

What Is the *BE SAFE* Program?

BE SAFE Advocates & Social Workers are *confidential* advocates located within Buffalo City Court, Erie County Court-DV Part, and the Family Justice Center. Whether you have a criminal case or simply want to discuss your options and learn about domestic violence, BE SAFE Advocates provide many services:

Advocates are available to provide specialized, CONFIDENTIAL services such as:

- Helping you plan for your safety.
- Supportive counseling to discuss your options and assess your needs.
- Attend criminal court with you and/or assists in filing criminal charges/obtaining an order of protection.
- Communicate your wishes about a criminal case to the Assistant District Attorneys with your permission.
- Advocacy—by providing referrals/linkage to other services such as housing, shelter, long-term counseling.
- Assistance with NYS Crime Victim's Board applications for financial reimbursement.

What is Domestic Violence?

Domestic Violence is a pattern of controlling behavior that may include:

- Physical abuse
- Emotional/Psychological abuse
- Verbal abuse/name-calling
- Economic/Financial abuse
- Sexual abuse

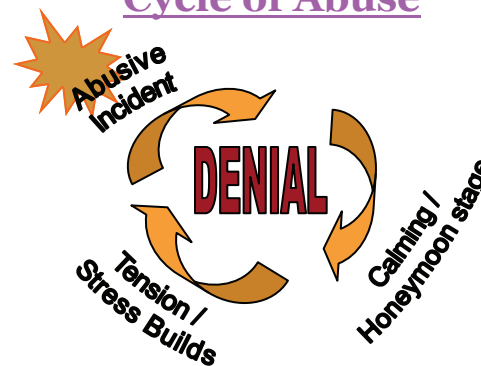
This abuse can be perpetrated by one person to gain and maintain power and control over another within a family, or intimate relationship.

Domestic Abuse can happen to ANYONE, regardless of age, race, gender, education level, or economic status.

Very few people become involved in a relationship they knew to be violent. What starts as courtship and love, may turn into jealousy and paranoia. People may stay due to:

- √ Fear
- √ Love
- √ Believing their partner/family member will change.
- √ Wanting to keep the family together for the sake of the children.
- √ Lack of financial resources.
- √ Fear of loneliness, the unknown.
- √ Cultural/religious beliefs.
- √ Pressure from family/friends to stay.
- √ Isolation/limited friends & support.
- √ Threats made against leaving.
- √ Shame & embarrassment.
- √ Blaming the abuse on other factors (alcohol/drugs, stress, finances)

Cycle of Abuse



Many times we don't realize we're in an abusive relationship because it doesn't happen frequently. Usually an incident occurs & there is a *Calming Stage* when your partner may apologize and promise to never hurt you again. But *stress and tension* build up over time leading to another *abusive incident* (which is not always physical). This cycle takes years to break & is difficult to recognize while in the relationship.

CHILDREN AND DV

- ◆ Children watch and learn from their parents and their environment.
- ◆ Children may get hurt attempting to intervene in a dispute or while protecting a parent.
- ◆ Children may believe the abuse is their fault, and can feel shame, anger & guilt.
- ◆ Children can experience health-related, developmental, behavioral, and learning problems as a result of witnessing abuse in the home.
- ◆ Ask about counseling for your child.

Am I At Risk?

YES! If your partner/family member:

- Checks your phone, email & mail without permission.
- Is controlling, possessive & jealous, often accusing you of untrue things.
- Is verbally & emotionally abusive— using name-calling & put-downs.
- Doesn't take responsibility for his/her actions.
- Won't accept the relationship is over.
- Blames others for his/her problems & mistakes.
- Stalks, follows you, texts/calls repeatedly and violates the order of protection.
- Attempts to isolate you from friends/family.
- You feel like you're "walking on eggshells". Nothing is ever good enough.
- Threatens you verbally or physically if things don't go his/her way.
- Uses the children, and/or visitation to harass you.
- Physically hurts you: pushes, slaps, chokes, punches, holds you against your will, grabs your hair, uses weapons against you, or makes threats to do so.
- Destroys your property.
- Attempts to control your money, spending, ability to work.
- Pushes you to have sex when you don't want to.

