



Information Handbook

A REQUEST FROM YOUR LOCAL POLICE OFFICERS

Every 15 seconds in the United States, an individual is hurt by someone who says s/he loves them. This statistic is stunning, yet, it is important to understand that it is difficult and dangerous to leave a controlling, abusive relationship.

To provide more effective help, local police departments developed Domestic Violence Services Network, Inc. (DVSNI), a non-profit, confidential service agency that provides outreach, crisis intervention, resources, and support to members in our communities and surrounding areas. Together we are here to help you.

You do not deserve to be hurt or controlled; no one does. Abusive behavior is a choice made by the perpetrator.

Please take a few moments to read through this packet. Even if you feel you are not in a controlling or abusive relationship, you may learn something that could help a family member, friend, or neighbor.

If you have any questions or comments, please contact DVSNI at our toll free, confidential number **888-399-6111**.

<p>If you or someone you know are in immediate danger, CALL 9-1-1. A police officer will be able to assist you.</p>
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You are not alone. We are here to help.

Together we will work to make our communities safer.

WHY READ ON?

Have you or someone you know ever experienced the following behaviors by someone who says they care about you?

- **Name-calling, insults, or humiliating put downs**
- **Isolation from family or friends**
- **Withholding of money or closely monitoring spending**
- **Actual or threatened physical harm**
- **Painful or forced sex**

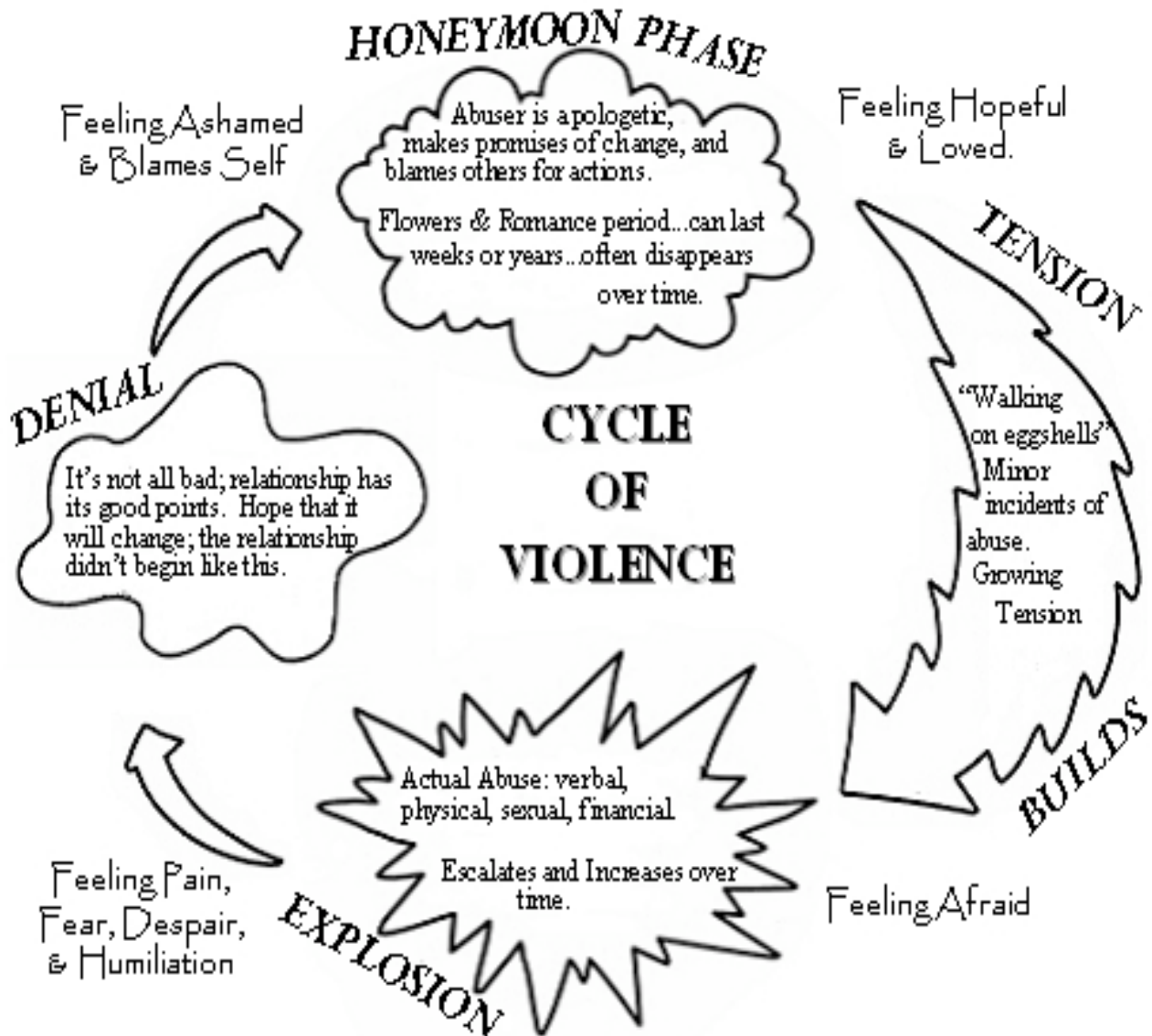
These are examples of controlling behavior.

