

Safety Strategies for Battered Women and Their Children

If you are in an abusive relationship, you have options. The groups starred (*) below can help you figure out what will work best for you.

EMERGENCY NUMBERS

Emergency	Call 911
* Portland Women's Crisis Line (available 24 hours)	503-235-5333

LEGAL ASSISTANCE

Multnomah County Legal Aid	503-224-4086
Multnomah County District Attorney Domestic Violence Unit	503-988-3873
Attorney Referral Service	1-800-452-7636

SUPPORT GROUP ASSISTANCE

Human Solutions	503-988-5215
El Programa Hispana	503-669-8350

IF YOU WANT HELP BECAUSE YOU ARE A BATTERER

Transitions Projects, Inc.	503-823-4930
El Programa Hispana	503-669-8350

If You Are Living In A Battering Situation

- Be prepared to call 911 anytime.
- Keep a 24-hour crisis line number with you.
- Talk to a domestic violence agency (*under emergency numbers) about your situation to find out what your options are.
- Tell someone you trust (a friend, a neighbor) about your situation. Arrange a signal to let them know when you need help.

- Plan where you can go to be safe. Options for places to stay include friends, relatives, neighbors, domestic violence agency shelters, clergy, and the police.
- If you can, stay clean and sober; this will help you make safer decisions.

Developing An Escape Plan

- Figure out other ways out of the house in case doors are blocked.
- Keep a spare set of house and car keys in a safe place.
- Keep important papers in a safe place where you can get them quickly, or with a friend. This may include: driver's license, social security cards, immigration papers, medical insurance and records, birth certificates, school papers and bank books and credit cards.
- Keep a bag packed with spare clothing, money, medicine, diapers.
- Tell someone you trust about your situation and your plan.
- Keep change for pay phones.
- Choose a safe time to leave, when your abuser is at work or out for the night. If you have to return to the house to get your things and you are afraid your batterer will be there; you can ask the local police to protect you. This is called a "civil standby." You can call the non-emergency police number (503-823-3333) to arrange this.

To Stay Safe Where You Are

- Get a Restraining Order. This is a legal paper authorized by a judge to keep someone from being near you physically, telephoning, or harassing you. You can get help filling out forms from a domestic violence agency (* under emergency numbers).
- Change the locks on your doors if the abuser has keys.
- Consider changing your telephone number.
- Let your neighbors know what is going on and how you want them to help. If they see the batterer near your house, do you want them to call the police? Let you know?
- Consider having friends stay with you or go with you when you leave home. If the abuser follows you on the street, you can go into stores and ask for help.

Your Children

- Plan a safe place for your children to go if violence occurs: a room with a lock or a neighbor's house. Reassure them that their job is to stay safe, not to protect you.
- Limit what you tell them if they can be forced or bribed by the abuser to tell.
- If necessary and only if safe (for example, if the batterer does not have access) arrange for family or friends to have the children for a few days.
- Teach your children how to use the telephone to call 911 in an emergency. If you don't have a phone, tell them to use a safe neighbor or friend's phone.

- Teach them their telephone number, address, their full name and your full name. Arrange a keyword as a signal for danger.
- Consider having them receive counseling (domestic violence agencies can give referrals).
- Tell your children's school, daycare workers, babysitters, and the children themselves how you want them to respond if the batterer attempts to contact them. You may need a Restraining Order to prohibit access.

How Domestic Violence cases are handled - Multnomah County District Attorney's Office

Cases concerning domestic violence are reviewed and prosecuted by the Domestic Violence Unit of the District Attorney's office. All of the crimes must have been reported to a police agency and the police report must be available for review.

The police report, the available evidence, and the applicable Oregon law all assist the Deputy District Attorney (DDA) in determining if a case will be prosecuted as a felony or a misdemeanor.

If your abuser was arrested please call the Multnomah County District Attorney's Domestic Violence unit at 503-988-3873 prior to 11:00 am the next business day.

If the pending charges are misdemeanors, the person arrested will find out in court if the DA's office plans to move forward with the charges. Then, depending on eligibility, the defendant will either enter the Deferred Sentencing Program* or will plead not guilty and request a trial.

If the case is a felony, the DDA will schedule a grand jury hearing. The Grand Jury will decide if there is enough evidence to charge the accused with a crime. The victim must appear at the grand jury hearing and tell exactly what happened.

The grand jury is comprised of seven people selected from the jury panel. **No judge, defense attorney or suspect will be present at the grand jury.** The purpose of the grand jury is to decide from the evidence presented if the state has enough information to proceed with a felony indictment.

***NOTE** - If the defendant is a first time offender they may be offered an opportunity to enter the Deferred Sentencing Program.

If the defendant is a first time offender s/he may be offered an opportunity to enter the Deferred Sentencing Program. Deferred sentencing is a program that allows an eligible person, accused of a domestic violence crime, to plead guilty and be placed on probation for a minimum of six months. A Probation Officer supervises the probation. The abuser must participate in any counseling program or other court ordered condition. The defendant must abide by the order of the court and Probation Officer regarding contact with the victim. If the person successfully complies with the conditions of probation, the probation terminates after review by the court. The defendant and their attorney make the decision regarding the acceptance of this option.