SafeHouse Center can help.

24 hour HelpLine
734-995-5444

Business Line
734-973-0242

4100 Clark Rd. Ann Arbor 48105

24 hour HelpLine: 734-995-5444
Business Line: 734-973-0242

Building communities
free of domestic violence
and sexual assault
Statement of Purpose
This is a handbook for those who have survived domestic violence. This handbook may also be helpful for friends and family who are trying to better understand their loved one’s situation. Its purpose is to provide facts, information, and resources regarding options and legal rights. It defines abuse, offers support and encouragement, and leaves survivors informed about their options and legal rights. In addition, because many survivors of domestic violence also experience sexual violence, this handbook provides some information and support for survivors of sexual assault. It is not intended to provide legal advice.

At SafeHouse Center, we believe that Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault is rooted in the oppression and degradation of women. However, we also recognize that Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault crosses many socially constructed boundaries, including gender. We understand and acknowledge that survivors can be men, and we embrace and welcome male survivors into our services. We know that the majority of violence that happens both in our community and the world at large targets women, and that much of the violence that men experience can often be linked to this broader issue.
**Survivor and victim** both mean the person in the relationship who is being hit, beaten, abused, sexually assaulted, raped, and controlled. The legal system uses the word **victim**. In this handbook, the word **survivor** is used because it emphasizes the fact that those who have survived sexual assault and domestic violence are strong, courageous people who have lived through terrible attacks.

**A battered woman** is any woman who has been assaulted or abused by her partner. Lesbians and both gay and straight men can also be victimized by their partners. In our experience, the vast majority of those who experience the power and control associated with domestic violence are women. SafeHouse Center offers services to any person who is victimized in an intimate relationship. This includes lesbians and men (both heterosexual and gay). If you need help, call us! All of the laws discussed in this handbook protect men battered by women, and most of them also protect lesbians and gay men.

**Domestic violence, battering, abuse, and domestic abuse** mean the same thing in this handbook. They all describe a pattern of coercive control that one person exercises over another. Abusers use physical and sexual violence, threats, money, and/or emotional and psychological abuse to control their partners and get their way. Spouse abuse means domestic violence between people who are married. Wife beating also means domestic violence. We do not use the terms spouse abuse or wife beating in this handbook because we know that married people are not the only ones who have these experiences; those who are living together, are having sex, dating, or were formerly in any of these situations can be in violent relationships as well.

**Emotional abuse** refers to the fact that in many relationships there is not only physical hurt but emotional wounding of one’s partner as well. It is the battering of one’s spirit. Emotional abuse may occur along with physical abuse or by itself. It is a very effective way to gain and maintain power and control over someone. It includes a range of behaviors including name calling, threatening, manipulating, humiliating/degrading, blaming, making light of situations important to the survivor, controlling behavior, destruction of property, angry outbursts, and undermining the survivor’s feelings. This system is an efficient means of maintaining power in a relationship because it makes the victim vulnerable through loss of confidence, self-esteem, and sense of worth. Women who are verbally/emotionally abused report feeling embarrassed, confused, hurt, guilty, and unworthy.

**Domestic assault** refers to a type of abuse that is a crime. Some behaviors can be abusive but not criminal. For instance, breaking dishes that you both own or calling you a whore is abusive but not a crime under Michigan law. A crime involves an assault or the threat of an assault.

**Assailant and batterer** both mean the same thing in this handbook. It is the person in the relationship who is hitting, controlling, or otherwise abusing his partner. We use the pronoun he or him when referring to assailants in this handbook, but, as stated above, the assailant could be a woman.

**Partner** means someone in an intimate relationship with another person. A partner could be a wife, husband, lover, boyfriend, girlfriend, or date. A domestic partner is someone with whom a person has a registered domestic partnership. Lesbians and gay men may register their partnership with the city of Ann Arbor, and a few mixed-gender couples do, too. Former partners can still be assailants and batterers.

**Advocates** are trained domestic violence counselors. They will provide you with support and information about your rights and options. Any communication with an advocate is private and confidential. Our advocates will NOT tell your assailant anything you say. Our confidentiality policies are very strong. Our advocates will not tell you what to do, nor will they judge or evaluate you. They will simply help you make your own decisions and figure out the best way to get what you need, deserve, and want. Your advocate will believe in you, encourage you, and fight for you.

**GENERAL STATEMENT**

Assaulting another person is a crime. It makes no difference if the person who beats you is a friend, a relative, your boyfriend, your lover, your husband, or someone with whom you were formerly in a relationship. Domestic assault is against the law. Hitting, strangling, shoving, slapping, biting, burning, or kicking someone is a crime.
Warning Signs of Abusers

Many assailants come across as charming and pleasant people at the beginning of a relationship. They often continue to display these qualities in public while being abusive in private. The following are warning signs of abuse, although there is no surefire way to identify a batterer ahead of time.

