willing to give help.
Nothing I do provokes the violence.
Nothing about me causes the violence.
Nothing gives one person the right to abuse another person.
My abuser can change himself; I cannot change him.
Nothing I can do will change my past.
Everything I do changes my future.
I have protected myself and my children.
Resistance to violence, defending myself OR my children is not abuse.
I believe myself; I believe my sisters.
I can ask support; I can give support.
I can change myself; I can change the world.
My being here helps others.
I am not here to judge my sisters, but to support their healing.
I will take the risk to trust other women here.
I affirm the privacy and confidentiality of
every woman in this group.
Every time a sister resists, she creates a
space for resistance around her.
I am here in solidarity with my sisters of all persuasions,
all colors, all orientations, and all faiths to say NO to violence.
We will not be divided by our diversity
— we will be strengthened by it.
In the words of Alice Walker “I am the woman
offering two flowers whose roots are twin.
Justice and Hope. Let us begin.”

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Vickie Frederick-Toure and Susan McGee.

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