



October is National Domestic Violence Awareness Month

What is Domestic Violence?

Domestic violence is a pattern of physically, sexually, and/or emotionally abusive behaviors used by one individual to assert power or maintain control over another in the context of an intimate or family relationship.

THE REALITIES OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Did you know?

- In the United States, about 1 in 5 women and 1 in 7 men report having experienced severe physical violence from an intimate partner in their lifetime. Additionally, over 43 million women and 38 million men experienced psychological aggression by an intimate partner in their lifetimes.¹
- In 2019, 68,669 calls were answered by domestic and sexual violence hotlines across Virginia.²
- In Virginia in 2019, 6,618 adults and children received a total of 228,703 nights of emergency shelter due to domestic violence.³
- In 2018, 55,576 emergency protective orders were issued by magistrates and judges across the Commonwealth to protect the immediate health and safety of domestic violence victims and their family members.⁴
- In Virginia, intimate partners committed 32% of all aggravated assaults with known victim to offender relationships.⁵

If you or someone you know is a victim of domestic violence, please contact the
Virginia Family Violence & Sexual Assault Hotline
1-800-838-8238 (24-hours/day, toll-free)

For additional domestic violence-related information and resources, please visit the
Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Action Alliance website at www.vsdvalliance.org

You may also contact the toll-free
Virginia Victim Assist Helpline at 1-855-4-HELP (855-443-5782)

Callers will be informed of their rights as victims under the Virginia Crime Victim and Witness Rights Act and will receive additional information, support, and referrals to programs and resources in their communities.

For additional information, visit the
Virginia Victim Assistance Network website at <http://vanetwork.org/victim-assist-helpline/>

Please wear a purple ribbon during the month of October to show your commitment to stop violence in our communities and across the nation.

¹ Centers for Disease Control, Preventing Intimate Partner Violence, 2019

² Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Action Alliance, Domestic Violence Services in Virginia – 2019 VA data Report

³ Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Action Alliance, Domestic Violence Services in Virginia – 2019 VA data Report

⁴ 2019 Annual Report, Domestic and Sexual Violence in Virginia, Office of the Attorney General

⁵ 2019 Crime in Virginia, Virginia State Police



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SAFETY COMES FIRST!

It is important to have a safety plan in place.

In order to enhance the victims' safety as many of the following should be done:

- ◆ Plan for a quick escape. Know where to go and how to get there, any time of the day or night. Think this through now, before an attack. Consider going to a domestic violence shelter or the home of a family member or friend. If that is not possible, try a public place such as a library, hospital, shopping center, police or fire station. Know where each is located.
- ◆ If you believe you are about to be assaulted, stay out of rooms where there are weapons such as guns or knives. Do not attempt to threaten the abuser with a weapon, as it may put you in an even more dangerous situation.
- ◆ Keep telephone numbers of family, friends, doctors, safe shelter, etc. in a safe place or where it is easily accessible and make sure your abuser does not have access to this information.

- ◆ Gather important documents such as:



- birth certificates
- passports
- prescriptions
- social security numbers
- copies of any protective orders
- records of the abuser's prior convictions (if any)
- marriage license
- insurance information
- children's school records
- immunization (shot) records
- medical records
- information about bank accounts
- any other information you feel is necessary

- ◆ Consider giving these important documents to a trusted friend or neighbor to keep for you so the abuser does not try to take or destroy them.
- ◆ Put aside emergency money.
- ◆ Hide an extra set of car keys.
- ◆ Keep an extra set of clothes and shoes for you and your children with a trusted friend or neighbor.
- ◆ Take a special toy for your child(ren).
- ◆ Let the people that you trust know about your situation and the violence you are experiencing.
- ◆ Trust yourself and your decisions. You are the one who can best determine how to stay safe.

WARNING: Abusers try to control their victims' lives. When abusers feel a loss of control—like when victims try to leave them—the abuse often gets worse. Take special care if you leave.

Continue to be careful, even after you have left. If you are in danger please call 911 immediately!