Ask yourself the following:

- Is he very, very jealous?
- Does he want to know where you are every minute?
- Does he drive away your friends and family?
- Does he have extreme highs and lows?
- Is he cruel to animals?
- Has he hit a former partner? Does he tell you in detail how terrible every former girlfriend was? Does he claim that former partners lied about him and put him in jail?
- Does he believe you belong to him? Does he tell you “it is you and him against the world?”
- When he gets angry, are you afraid of him?
- Does he say he “can’t help” losing his temper?
- Does he blame alcohol or drugs, mental health problems, depression, trouble at work, or anything else for his abuse of you?
- Does he say it is your fault when he is in a rage?
- Does he believe men are superior to women?
- Does he act like two totally different people (Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde)?
- Does he tell you he has to restrain you for your own good?

If your answer to ANY of these questions is yes, you could be involved with an abusive partner!
Abuse is a pattern. It is not being hit once. It is one person manipulating the other person into doing what he wants her to do. It is about one person controlling the other. Abuse can be physical, emotional, and/or sexual. There are many different methods of control (ways in which one person can make the other person do what he wants). The Power and Control Wheel (see section 4) shows some of the different ways in which one person can control another. Many women do not think of themselves as battered. They do not see the things their partners do to them as abusive, and they do not see how those things are part of a pattern. For example, a woman may be forced to have sex by her boyfriend, but she may not see it as rape. Yet forced sex, even with someone with whom you have a relationship, is rape. Assaultants blame everyone and everything but themselves for their abuse. They try to convince their partners that they cannot stop or that they have good reasons or excuses for the abuse.

The following questions can help you consider your relationship and determine whether or not it is an abusive one. If you answer yes to any of them, your relationship may be abusive.

- Have you been hit? Slapped? Pushed?
- Has your safety and or the safety of those you love been threatened?
- Has your partner pulled your hair? Restrained you? Prevented you from leaving?
- Have you been grabbed? Shaken? Bit? Burned with a cigarette or cigar?
- Have you been choked?
- Has your partner used an object to hit you? An iron? A telephone? A belt? A dish?
- Have you had bruises from being hit, held, or squeezed?
- Have you had a black eye, cut lip, or broken tooth from being attacked?
- Has your partner threatened you with a weapon?
- Has your partner used a weapon against you? Gun? Knife?
- Have you had to see a doctor because of an injury?
- Has your partner threatened to hurt or take away your children if you don’t do what he wants?
- Has he threatened to kill you? Your children? Your family? Your friends? Your pets?
- Has he demanded sex to “make up” after an attack?
- Has he forced you to have sex? Oral sex? Anal sex?
- Has he forced you to have sex with others? In front of the children?
- Has he stopped you from taking classes?
- Has he stopped you from getting a job?
- Has he stopped you from going to work or shown up at work and threatened or abused you there?
- Does he keep or take your paycheck and give you a little bit back or make you ask for money?
- Does he keep all the money under his control?
- Does he prevent you from going places? To a house of worship? To visit friends or family? To doctor’s appointments?
- Does he control your use of the car? Does he take your keys or disable your car? Does he put all the vehicles in his name?
- Does he refuse to pay the bills?
- Does he fight with your friends and family, call them names, and in general make it hard for them to see you?
- Does he make you tell him where you have been every minute?
- Does he make you account for what you have done all day?
- Does he call frequently to check up on you when you’re not with him?
- Does he check your cell phone to see who you have called and how long you spoke with them?
- Does he call you names or tell you that you are ugly, fat, stupid, a bitch, a slut, a whore, or other hurtful names?
- Does he say that if you left him no one would want you?
- Is he jealous without reason? Does he accuse you of having sex with men you meet, smile at, or talk to?
The wheel shows the relationship between physical and other forms of abuse. Each spoke represents a tactic used to control or gain power, which is represented by the hub of the wheel. The rim that surrounds and supports the spokes is violence—both physical and sexual. It holds the system together and gives it strength.

The power and control wheel was designed by a group of battered women and their advocates, including Ellen Pence, Susan Schechter, Barbara Hart, Joe Morse, Michael Paymar, and Miguel Gil. Many thanks to the Duluth Abuse Intervention Project in Minnesota for allowing its use in this publication.

- Does he repeatedly, and wrongfully, accuse you of being unfaithful?
- Do you change what you want or plan to do because you’re afraid?
- Do you feel as if you are walking on eggshells when you are around him?
- Are you afraid that if you left him he would kill you or harm someone you care about?
- Are you afraid that if you left he would kill himself?
- Has he hurt your pets or threatened to do so?
- Has he made you do things that you’re ashamed of?
- Has he made you commit a crime?
- Does he encourage you to drink too much?
- Does he force you to use drugs?
- Does he wake you up frequently when you need sleep? Withhold food from you for long periods of time?
- If you are sick or have a chronic illness or developmental disability, does he withhold medication from you?
- If you are addicted to alcohol or other drugs, does he buy you liquor or drugs? Does he stop you from going to meetings or support groups?
- After he has hit you, does he beg for forgiveness and act extra thoughtful? Does he say he is sorry, buy you gifts, cry, or say he will never do it again?
- Are you afraid of him? Are you afraid of what he might do if you “crossed” him?
Is drinking or drug use causing the abuse?
No. If your partner stopped drinking or taking drugs, he would not stop being abusive.

