

Sometimes after you have tried everything you can think of to make the relationship work, including giving up friends, jobs, and family; keeping your mouth shut; agreeing even when you don't want to; keeping the peace...

Sometimes after you have tried, forgiven, and given in, you begin to feel trapped, hopeless. You may even begin to feel you are crazy or wish you would die.

You don't deserve to be called names or be put down.

You do deserve to express your thoughts and opinions, to be treated with respect.

You don't deserve to be told what you can and cannot do.

You do deserve to be in control of your own life, to make your own decisions.

You don't deserve to have your hair pulled or to be slapped, kicked or punched.

You do deserve to be safe and free from fear in your home.

St Paul Domestic Abuse Intervention Project
651-645-2824

Your rights as a victim

You do have rights under Minnesota state law throughout the court process, including the right to:

- Be notified of the prosecutor's decision to dismiss the charges or not prosecute the abusive person
- Not be fired from your job or disciplined because you have been subpoenaed or requested to appear in court.
- Submit a victim impact statement to the court and to request restitution for out-of-pocket expenses because of the assault.
- State your opinion, orally or in writing, about plea bargain agreements and sentencing
- Be notified of the release of the abuser

In addition to protecting yourself through criminal court, you can also seek protection through family court, which issues Orders for Protection (see separate panel).

ORDERS FOR PROTECTION

An Order for Protection

(OFP) is an order family court makes to protect you from domestic violence. It may direct the person who has abused you to:

- Stop threatening or abusing you.
- Leave your household.
- Stay away from where you live, go to school, work.
- Pay support to you and your children if legally required.
- Enter a counseling program.

An OFP may also award you temporary custody of your children and set up conditions for visitations.

Who is eligible?

You may file for an OFP if you were recently a victim of domestic abuse. Domestic abuse includes physical harm, bodily injury, assault, or the infliction of fear of imminent physical harm, bodily injury, or assault. You are eligible for an OFP if you and the person who has abused you:

- Are married or used to be married
- Lived or used to live together
- Have a child/pregnancy in common
- Are related by blood

Domestic Violence:

No one should have to face it alone



(651) 645-2824

Crisis line answered
24 hours a day

Office hours:
Monday-Friday,
8:30 AM – 4:30 pm

Domestic violence is a problem that you do not have to face alone. No matter how hard you try, you cannot change your partner's behavior. Only your partner can decide to change.

If your partner was arrested, it is not your fault. Your partner's actions caused the arrest. Furthermore, once the assault is charged, the decision to prosecute the abuser is up to the state of Minnesota.

Throughout this process, advocates from the Intervention Project can help you understand how the criminal justice system can or cannot work for you. The system may not always respond the way you want it to, and your abuser may not always pay attention to the court orders, but the Intervention Project can work with you to try to make the system hold your abuser accountable for the actions.

The Saint Paul Domestic Abuse

Intervention Project is not part of the court system. It is an independent, nonprofit agency with staff that can lend support and talk with you about other resources available to help you deal with the domestic violence in your life.

While you are working with the criminal justice system and family court, advocates from the Intervention Project can:

- Work with you to ensure that your rights as a victim are upheld during the court process.
- Provide you with information about domestic violence.
- Educate you about your rights as a victim of a crime.
- Explain what takes place at the various stages of the court process.
- Help you think of questions to ask to get the information you need.
- Explain the possible outcomes of the court proceedings.
- Go with you to court hearings at your request.
- Help you obtain and understand the results of court hearings.
- Refer you to support services you may need, including support groups, shelters, and other emergency services.

We work with battered women from all occupations, economic levels, age groups, and ethnic and racial backgrounds. Some are heterosexual, some are lesbian or gay. Some reside with their abusers, some don't. Some

have children, some don't. *No matter who you are, you don't deserve to be hit.*

Whether or not you stay in the relationship, you may want to have a protection plan. It may include knowing about your options, being familiar with community resources and shelters for battered women, or becoming involved with a support group.

- **Support groups**

All women in abusive relationships are welcome at SPIP's support groups. The groups provide a safe place for you to talk, at no charge. Child care may be available or reimbursable. Transportation may be reimbursable.

- **Hospital/clinic advocacy**

The Saint Paul Domestic Abuse Intervention Project has an on-site advocate at the Ramsey County Physician's Clinic on the East Side to assist you and address questions or concerns you may have. As with all of our services, your confidentiality is respected. If you have gone to, or go to Ramsey Hospital's emergency room, you can request to speak to one of our advocates.

- **Felony-level domestic assaults**

Our advocates are available to assist you if you are a victim of a felony-level domestic assault as well as a misdemeanor domestic assault. An assault will usually be charged as a felony when a weapon is used or when harm to the victim requires hospitalization.

It is vital for you to have access to information about your rights and options in all criminal matters.

Saint Paul Domestic Abuse Intervention Project

*Toll Free 1 (888) 575-3367

Shelters for battered women

*Women's Advocates

(651) 227-8284

*Eagle's Nest Shelter

(651) 222-5836

PHONE NUMBERS

Shelters take calls 24 hours a day and provide you with a safe place where you have time to think and make choices about your future.

Other numbers

*Domestic Abuse Office

(651) 266-5130

*St Paul City Attorney

(651) 266-8740

*Sexual Offense Services

(651) 643-3006

*Bridges to Safety

(651) 266-9922

(651) 266-9901

*Family Sexual Violence Unit

(651) 266-5676

*Crisis Response Program

(651) 291-6795