Abuse takes many forms and can occur once in a while or more frequently (see cycle of violence). Although each situation is unique, there are common warning signs—or red flags—to look for including:

- **Destructive criticism/verbal attacks**
 - Name calling; mocking, blaming, making humiliating remarks
- **Pressure tactics**
 - “Guilt-tripping”; threats, manipulating the children or other family members, manipulating finances
- **Minimizing, denying, & blaming the person being controlled**
 - Making light of behavior and not taking your concerns about it seriously; saying the abuse didn’t happen or that you caused it to happen; telling you the abusive behavior is your fault
- **Isolation**
 - Preventing or making it difficult for you to see friends or relatives; monitoring phone calls; telling you where you can and cannot go
- **Intense jealousy** and/or possessiveness
- **Telling you no-one else would want you** and that you’ll never be allowed to leave the relationship
- **Threats to kill you or him/herself** if the relationship should end

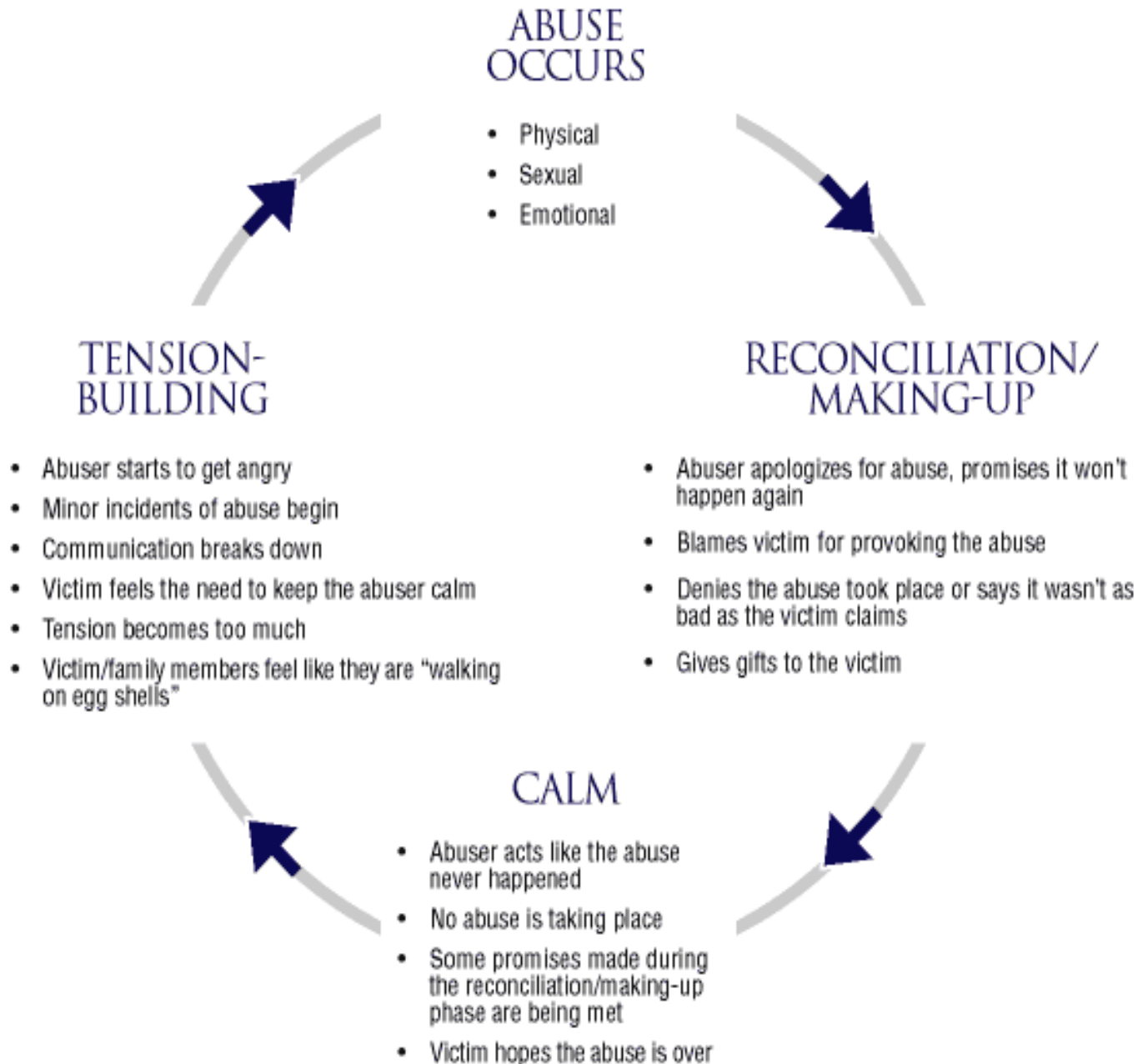
CYCLE OF VIOLENCE

The "Cycle of Violence" is a pattern of behaviors that trap a victim in a tightening spiral of power and control.



The graphic above illustrates the emotional turmoil within a controlling relationship.

The key elements of the Cycle are clearly depicted below.



POWER AND CONTROL WHEEL

