



# Domestic Violence: *Any Family, Any Age*

About Domestic Violence  
and Resources in  
Miami-Dade County

This information was compiled by  
The Center on Aging at Florida International University  
as part of a research grant from the National Institute of Justice  
(Project # NIJ 2002-WG-BX-0010)

# Domestic Violence: Any Family, Any Age

**Domestic violence is not only for the young. It can occur in older families, too. This booklet discusses domestic violence and includes issues that are specific to older adults.**

**Domestic violence can include not only physical violence, but emotional and financial abuse, as well. Domestic violence legally differs from elder abuse in that it is committed against a physically and mentally healthy adult and occurs at the hands of a spouse or companion.**

**For many older victims of domestic violence, there has been ongoing violence for many years. Yet for others, it does not begin until later in life, often aggravated by the change in lifestyle that comes with retirement, declining physical and mental health, and reduced sexual ability.**

**Regardless of which category you fall into, domestic violence is wrong, and it is not your fault. No one deserves to be hurt.**

**Persons who may be included in domestic violence cases are:**

- ▶ **wife or husband**
- ▶ **parent of your child**
- ▶ **family member**
- ▶ **someone you have lived with as if a family**

***If you know someone who is being abused, do not look the other way.***

- ▶ **Let her/him know you are concerned about her/him.**
- ▶ **Offer to listen.**
- ▶ **Respect her/his choices, but encourage her/him to talk with professionals about safety issues.**
- ▶ **Offer as much help as you can, but do not take risks with your own safety.**  
***Examples of help: transportation, a place to stay, a job, lending money.***
- ▶ **Give her/him a copy of this safety planning worksheet.**

# What is Domestic Violence?

## **PHYSICAL ABUSE:**

- **Infliction of physical pain or injury, physical coercion, confinement, restraining, burning, cutting, pushing, striking, slapping, kicking, pinching, or use of weapons.**

## **PSYCHOLOGICAL ABUSE:**

- **Demeaning you, name-calling, insulting, ignoring, humiliating, frightening, threatening, isolating, harassing, intimidating, denying you a home or personal possessions.**

## **SEXUAL ABUSE:**

- **Sexually molesting you, forcing you to have sex when you say no, using weapons to coerce you into having sex, using weapons during sex.**

## **NEGLECT:**

- **Intentionally withholding medication, shelter, food, personal hygiene products, or clothing; infliction of physical or emotional stress or injury; abandonment.**

---

**If you have been forced to do something sexual that you didn't want to do or if you have been kept from food, medicine, or a doctor's care, you are a victim of domestic violence. It is not your fault. The abuser is responsible. There is someone who will listen and support you and your decisions. There are steps you can take to help end the abuse. If any of these things are happening to you, you do not have to face them alone.**

---

## Is This Happening to You?

- ▶ **Do you feel isolated? Are you being deprived of contact with the outside world?**
- ▶ **Are you being denied private space or time?**
- ▶ **Are you being controlled and not allowed to make decisions for yourself?**

- ▶ **Is your spouse or companion withholding or mismanaging your scheduled medications?**
- ▶ **Are you being deprived of good personal hygiene or proper cleanliness when you need assistance?**
- ▶ **Does your spouse or companion make false accusations against you?**
- ▶ **Is your spouse or companion verbally, mentally, emotionally, physically, or sexually abusing you?**

---

**No one deserves to be abused. You have the right to feel safe in your own home. If you are not safe in your home, it is sometimes necessary to make changes to become safe again.**

---

## **WHAT ARE SOME OPTIONS YOU MAY CONSIDER?**

- ▶ **Call the police in an emergency.**
- ▶ **File a police report about the violence.**
- ▶ **Call the domestic violence hotline to talk, get information or ideas, find a shelter, or make a safety or escape plan.**
- ▶ **Have the abuser ordered by the court to stay away from you by getting an Injunction for Protection.**
- ▶ **See a doctor for injuries (and consider having him/her write down the cause of the injuries).**
- ▶ **Talk to a friend, family member, neighbor, or someone else for support and ask for help.**
- ▶ **Make a personal safety plan.**

***When violence does seem close, avoid the kitchen, bathroom, and rooms without any doors to the outside. Begin action on safety plan at any sign of trouble.***

# Planning for Safety

## WHO SHOULD CONSIDER MAKING A SAFETY PLAN?

- ▶ Living with an abuser - *because the danger can occur at any time*
- ▶ Planning to leave - *because few abusers allow their victim to leave peacefully*
- ▶ Living separately - *because danger often increases after a survivor leaves or stops a relationship*

If you are living in an abusive situation, there are several precautions you can take to stay safe in your home and to be prepared to leave quickly if necessary.