Often assailants will drink or get high so that they will have an excuse to assault their partners. Many batterers blame drinking or drug use for their violence and claim they cannot help themselves. That is not true. They have the choice not to batter. They also have the choice to seek help for their use of alcohol or other drugs.

A lot of batterers claim that they cannot help what they do when they are drunk or high—that they are out of control and therefore not responsible for what they do. In fact, a lot of people drink but only some assault their partners.

A batterer’s judgment and physical ability may be harmed by his drinking or drug use. If he is trying to strangle you into unconsciousness and he is drinking, he could misjudge and kill you. If he pushes you, he might miss and push you down the stairs. People do not commit acts that they feel are totally wrong even when they are drinking. (For more information, see section 12, “Alcohol and Other Drug Issues”.)

Could I be killed?
One-third of all female homicide victims are killed by their husbands or other intimate partners. If you are battered, you are in danger of being killed. Most homicides occur when men feel they are losing control of their partner after the women have left or when the assailants realize their partners are leaving for good.

Assessing Lethality
The following are indicators that your partner might kill you. There is no guarantee that if he does not fit this picture he will not try to kill you. If all the answers to these questions are no, that does not necessarily mean you are safe.

- Has he threatened to kill you, your children, himself, or a member of your family?
- Does he talk about fantasies of killing you or the children? The more details he provides, the greater is the danger to you or your loved ones.
- Does he own weapons? Has he ever used them or threatened to use them?
However, it is likely that eventually you will be assaulted again. In some cases, assailants decide that they can control their partners without engaging in physical abuse. They rely on the actual or implied threat of violence without having to engage in violent acts. They will escalate the psychological controls—controlling money, controlling access to children, and convincing their partners that they will lose their children if they leave. They do not have to hit any more because their victims know that they are capable of brutality and violence.

Some survivors say apologies and gifts are tactics of control. He may be afraid that you will leave and decide not to be abusive for awhile.

Violence never goes away by itself. It usually increases in frequency and intensity over time.

Battering is a behavior that is learned. It is learned in families, and it is learned in our culture. It is developed and practiced over time. It takes a tremendously strong desire to change and a commitment to long-term participation in a batterers’ intervention program in order for there to be any chance to stop being an abuser (for more information, see section 11, “Education and Counseling for Assailants”).

**Will he go to prison?**

Usually he will not. In most cases, domestic violence charges are misdemeanor assault and battery.

If convicted, the maximum sentence for a first offense in Michigan is ninety-three days in jail. (The second and third conviction might mean more time in jail.) More often, abusers are put on probation and do no jail time. They may be sentenced to attending a batterers’ counseling program for a predetermined period of time. However, if your assailant is charged with a felony, there is a possibility that he will go to prison.

It is not your fault if he goes to prison or jail. He chose to be abusive. Although he may try to blame you for his arrest and punishment, they are not your fault. Domestic violence is a choice. He chose to assault you physically. He committed the crime, and it is his responsibility.

**What about couple’s (or marital) counseling?**

Assailants often claim that their partners are the crazy ones and need counseling. Survivors may think that they can save their marriages through couple’s counseling. They hope that contact with a therapist...
will help their partners realize they are violent and that this will cause them to stop the abuse.

When there is violence in a relationship, couple’s counseling does not work. Couple’s counseling assumes that the primary problem is “the relationship” or “communication” and that both people are responsible for making the changes necessary to improve the relationship. Violence cannot be negotiated.

Couple’s counseling will not end the violence—it increases the danger. No matter what issues or problems there may be in a relationship, battering is the problem of the individual using the violence. Usually, the survivor is afraid to say what is really going on because the assailant may punish her for doing so. The assailant frequently uses the therapy as another means of controlling her.

Isn’t divorce against God’s Law?
Consult your religious leader for your house of worship’s position about a marriage with violence in it. Often religions hold that if a person is violent and abusive he has broken the marriage vow and God does not want anyone to be hit, hurt, or afraid.

If divorce is forbidden in your religion, you might want to consider an order for “separate maintenance.” However, this alternative to divorce can be difficult to obtain (see “Separate Maintenance” in section J).

Many battered women have strong spiritual beliefs and/or are very connected to their religious community. Some religious communities are very supportive of a woman’s safety. Others are not. Sometimes they counsel the woman to stay and try to work it out or even actively support the abuser (usually because they don’t understand domestic violence). Try to find someone connected with your faith that is knowledgeable about violence against women.

A wonderful resource for women of faith is the Web site: http://www.faithtrustinstitute.org. This organization has published a great booklet called Keeping the Faith.

Why does he hit me?
People batter in order to control their partners. He may say it is because he was hit as a child. He may blame losing his job or being discriminated against. He may say he has been treated badly in other relationships or that what you do forces him to hit you. Some women want to believe these “reasons” because they think that by changing what they do they can stop the violence. Unfortunately, batterers make a choice to assault because they want their partners to do as they say. Changing your behavior will not prevent him from hitting you.

