

## What is Domestic Violence?

Domestic Violence is a pattern of abusive behaviors used by one individual intended to exert power and control over another individual in the context of an intimate relationship. Domestic Violence may appear in many forms.

### *Physical*

Consists of behaviors which may include pushing, pinching, spitting, pulling hair, kicking, choking, burning, stabbing, shooting, etc. While physical abuse may be the easiest to identify, these signs often indicate a long history of abuse.

### *Sexual*

Includes a wide range of behaviors, done without consent, including sexual harassment, unwanted touching, sexual assault, and forced intercourse.

### *Emotional/Verbal*

Often the hardest to identify, threats to harm you or others is used as a way of controlling. Self-esteem is eroded through name calling, put downs, humiliation, and embarrassments in front of friends or alone.

### *Destruction of Property/Pets*

Includes destroying favorite objects such as pictures or collectibles, and torturing or killing pets. This behavior involves no contact with the victim - but it is used to intimidate.

## What is Safety Planning?

It is a plan of action designed to keep you safe or decrease the chance of serious injury to you and/or your children during a violent incident.

To get started, first think about...

*Where and When you might be in danger.*

- ◆ Are you living with an abuser?
- ◆ Do you work at the same place?
- ◆ Do you have children with this person?
- ◆ Do you have the same friends or visit the same family members?
- ◆ Do you shop in the same places, bank at the same branch?
- ◆ Will you be going to court at the same time?
- ◆ Are there other times or places when you might not be safe?

*What you can do to be safe...*

- ◆ Stay calm
- ◆ Stay out of the bathroom and kitchen
- ◆ Develop signs with neighbors to call 911 for you
- ◆ Be aware of escape routes in your home
- ◆ Talk to your kids about what they can do to be safe
- ◆ Change your routine
- ◆ Make a list of safe people and safe places
- ◆ Make copies of car keys, house keys, and important documents for safe keeping

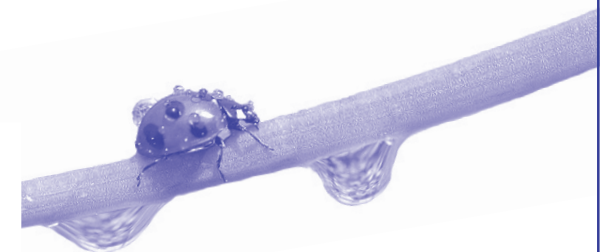
Contact The Laurel Center. Staff can assist you with making your own personalized safety plan.

## What is an advocate?

An advocate is someone who is there for you. An advocate provides support, information, options, assistance, and answers questions. An advocate can be a voice for you and help you to become your own advocate.

*Advocacy Services Include:*

- ◆ Education about Domestic Violence
- ◆ Information about local resources
- ◆ Help with creating a safety plan
- ◆ Referrals to local agencies
- ◆ Information about the court process
- ◆ Accompaniment to court
- ◆ Protective Order information and assistance
- ◆ Help with restoring normalcy to your life



**Courage.**

## Effects of Domestic Violence on Children

- ◆ Low self esteem
- ◆ Acting out
- ◆ Withdrawing from others
- ◆ Using violence towards others
- ◆ Problems at school
- ◆ Depression/sadness
- ◆ Changes in appetite and sleeping patterns
- ◆ Anxiety related health problems
- ◆ Nightmares
- ◆ Insecurity
- ◆ Self-blame

*For more information on this topic, contact the Children's Advocate at The Laurel Center.*



*You are not alone.  
There is help available.*

For more information, contact:

**The Laurel Center**  
**Hotline: 540-667-6466**  
**Office: 540-667-6160**

or

Virginia Family Violence  
& Sexual Assault Hotline  
1-800-838-8238 (V/TTY)

[www.thelaurelcenter.org](http://www.thelaurelcenter.org)



THE  
*Laurel*  
CENTER  
*Intervention for Domestic and Sexual Violence*  
*formerly The Shelter for Abused Women*

## Domestic Violence

P.O. Box 14  
Winchester, VA 22604  
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540-667-0138 Fax  
TTY Available