Most individuals who hurt their partners and/or family members do not do it out of anger; they do it out of a desire to control. The following wheel is used by many advocates to help identify controlling behaviors. Are any of these familiar to you?



TACTICS USED BY CONTROLLING INDIVIDUALS

Emotionally Abusive

Humiliates, ridicules, name calls, mocks
Degrades, withholds affection
Uses silence or profanity
Tells partner no one else would want him/her and s/he will never be allowed to leave the relationship
Acts loving and apologetic after verbal or physical abuse
Begs for forgiveness and promises to change (but never does)

Uses Family Members

Misleads family about extent and nature of partner's illnesses/conditions/mental stability
Excludes or denies partner access to family; forces family to keep secrets
Manipulates children to be abusive to partner

Isolates

Controls what partner does, who partner sees, and where partner goes
Denies access to phone or mail

Ridicules Values/Spirituality

Denies access to worship and/or clergy
Ignores or ridicules religious/cultural values
Uses religion/scriptures to rationalize abuse

Abuses/Neglects Dependencies and Medical Needs

Takes away partner's walker, wheelchair, glasses, medications, etc.
Does not report medical conditions and/or makes partner miss medical appointments

Exploits Financially

Steals money, property titles, possessions
Takes control of finances without permission
Abuses power of attorney

TACTICS USED BY CONTROLLING INDIVIDUALS (CON'T)