I feel as though he makes up rules and punishes me for breaking them. Am I crazy?
No. Batterers do indeed make rules in relationships and then punish their partners for breaking them. Typical rules are the following:

• You cannot leave the relationship unless I am through with you.
• You may not tell anyone about my violence or coercive controls.
• I am entitled to your obedience, service, affection, loyalty, fidelity, and undivided attention.
• I get to decide which rules are critical.

(These rules were first articulated by survivor Barbara Hart, who has given permission for their reprint here.)

➤ Am I codependent? If I get therapy, will he change?
If you get therapy, it will not change his behavior. Some women have been helped by thinking of themselves as “codependent.” They have learned through this label that they are valuable people, that they should take care of themselves, and that they cannot change or be responsible for other people. This perspective can be very helpful.

However, other women have been told they are codependent and are somehow enabling, participating in, or colluding in his “sickness.” This is not true about battering.

What you do, say, or think, and whatever ways you try to change yourself—these will not stop or reduce his violence. Only he can make the decision to change his behavior.

Counseling might help you decide what is best for you and your children, but it will not affect his behavior.

➤ Is he mentally ill?
No. Many people believe that anybody who would beat and torture someone they claim to love is “crazy” and needs help. Batters may need help and may be mentally ill, but this does not cause them to batter. Mental illness does not cause battering. Most people who are mentally ill are not physically violent.
What if I’ve hit him? Doesn’t that make me just as bad?

No. Battered women try all kinds of methods to stop the violence. They may do as the assaulter tells them or try to calm him down and give him what he wants. They may try to argue and reason or cry and plead. If that does not work, they may try using force to get the assaulter to stop hurting them. Some of the common things that survivors do to defend themselves are biting the assaulter, scratching his face, grabbing a weapon, or pushing him away. None of these acts, if used in self-defense, are criminal.

Sometimes assaulants call the police, claim that they are the real victims, and show the officers their scratches or bites. Sometimes battered women are arrested incorrectly. If a woman hits her partner first, she may also be arrested for provoking the attack. At SafeHouse Center, we work with women who have been wrongly arrested for domestic assault. If this has happened to you, we can help you by advocating on your behalf with the prosecutor’s office.

Call us at 734-995-5444

What Can I Do to be SAFE?

• Call the police.

Write down the emergency number for the police. Call the operator if you do not know it. It is usually 911.

If you do not have a telephone, arrange a signal with neighbors, friends, or one of your children so that they can call the police.

When the police come, ask them to arrest your partner. If you are scared to do that in front of your assaulter, consider talking to one of the officers alone. You have the right to talk with the officers without your partner present.

• Get support from friends and family.

Tell your family, friends, and coworkers what happened. Do not try to protect him. Ask for what you need.

• Move out, move away.

It is not fair. You should not have to leave your home because of his behavior. But sometimes the only way you will be safe is to leave. There are shelters throughout the state and the country that can help you relocate. SafeHouse Center can put you in touch with them or they can be accessed by calling 1-800-799-7233.

• Make a safety plan.

Figure out what to do before or when the next attack happens. (See section 8, “Safety Planning.”)

• Get a personal protection Order (PPO).

Call 734-995-5444 for more information about how to obtain one. (See section K, “Personal Protection Orders”)

• Keep your own records of the abuse.

Keep a journal or log of all incidents of physical violence, threats, harassing phone calls, unwanted contacts, missed parenting time, and so on. You may also want to include promises your assailant made about getting help or changing his behavior.

Take pictures of any bruises or injuries you have. Take pictures or videotapes of any damage done to your home or property. Make sure you write the date of the incident and a description of what it is on any pictures. If you are taking pictures of bruises on a specific part of your body, it is advisable to take two pictures. First, a close-up that shows the bruise and, second, a picture taken from farther away that shows your face and that part of your body. This will prove that the bruise was yours. When taking pictures of a hole in the wall, put something next to the hole to show its size. Write the date of the incident and the date the picture was taken on the back of the photo.

Keep copies of any e-mails he sends to you. Record or make copies of any messages on answering machines or voice mail. Write down the name, address, and phone number of any witnesses to his violence. It is important to keep all of this information (pictures, logs, lists, etc.) where he is not likely to find it.

• Get medical help.

If you have been injured, go to the emergency room or urgent care unit or see your doctor.

Medical records may be important evidence in criminal or civil court cases. Medical records may also help you get a personal protection order. Give all the information you feel is safe. Medical records are confidential and are not to be given to anyone but you.
SPECIAL MEDICAL CONCERNS

Special Health Concerns
Injuries that result from an assault may require medical attention. If you have an injury to the head or lose consciousness, you should be seen by a health care provider who can check for a possible concussion or brain injury. If you experience headaches, nausea/vomiting, memory loss, vision problems, or decreased alertness, even in the days following a head injury, you should seek medical attention immediately.