SAFETY PLANNING

- Be aware of signs that your partner's abuse may be escalating.
- Keep a list of trustworthy contacts to call in an emergency. Write them down in a safe place in case your phone breaks.
- Call 911 if you feel threatened in any way.
- Call the 24 hour Erie County DV hotline at 862-HELP (4357).
- Call HAVEN HOUSE for safe shelter (24 hours) at 884-6000.
- Change/add locks to your home.
- Plan escape routes if an argument occurs-avoiding bathrooms (no exits) & kitchens (weapons).
- Teach family/friends a code word or sign to use in case of emergency.
- Change your daily routine.
- Have 911 on speed dial. Consider hiding a prepaid cell phone in a safe place.
- Change your phone number or screen calls.
- Avoid being alone. Have someone stay with you temporarily or stay with someone.
- Make extra copies of car and house keys-hide them in a safe, accessible place.
- Establish a separate bank account or set aside money that your partner won't have access to.
- If your partner knows your SS#, consider having accounts for utilities, banks accounts and insurance, password protected so only you have access.
- Keep a small bag packed/hidden with emergency items if you need to leave in a hurry:

-ID, SS cards, Birth certificates, medicine, money,

Debit/Credit cards, keys, court papers.

SAFETY PLAN continued...

- If you have an Order of Protection, make copies to give to schools, employers, family, friends, neighbors, landlord, daycare, local police precinct, and keep one on you at all times.
- Be aware of how phones, computer, email, and your driving via GPS can be monitored. Use a safe computer, not shared by your abuser.
- Adjust privacy settings on social media, smartphones. Change passwords and pin numbers frequently.
- When filing police reports/court papers, keep your contact information confidential.
- Get a private PO Box and look into participating in the NYS Address Confidentiality Program (ACP).
- If your abuser is in jail, sign up with the VINE Program to get notified of his/her possible release.
- Use a new or safe donated cell phone, and avoid a shared plan that reveals your phone log.
- Ask businesses you deal with about how information is shared & how it can be protected. Many governments & courts are putting information on the web.
- Search yourself on Google or other search engines using quotes: "Full name". See what info is listed & ask how to get it removed.
- Know that leaving an abusive relationship can be dangerous and have a plan in place.
- Document incidents of verbal & physical abuse, threats, stalking, and take photos, in case you decide to file charges or go to Family Court later. Document texts, emails, voicemails and violations of the Order of Protection.
- Teach children how to call 911.
- Talk with a DV Advocate about your options.
- TRUST YOUR JUDGEMENT. Sometimes it is right to leave, and other times you may feel you can calm your partner down.

Important Numbers

24-Hour Domestic Violence Hotline response for Erie County-

862-HELP(4357)
(shelter) 884-6000

Haven House	884-6000
Crisis Services	834-3131
Hispanics United of Buffalo	856-7110
Family Justice Center	558-7233
International Institute of Buffalo	883-1900
Child Advocacy Center	886-5437
Holding Center- Inmate Release Information	858-2174
Family Court Advocacy	845-2751
IDV Court Advocacy	845-9384
Neighborhood Legal Services	847-0650
Erie Co. Probation	858-8200
Child Abuse Hotline	1-800-342-3720
VINE NY	1-888-846-3469
-to register for victim notification regarding offenders in the NY State prison system.	www.vinelink.com

BE-SAFE

Domestic Violence Program



*Buffalo and Erie County Stopping Abuse
in the Family Environment*

(716) 858-4630

*Call our Social Workers & Advocates for
help.*

YOU ARE NOT ALONE!

**Located at: Buffalo City Court
4th floor – Domestic Violence Bureau
50 Delaware Avenue Buffalo, NY
14202**

Monday-Friday 8:30am-5:00pm