Uses Privilege

- Treats partner like a servant
- Makes all major decisions

Threatens/Intimidates

- Displays intense jealousy or possessiveness
- Becomes easily enraged
- Threatens to leave or institutionalize partner
- Destroys partner's property
- Threatens/hurts children or pets or other family members or friends
- Threatens to kill partner or him/herself if the relationship should end

Physically Abuses

- Slaps, punches, pinches, bites, kicks, hits walls, throws things, etc.
- Is rough with physical body parts during care giving
- Strangles partner

Sexually Abuses

- Is rough with intimate body parts during sex
- Makes demeaning remarks about intimate body parts
- Refuses affection or sexual intimacy as punishment
- Forces sexual intimacy or uncomfortable sexual behavior

Minimizes, Denies, and Blames the Person Being Controlled

- Makes light of abusive behavior
- Does not take partner's concerns about it seriously
- Denies abuse happened
- Says it was the partner's behavior that caused the abuse

SAFETY PLANNING

Whether you decide to stay in or leave your relationship, it is important to think through ways to keep yourself and your children safe. Although you may feel that this was a single and uncommon incident, it is still important to think about a safety plan. DVSN advocates are available to help you develop your safety plan.

Safety Planning if you decide to stay:

- Visualize your house and identify “safe places” where you can go: rooms that have two exits, rooms without hard surfaces or knives/weapons, and rooms with phones.
- In a secure place, secretly put money aside, so, if you need it, you will have access to it.
- Create a “necessity bag” in case you need to leave quickly, you will have essentials already packed. You can keep this bag at work or at a friend’s.
- Hide important documents (or make copies) such as passports, bank statements, birth certificates, etc.
- Keep a log—events that may seem “random” could uncover a pattern when documented. This information may also prove useful if needed in the future.
- Keep this booklet, other helpful resource information, and the log in a safe place away from your partner.
- Tell people who care about you what’s happening. The more eyes looking out for you, the better!
- Work out a signal system with a neighbor or friend. Make sure the neighbor/friend knows the signal and what to do.
- Have extra keys to your house and car; keep a list of telephone numbers to call in case of an emergency.
- If you fear for your safety, apply for an Order of Protection (a restraining order) at your local District Court.
- Keep emergency 911 cell phones accessible but hidden in your house. Call DVSN or your local police dept. for these phones.
- Join a support group. You are not alone!

SAFETY PLANNING (CON'T)

Safety Planning if you want to leave the relationship:

- Review all of the suggestions on the previous page, plus...
- Change the locks.
- Arrange for a safe place to stay.
- Keep money at work or with family or friends.
- Open your own, personal savings account; send bank statements to a P.O. Box or to family or friends.
- If you fear for your safety, apply for a restraining order.
- Plan to take the following with you:
 - Cash, checkbooks, credit cards, ATM cards, mortgage payment book, car title
 - Birth certificates - yours and family's
 - Marriage and driver's licenses; car registration
 - Social Security card, work permit, green card, passport, visa
 - Insurance papers and medical records
 - Employment records
 - Divorce, custody papers, and restraining order
 - Lease, rental agreement, and/or house deed
 - School and health records
 - Keys: house, car, office, friend's
 - Medications, glasses, hearing aids, etc. needed by you and your family
 - Personal items - address book, photographs, jewelry, toys; comfort/familiar items for children
- Inform your children's schools and childcare of the situation-- especially if you have a restraining order.
- Let someone at your place of work know what is going on. Tell your employer if you have a restraining order.
- Obtain legal advice from a lawyer who understands the dynamics of domestic violence to discuss options involving divorce, custody, restraining orders, etc.
- DO NOT tell your abuser that you are leaving.
- Slip away when the abuser is at work, or have several plausible reasons for leaving at different times of the day or night.

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

You have the right to appear at the Superior, Probate and Family, District or Boston Municipal Court, if you reside within the appropriate jurisdiction, and file a complaint requesting any of the following orders:

- An order restraining your attacker from abusing you;
- An order directing your attacker to leave the household, building or workplace;
- An order awarding you custody of a minor child in your custody, if the attacker has a legal obligation of support; and
- An order directing your attacker to pay you for losses suffered as a result of abuse, including medical and moving expenses, loss of earnings or support, cost for restoring utilities and replacing locks, reasonable attorney's fees and other out-of-pocket losses for injuries and property damage sustained.