If you are pregnant and fall during an assault or receive any injury to the abdomen or groin area, you should see an obstetrician, midwife, or emergency room doctor immediately.

If you sustain a human bite, you should be evaluated and treated, as human bites often cause serious infections. You should also receive a tetanus shot if needed.

Many injuries cause bruising and bone fractures. Ice applied to the injury, non steroidal medications such as Motrin and Advil, and acetaminophens such as Tylenol are good first treatments. If the pain persists, see a health care provider. If you have a deformity in any area of injury, you should seek treatment and possible X-rays.

Cuts or lacerations may need cleaning and stitches in an emergency room or urgent care facility if they are deep or bleeding persists. A tetanus shot may also be needed.

Other Medical Issues
Withholding medication is a form of abuse that some assailants use on their partners. It is important that you take the medicine if it is needed for chronic illness or acute infections. You can contact your physician to inquire about samples (though these are becoming more difficult to obtain). Drug companies have patient assistance programs for which you may be eligible. The paperwork needs to be prepared by your health care provider.

Related Issues
Emergency Room personnel may be obligated to report some injuries to the police, particularly if weapons are involved. You are not under any obligation to speak to the police if they are called.

If you have health insurance and it is under your assailant’s name, he is entitled see a copy of the bill for your emergency room or urgent care visit. He cannot obtain a copy of the record of your visit or speak with any hospital personnel, including doctors and nurses, without your written permission.

You may ask to be signed into the emergency room under a false name. If English is not your primary language, you may ask for an interpreter while in the emergency room.

If you have any questions about injuries related to domestic violence or sexual assault, don’t hesitate to call the 24-hour HelpLine at 734-995-5444.

section 7 ➤ GETTING HELP

SERVICES OF SAFEHOUSE CENTER

What is SafeHouse Center?
SafeHouse Center is a private, nonprofit organization in Washtenaw County dedicated to ending domestic violence and sexual assault. We offer many different services to residents of this county and anyone who works, or receives police or medical care in it.

Confidentiality
All of our services, whether at the shelter, in support groups, individually, or through our response team, are strictly confidential. We will never tell anyone you are using the services of SafeHouse Center unless you specifically give us permission to do so. There are only three exceptions to our confidentiality policy: (1) when we suspect a child and/or vulnerable adult has been abused, in which case we must report that abuse to Adult and/or Children’s Protective Services; (2) when there is immediate danger that you intend to hurt yourself or another person; and (3) when a member of our staff witnesses an assault against you.

HelpLine
We have a 24-hour HelpLine. The phone number is 734-995-5444. It’s answered 365 days a year by trained counselors. If you are in crisis, want to talk, need counseling, want information, or need a referral, please call us. You do not have to give your name.
Shelter

Our shelter is called SafeHouse Center. The “Safe” in SafeHouse stands for Shelter Available For Emergencies. It’s a large, well-equipped building where survivors can come alone or with their children and find physical safety. At SafeHouse Center, you will have a chance to meet and talk with others and receive support.

There are support and educational groups. You will be assigned a counselor/advocate who will help you obtain legal, financial, and other services as needed. There is always someone to talk to.

The survivors who reviewed this book asked us to emphasize that SafeHouse Center is a wonderful place. They were concerned that survivors reading this handbook would be frightened of the unknown or afraid to come to SafeHouse Center. They want you to know that you will be welcomed and safe. In order to access shelter, please call 734-995-5444.

Pets

If you are afraid to leave because your pet may be injured, please call us because we can help. The Humane Society of Huron Valley has a special program for temporarily sheltering pets, and if necessary arranging for adoption, since assailants often threaten or hurt them.

Response Team

The Response Team (RT) at SafeHouse Center provides 24 hour a day, 365 days a year immediate support to survivors of domestic violence and/or sexual assault.

All Washtenaw County law enforcement agencies contact RT after receiving a report of domestic violence and/or sexual assault. Local area hospitals also contact RT when a patient discloses that they have experienced domestic violence and/or a sexual assault.

An RT advocate will then make contact with the survivor either in person or by phone to offer emotional support, validation, information, advocacy, resources and safety strategies. Our main goals are to ensure that survivors are aware of all the SafeHouse Center services that may be available to them and to ensure that survivors have the ability to make informed decisions. We can also assist with streamlining service provisions within our community.

Please note that as all of our services are provided from an empowerment perspective, survivors are able to choose whether to participate with any or all of the services provided by the RT advocates. Talking to us is your choice.

Legal Advocacy and Court Accompaniment

If you want to make a police report, have to go to court, decide to file for divorce, need to get custody of your children, have questions about the court process, and/or wish to obtain a personal protection order (PPO), our staff is available to assist and accompany you. Our staff will provide you with referrals and information. We can also help if you are a victim of domestic violence and have been charged with a crime. Please keep in mind, however, that our advocates are not attorneys.

We can provide you with accurate information about how the legal system works and what you can expect. We can help you fill out the forms needed to get a personal protection order, make referrals to attorneys, and help you prepare a victim impact statement. We cannot give you legal advice or represent you in court.