- Keep important phone numbers where you can get to them quickly and easily.
- Keep any restraining orders or protective orders easily accessible.
- Have an emergency contact you can turn to if or when the abuse recurs.
- Keep important documents hidden in an easily accessible location in case you must leave quickly. These might include:
  - ✓ your birth certificate,
  - ✓ Insurance, Medicare, and Medicaid cards,
  - ✓ bank account passbook,
  - ✓ passport,
  - ✓ Social Security card,
  - ✓ power of attorney documents,
  - ✓ financial documents,
  - ✓ marriage license,
  - ✓ the deed to your house.
- Keep your money, medications, spare keys, and clothing readily accessible in case you must leave quickly.

- Take your glasses, hearing aids, and other personal items such as photographs when you leave.
- Make financial arrangements to secure a personal bank account, credit cards, or a safety deposit box.
- Make arrangements for a safe place to go if you are in danger.

Safe Place #1      Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Safe Place #2      Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

- Make arrangements for someone to give you a ride in case of an emergency.

Emergency Ride Phone #1: \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency Ride Phone #2: \_\_\_\_\_

- Make arrangements to house your pets.
- Develop an emergency signal with a friend or neighbor to let them know when you are in danger and need help.
- Keep any evidence of physical abuse, such as ripped clothes and photos of bruises and injuries.
- Keep a list with you at all times with your doctor's name and phone number, the names of all of your medications, and the name of your drugstore.

## Emergency Telephone Numbers

**FLORIDA DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HOTLINE: 1-800-500-1119**

**TTY: 1-800-621-4202**

**ELDER ABUSE HOTLINE: 1-800-96-ABUSE (1-800-962-2873)**

**ELDER HELPLINE: 1-800-96-ELDER (1-800-963-5337)**

**EMERGENCY SERVICES: 911**

## ***Using telephone services or a special device may play a role in getting help or documenting threats.***

Some telephone companies offer services that may help domestic violence survivors. These services may also be used by abusers to harass, stalk, threaten, or find survivors. Most require phone company charges. Some of the services include:

**Operator Assistance:** Operators can dial police and other emergency numbers if you cannot do it or do not know the number. If you do not have some of the services listed below, operators in your area can advise you of other services if they exist.

**Voice Mail:** Allows you to have a phone number and get messages without answering the phone. No one has to know it's just voice mail.

**Caller ID:** Shows and records the numbers that call your phone. You have to buy a special electronic box to plug into the phone.

**Call Block:** Keeps caller ID from recognizing your number.

**Trap and Trace:** Local telephone companies may be able to mechanically check repetitive calls. This allows for outside documentation of violations of protective injunctions and stalking.

**Call Tracing:** Dialing \*57 on a touchtone operated phone or 1157 on a rotary phone verifies to the police the last call into your number.

**Last Number Redial:** Dialing \*69 on a touchtone operated phone or 1169 on a rotary phone obtains the last number called and can dial back to the caller.

**Collect calls and calls billed to another number:** Use caution when making these calls. They can be traced. If calling the batterer, make these calls from payphones out of your neighborhood or town. Consider buying a pre-paid calling card.

The information above was prepared by FCADV in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Justice. It was originally published February 15, 1999 as a project supported by grant No. MJ940 awarded by the Violence Against Women Grants Office, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. Information contained within this brochure do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the State of Florida, the U.S. Department of Justice, or any other agency of the state or federal government. Reprinted on FCADV website October 14, 2002.

# Shelter Resources in Miami-Dade County

**NOTE: SHELTERS OFFER RESIDENT AND NON-RESIDENT SERVICES.**

## **Metro-Dade Advocates for Victims, Safespace (North)**

Serving Miami-Dade County and

Serving the cities of Miami, Coral Gables, Hialeah, Homestead, and Opa Locka

**Hotline numbers: (305) 758-2546**

7831 NE Miami Court, Miami, FL 33138

Administration: (305) 758-2804, ext. 224

FAX: (305) 756-1347

[pls@miamidade.gov](mailto:pls@miamidade.gov)

## **Metro-Dade Advocates for Victims, Safespace (South)**

Serving Miami-Dade County for South Miami, Kendall, and Pinecrest and all points south, and Monroe County

49 West Mowry Street

Homestead, FL 33030

**Hotline (305) 758-2546**

Administration: (305) 247-4249

## **Women in Distress of Broward County**

Serving Broward County and

Serving the cities of Ft. Lauderdale, Hallandale, Hollywood, and Pompano

**Hotline number: (954) 761-1133**

PO Box 676

Ft Lauderdale, FL 33302

Phone: (954) 760-9800

FAX: (954) 687-0733

## **Aid to Victims of Domestic Abuse**

Serving Palm Beach County and

Serving the cities of Delray Beach, Boca Raton, Boynton Beach, and West Palm Beach

**Hotline numbers: (561) 265-2900 or 1-800-355-8547**

PO Box 667

Delray Beach, FL 33447