For an emergency on weekends, holidays or weeknights, the police will refer you to a justice of the Superior, Probate and Family, District or Boston Municipal Court Department.

You have the right to go to the appropriate District Court or Boston Municipal Court to seek a criminal complaint for threats, assault and battery, assault with a deadly weapon, assault with intent to kill or other related offenses.

If you are in need of medical treatment, you have the right to request that an officer present drive you to the nearest hospital or otherwise assist you in obtaining medical treatment.

If you believe that police protection is needed for your physical safety, you have the right to request that the officer present remain with you at the scene until you and your children can leave or until your safety is otherwise ensured. You may also request that the officer assist you in locating and taking you to a safe place, including, but not limited to a designated meeting place for a shelter or family member's or friend's residence or a similar place of safety.

You may request a copy of the police incident report at no cost from the police department.

LEGAL OPTIONS

Restraining Orders (209A Abuse Prevention Orders)

If you do not feel safe, you may apply for a restraining order at District Court (or through the local police if the Court is closed) to help protect yourself and your family from:

- **Spouse (current or former) or parent of your child**
- **Children (either by blood or by marriage)**
- **Parents or family members by blood or marriage**
- **Roommates (including live-in caregivers)**
- **Current or former dating partner**

Legal Criteria to Obtain a 209A Abuse Prevention Order

- **Suffered physical harm**
- **Suffered threats of physical harm; physical harm was attempted**
- **Placed in fear of imminent, serious physical harm**
- **Caused to engage in sexual relations by force, threat of force, or duress**

The defendant must surrender firearms and have firearms license suspended.

Restraining orders may be customized to include (but are not limited to):

- An order not to commit further abuse
- A “no contact”
- A stay-away order (from home, work, and/or school)
- A vacate order to leave a shared residence
- No contact with minor-aged children
- Stay away from minor-aged children
- Stay away from minor-aged children’s school or daycare
- An order directing your attacker to pay you for losses suffered as a result of the abuse, including medical and moving expenses, cost for restoring utilities and replacing locks, and other out-of-pocket losses for injuries and property damage sustained.

**VIOLATION OF A 209A ABUSE PREVENTION ORDER
IS A CRIMINAL OFFENSE!!**

Always keep a copy of your order with you.

If you have suffered criminal harassment, stalking, or sexual assault but do not meet the relationship criteria for a 209A Abuse Prevention Order, you may qualify for a Harassment Prevention Order - 258E.

Harassment under the law is defined as:

1. Three or more acts of willful and malicious conduct aimed at a specific person committed with the intent to cause fear, intimidation, abuse or damage to property and that does in fact cause fear, intimidation, abuse, or damage to property, or
2. An act that a.) by force, threat, or duress causes another to involuntarily engage in sexual relations or b.) constitutes a violation of several specific criminal statutes (indecent assault and battery on a child under 14, on a mentally-disabled person, or on a person 14 years or older; rape; rape of a child; assault with intent to commit rape; enticement of a child; criminal stalking; criminal harassment; drugging persons for sexual intercourse)

A 258E Harassment Prevention Order may include:

- Prevention: stop the abuse and/or harassment
- No Contact
- Stay away from home and/or workplace
- Monetary compensation for any losses suffered as a result of the abuse and/or harassment (loss of earnings, cost of replacement locks, etc.)

**VIOLATION OF A 258E HARASSMENT PREVENTION ORDER
IS A CRIMINAL OFFENSE!!**

DVSN's **COURT SUPPORT PROGRAM (CSP)** is available to provide information, support, and accompaniment during the restraining order process.