You do not have to know right away which services you want or need. You can decide at any time to call the HelpLine and arrange to talk to a legal advocate.

Referrals

- If you decide you need a lawyer, we can help you find one who knows about domestic assault.
- If you want information on counseling for your assailant, we will give it to you.
- If you need help with your children, with food, or in meeting special needs, we can help you find assistance.
- Let us know what you need, and we will do our best to help you.

Counseling

You can get counseling, advocacy, and information at SafeHouse Center. Whether or not you are ready to leave, have left, or just want someone to talk to, you can get counseling on a short term basis. Counseling takes place at Safehouse Center. We are on a bus route and our building is wheelchair accessible.
Support Groups
There are free support groups throughout the week at SafeHouse Center. Call the HelpLine (734) 995-5444 or visit our website (www.safehousecenter.org) for current information about support groups.

section 8 ➤ Safety Planning

Staying Safe After You’ve Left
If you need to retrieve belongings from your assailant’s residence, or your assailant must retrieve belongs from your home, call the police to request a “civil standby.” Be aware that police generally can only stay for 15 or 20 minutes. Also be aware that police are not required to do civil standbys.

In addition:
• Change the locks on your doors, obtain additional locks and safety devices to secure your windows and install motion sensor lights.
• Inform neighbors and the landlord or property manager that your assailant no longer lives with you and that they should call the police if they see your assailant near your home. If necessary, provide a photo.
• If you live in an apartment complex, ask your neighbors not to buzz in anyone they do not know.
• Ask a friend or family member to check in with you on a regular basis.
• Set up a code word or signal with a neighbor, friend or family member to indicate that you are in danger and need emergency assistance. Get an unpublished and unlisted telephone number. Also, remove your name from phone book listings and reverse directories. Use Google, Yahoo and switchboard.com to search for your name (in quotation marks). Do the same with your telephone number. Also, check phone directory pages.
• Many court systems and government records are published online. Ask agencies how your records can be protected, restricted or sealed.
• Get a private mailbox or post office box and use it as your address for businesses, doctors and others.

• Consider closing out your credit and discount cards. (The information they track is put on searchable databases.) Often clerks will allow you to use their discount card so you can still get the savings.
• Change the passwords on your e-mail, voicemail, social media, credit cards, checking, savings and any other accounts.
• Be careful who you share information with. Assailants may learn of your new address from family, friends, business contacts or mutual acquaintances.
• Document all contacts with the assailant. Save letters, cards, e-mails or other electronic communications and record voicemail messages and phone calls.
• If your assailant is arrested and placed in custody, you have the right to know when he/she is released. The Michigan Crime Victim Notification Network (MCVNN) is a free, anonymous service that notifies victims about offender custody status, case information and related court events. MCVNN provides 24-hour access to crime victims and other concerned citizens by phone at (800) 770-7657 and online at www.VINELink.com.

Safety on Job and In Public
• Inform a trusted person at work of your situation. Consider alerting office or building security and provide a photo of your assailant.
• Have someone screen your telephone calls if possible.
• Ask someone to escort you to your car, bus or train. Think about what you would do if something happened in your car, on the bus or on the street.
• Vary your regular routine. Think about leaving for for work at different times and going to different grocery stores, gas stations and restaurants.

Safety if You are Arrested
• Do not resist arrest, even if you believe the arrest is unfair.
• Say that you wish to remain silent and ask for a lawyer immediately. If you can’t pay for a lawyer, you have the right to a free one.
• Don’t say anything, sign anything or make any decisions without a lawyer.
• You have the right to make a local phone call. If you call a lawyer, the police cannot listen.
• Special considerations for non-citizens:
  • Ask your lawyer about the effect of a criminal conviction or plea on your immigration status.
  • Don’t discuss your immigration status with anyone but your lawyer.
  • If an immigration agent visits you while you’re in jail, do not answer questions or sign anything until you have talked to a lawyer.
  • Read all papers fully. If you do not understand or cannot read the papers, ask for an interpreter.

If you Feel Your Rights Have Been Violated
• Remember: police misconduct cannot be challenged at the time of an incident. Don’t physically resist officers or threaten to file a complaint.
• Write down everything you remember including officers’ badge and patrol car numbers, which agency the officers were from and any other details. Get contact information for witnesses. If you are injured, take photographs of your injuries (but seek medical attention first).
• File a written complaint with the agency’s internal affairs division or civilian complaint board. In most cases, you can file a complaint anonymously.
• Call your local ACLU or visit www.aclu.org/profiling. This information is not intended as legal advice. Produced by the American Civil Liberties Union 6/2010

Phone Safety
• Limit your phone use as much as possible.
• On a regular basis, erase any incoming or outgoing phone calls which can be traced to individuals assisting you in your safety plan.
• Make it a habit to erase all text messages.
• Consider using prepaid phone cards, purchasing a prepaid cell phone or making phone calls from the phone of a family member or friend.
• If you are using a cell phone provided by the assailant, turn it off when not in use. Phones can be set to automatically answer without your knowing, in effect becoming a speaker. Also, most newer phones have GPS, which makes them capable of tracking your location.

• To block your number to the person you’re calling, dial *67 before dialing the outgoing number. To permanently block your number, contact your service provider and request that your line be blocked.

Computer Safety
• Limit your Internet usage.
• Don’t share any personal information or details of your safety plan in e-mails or on social media.
• Change your passwords often and be sure to use a combination of letters and numbers.
• When searching the Internet, consider using a computer at your local library, a friend’s house or your workplace as your assailant may have installed a software program to capture your keystrokes.
• If your assailant has access to your e-mail account, he or she may be able to read your incoming and outgoing mail. Choose a password he or she will not be able to guess.
• Avoid social media tools that allow you to “check in” to places. Likewise, disable others’ abilities to check you into places.

Protecting Your Emotional Health
• Before you return to a potentially abusive situation, discuss alternatives with someone you trust.
• If you have to communicate with your assailant, determine the safest way to do so.
• Think positive thoughts about yourself and be assertive with others about your needs.
• Read books, articles and poems that make you feel stronger.
• Decide who you can call to talk freely and openly for support.
• Consider joining a domestic violence support group.

Items To Take With You When You Leave
• Identification
• Driver’s License
• Children’s birth certificates
• Your birth certificate
• PPO
• Remove or lock up any weapons and ammunition in the house.

Always remember: YOU DON'T DESERVE TO BE HIT OR THREATENED

Safety Planning During a Violent Incident
• When an argument begins, try to move to a room or area with a safe exit. Avoid a bathroom, kitchen or anywhere near weapons.
• Identify a neighbor you trust and ask that person to call the police if they hear a disturbance coming from your home or if a prearranged signal is used (i.e. switching the porch light on and off a certain number of times or curtains specifically arranged).
• You have the right to protect yourself until you are out of danger. Rely on your instincts and judgment.
• If the police come, and you feel you are in danger, ask them to arrest your assailant. If you are afraid to do that in front of your assailant, ask to talk to one of the officers alone.

You have the right to TALK TO THE RESPONDING OFFICER AWAY FROM YOUR ASSAILANT.

When Preparing to Leave
Planning to leave your assailant can be very dangerous. Follow these suggestions if you feel it is safe to do so:
• If possible, pack a bag—including documents, extra clothes, money and spare keys to the car and the house. Keep the bag in a secret place or hide it in a car or at the home of a trusted neighbor, friend or family member.
• Find a friend or family member who will let you stay with them or lend you money.
• Keep SafeHouse Center’s phone number close at hand and memorize it if you can. Also keep a personal cell phone with you at all times, along with some change or a calling card.
• Ask trusted friends, family members, coworkers, neighbors and professionals to help you with your safety planning.
• For additional help, call the SafeHouse Center HelpLine at 734-995-5444.
• If possible, have important mail such as bank statements and legal papers sent to a post office box or to a friend or family member’s house.

Staying Safe While Still in the Relationship
• Practice how to get out of your home and identify the best exit route.
• Brainstorm reasons to leave the house for a short period.
• Devise a signal or code word to use with family, friends and neighbors when you need them to contact the police.
• If your children are old enough, teach them how to call 911, or to go to a neighbor’s house to call 911. Be sure the children understand how to be safe.
• Decide on a safe place to go if you have to leave home, where you can call for further assistance.
• If you notice “warning signs” in your partner’s behavior, get out or get help before an assault happens.

GENERAL INFORMATION

• Social security card
• Welfare identification
• Money
• Lease/Mortgage
• Bank books
• Check books
• Insurance papers
• House and car keys
• Medications
• Address Book
• Photographs
• Medical and immunization records for family members
• School records
• Work permits
• Green card
• Passports
• Divorce papers
• Jewelry
What About my CHILDREN?

Children are in danger in homes with a batterer for many reasons. Many assailants hurt the children physically and some sexually abuse them. Your assailant may kidnap or deny you access to your children to try to get you back or take revenge on you. Batterers may seek custody of the children for the same reasons or use them to attract his next victim.

Children can be hurt “indirectly.” Your batterer may be trying to shoot you and “accidentally” shoot a child. Or he may push you down the stairs while you are holding a baby. Children may get hurt trying to protect you or attempting to restrain the batterer.

Children in homes where there is violence may start behaving in negative ways or develop psychological problems. Some children become the perfect kids— they take care of everything and become overachievers. Others act out. They may become involved in gangs or start having sex, skipping school, drinking, or using drugs. These children may exhibit behavior ranging from very withdrawn to very aggressive.

Some survivors think their children do not know about the violence and therefore are not going to be hurt by it. Children from violent homes tell us that they almost always knew about the violence, even if they were not present when it occurred.

Do not blame yourself because of what the assailant’s violence has done to your kids. Take inventory of the ways in which you have protected your children and build upon that. Some children from violent homes do extremely well later in life, particularly if there is early intervention to help them sort out what is happening or has happened to them.