**Call 781-275-6111 or toll-free at 888-399-6111
for more information**

If you would like to obtain free, confidential advice from an attorney, you may qualify to meet with an attorney from Metro West Legal Services (MWLS). To see if you are eligible, call 508-620-1830 or visit their website www.mwlegal.org

NEXT STEPS

If you think that you might have a controlling partner, family member, roommate, or caregiver, **you are not alone. Help is available.**

To speak with someone about your concerns, call the **Domestic Violence Services Network, Inc. (DVSNI)** toll-free **Help Line at 888-399-6111**. DVSNI provides **confidential** outreach, crisis intervention, safety planning and resources to victims of domestic violence and/or controlling behavior. We are here to support you in any way we can.

If you fear for your safety and are afraid of being hurt, please call 9-1-1 for police assistance.



WHO WE ARE

Domestic Violence Services Network, Inc. (DVSNI) originated as the **Domestic Violence Victim Assistance Program (DVVAP)** in 1998, as a non-profit, community-based organization, founded by the Concord Police Department.

DVSNI, in partnership with the police departments in its ten collaborating towns (Acton, Bedford, Boxborough, Carlisle, Concord, Lexington, Lincoln, Maynard, Stow, and Wayland), the Family Advocacy Program on Hanscom Air Force Base, and the Concord District Court, **provides outreach and direct support to victims of domestic abuse from over 125 communities.**

DVSNI is a volunteer-driven organization. **DVSNI** Advocates are community members who have been thoroughly screened and trained to become **confidential**, MA certified, Domestic Violence Advocates.

WHAT DVSNI OFFERS

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIM ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (DVVAP):

DVVAP Advocates are carefully trained to support clients in identifying their own pace for change and finding appropriate interventions that meet the needs of their specific situation and level of risk. Our main objectives for this outreach are to encourage clients to tell their story, assess their risk, develop a safety plan that keeps them and their children as safe as possible, and connect with appropriate community resources for help.

COURT SUPPORT PROGRAM (CSP):

Court Advocates help clients while at court, answer clients' questions about procedures and court personnel, decipher unfamiliar and seemingly mystifying behaviors, and offer non-judgmental support and encouragement. Risk assessment, safety planning, and referrals to viable, effective, and appropriate resources are crucial to the health and well being of our clients and their families during this period of heightened risk.

WHAT DVSN OFFERS (CON'T)

EDUCATION & OUTREACH PROGRAMS:

DVSN raises awareness about domestic violence in our communities through violence prevention education and outreach activities--presenting "DV 101" to over 50 organizations, agencies, and municipal departments. In addition, **DVSN** organizes an annual Candlelight Vigil and numerous community events in partnership with sister organizations. **The Network for Women's Lives**, established in 1992, joined DVSN in 2008. Several of their projects, including a Clergy Symposium, Rachel's Boxes of information in more than 60 locations, and a Support Group for Women with Controlling Partners are fully integrated and supported as part of **DVSN's** outreach and education efforts.

HOW TO CONTACT US & OUR PARTNERS

For an **EMERGENCY** call 9-1-1

DVSN's Helpline (toll free)	888-399-6111
Acton Police Department	978-264-9638
Bedford Police Department	781-275-1212
Boxborough Police Department	978-263-2628
Carlisle Police Department	978-369-1155
Concord Police Department	978-318-3400
Lexington Police Department	781-862-1212
Lincoln Police Department	781-259-8111
Maynard Police Department	978-897-1011
Stow Police Department	978-897-4545
Wayland Police Department	508-358-4721
Hanscom Family Advocacy Program	781-377-4791
Concord District Court	781-897-8775
Ayer District Court	781-897-8750
Framingham District Court	781-897-8800
Suzanne Kontz, <small>Chief of Middlesex County DV Unit</small>	781-897-8460
Emerson Hospital	978-369-1400

SUGGESTIONS FOR FRIENDS & FAMILY

Even if you feel that this was an isolated incident or that the police should not have been involved, it is still an opportunity to help others. One (1) in 3 women will be hurt in her lifetime by someone who says that they love her. *(The majority of domestic violence is perpetrated against women. It is important to emphasize, however, that violence occurs to men as well, and is equally unacceptable.)*

Therefore, there is a good chance that you may have the opportunity to help a family member or friend in the future. If you suspect that someone is being hurt, don't be afraid to offer help—you may save a life. Here are some basic steps you can take to assist someone who may be a target of controlling behaviors:

Approach her/him in an understanding, non-blaming way. Tell her/him that s/he is not alone, that there are many individuals like her/him in the same kind of situation, and that it takes strength to survive and trust someone enough to talk about being abused.

Acknowledge that it is scary and difficult to talk about controlling behavior. Tell her/him that s/he does not deserve to be threatened, physically hurt, or controlled. Nothing s/he does or says makes emotional abuse, physical violence, or control okay.

Support her/him as a friend. Be a good listener. Allow her/him to make his/her own decisions, even if it means s/he does not want to leave the relationship or do what you think should be done.

Share information. Show her/him this packet.

Ask if s/he has suffered physical harm. Go with her/him to the hospital to check for injuries. Help her/him report the assault to the police, if s/he chooses to do so.

Provide information on help available (see resources at end of this booklet).

Inform her/him about legal protection and restraining orders and have him/her call the **DVSN toll free Help Line @ 888-399-6111**.

Plan for safety when leaving a controlling relationship or for staying in one. (See **Safety Planning** section above for some ideas.) Never encourage someone to follow a safety plan that s/he believes will put her/him at further risk.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Service Agencies with Specific Language Capabilities

Asian Task Force Against Domestic Violence	617-338-2355
Casa Myrna Vasquez (Spanish)	800-992-2600 (toll free)
Jewish Family & Children Services—Journey to Safety (Russian)	781-647-JFCS (5327)
Massachusetts Alliance Portuguese Speakers (MAPS)	978-970-1250
Safelink (Language line for ALL languages)	877-785-2020 (toll free)
Saheli (South Asian languages)	866-4SAHELI (472-4354)

AA Lowell	978-957-4690
AA MA http://www.aaemassd21.org	617-426-9444
Acton Community Resources Coordinator	978-929-6651
Bedford Youth and Family Services	781-275-7727
Boston Area Rape Crisis Center (BARCC)	800-841-8371 (toll free)
Carol Lambert (Support Group for Women)	978-369-0259
Concord & Carlisle Community Resources Coordinator	978-318-3034
DCF Arlington (formerly DSS)	781-641-8500
DCF Framingham (formerly DSS)	800-792-5200 (toll free)
Center for Hope & Healing Rape Crisis Services--Greater Lowell	800-542-5212 (toll free)
Child At Risk Hotline (Judge Baker Children's Center)	617-232-4882
Children's Charter	781-894-4307
Department of Transitional Assistance	617-629-1400
Disabled Persons Abuse/Neglect Hotline	800-426-9009 (toll free)
Elder Abuse Hotline	800-922-2275 (toll free)
Eliot Community Health Services (Metrowest)	978-369-1113
Emerge Abuser Education Program	617-547-9879
Gay Men's DV Project (Boston)	800-832-1901 (toll free)
Harvard Law Clinic	617-495-4408
Lexington Human Services	781-861-0194
MA Child Support Enforcement	800-332-2733 (toll free)
MA Dept Transitional Assistance (Lowell)	978-446-2400

Continued →

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES (CON'T)

Metro West Legal Services	508-620-1830
Minuteman ARC	978-287-7900
Minuteman Senior Services	888-222-6171 (toll free)
National Alliance for the Mentally Ill (NAMI)	781-982-3318
Network/La Red (Boston)	617-742-4911
Parents Helping Parents	800-632-8188 (toll free)
Project Bread Food Source	800-645-8333 (toll free)
REACH Beyond Domestic Violence (Waltham)	800-899-4000 (toll free)
Safelink (Clearinghouse for shelter beds)	877-785-2020 (toll free)
Voices Against Violence (Framingham)	800-593-1125 (toll free)
Wayland Youth & Family Services	508-358-4293

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Points of view in this document are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

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