Many survivors wonder how their children are doing and what they should say to them about the violence. We recommend that you talk to your children about the violence and what is going on. We also recommend that you find another helpful adult to talk with your kids.

Here are some suggestions of what you can discuss:

- Violence is always wrong, and what Dad (or a stepfather or boyfriend) is doing is not right.
Child Abuse and Neglect

If you believe your partner has sexually or physically abused one or more of your children, what do you do?

➤ Most important, believe your child.
Children almost never lie about abuse. Tell your child you are glad she or he told you and that you will try to help them be safe in the future. Be aware that some institutions may assume that your child is lying or you are lying to get revenge on your husband, get child custody, to win a court battle. Keep a log and write down all incidents and statements about the abuse.

➤ Get your child counseling.
Call our HelpLine at 734-995-5444 for a referral.

➤ Get some support for yourself.

IF THE BATTERER ABUSES THE CHILDREN
If your partner is abusing the children, you will probably need to leave in order to protect them. You can be charged with “failure to protect” if you know about the abuse but don’t remove your children from the risk. If you believe that your child has been abused by your partner or former partner, it is very important to report the abuse. The staff at SafeHouse Center can be very helpful in that process, and please feel free to call us at 734-995-5444 to learn more about reporting child abuse.

If your child has been sexually assaulted or abused, he or she should have a medical exam. However, you may not want to take him or her to your family doctor. Most doctors are not trained to perform such exams, and it could be traumatic for the child. Ask Children’s Protective Services (CPS) to make a referral to the Child Protection Team at the University of Michigan Hospital.

CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES’ ACTIONS
After suspected abuse or neglect is reported to CPS, it will investigate to determine if abuse has occurred and what steps are necessary to protect the children. These actions can vary from simply speaking to the parties involved to going to court and asking that the children be removed from the home. However, the goal of CPS is not to remove

International Parental Abduction
Sometimes a batterer will threaten to take minor children out of the country or will actually attempt to do so. U.S. citizens must enter and depart the United States with a valid passport except when traveling to countries within the western hemisphere (Canada, Mexico, and Central and South America). If your children are citizens of the United States and you are concerned that your partner may take them out of the country, you can participate in the Children’s Passport Issuance Alert Program run by the State Department. This program enables the department to notify a parent or legal guardian that a passport has been requested for the child(ren). You must submit a written request to the State Department for entry of a child’s name into the program.

To participate in the program, you can (1) call 1-888-407-4747 and request copies of its request form or (2) download the request form from the State Department Web site at http://travel.state.gov.

Submitting this request does not necessarily mean that a passport request for your child will be denied. In order for the State Department to deny a passport for your child, you must submit a complete copy of a temporary or permanent court order that states (1) you have sole legal custody, (2) you have joint legal custody, or (3) there are restrictions on the child’s ability to travel.

SafeHouse Center can provide referrals to agencies that help and support children from violent homes. Call the HelpLine to talk to an advocate about these resources.
children from their homes--its job is to ensure the safety and proper care of the children. It is in your best interest to work with Child Protective Services. There is also the Washtenaw County Child Advocacy Center (WCAC). The WCAC is a child-centered facility where families can meet with a multidisciplinary team following reports of child sexual abuse.

GETTING HELP
If you need help with parenting skills or protecting your children, call SafeHouse Center and ask for help. An abuser may use threats to keep you from seeking out resources and services for you and your children. It may be scary to take that first step, but you’ll find there are community services that want to assist and work with you, not against you.

section 11 Education and Counseling for Assailants

All survivors want the violence to stop, but not all want the relationship to end. Ideally, they would like the relationship without the violence. The hard truth is that assailants typically do not permanently stop being violent toward his or her intimate partner. If they do reduce or eliminate their violence, it is only with intensive counseling, education, sanctions for continuing the violence (such as probation, the threat of jail, or the threat of losing a job), and a strong internalized belief that they must change because battering is wrong. They are not apt to change only because they want to hold on to a relationship; rather, if they change will be because they are prepared to dramatically change their fundamental beliefs and behaviors. The odds are strongly against batterers permanently stopping their controlling and abusive behavior.

Many survivors want their batterer to get help, and some want to save him. Nothing you do makes him abuse you. Nothing you do can make him stop. He chooses to be violent. He must make the choice to stop, and he must stick with that choice no matter what happens.

To stop being violent, batterers must really want to change and must make a long-term commitment. They must take full responsibility for their violence without making excuses or blaming others. The very few batterers who do change are forced to because of serious consequences (jail being one of the most effective). Interventions that do work take one year or longer. Change will not happen overnight.

We worry about survivors taking comfort in the fact that their assailants are going to counseling because one of the reasons why some battered women stay in abusive relationships is that they believe their partners will change. If the assailant enters treatment, counseling, or a batterers’ intervention program, the survivor may stay in the relationship in the hope that the violence will end.

A lot of batterers go to counseling one, two, or three times. They use the counseling to convince their partners to return, and after that happens they drop out. Batterers have many excuses for dropping out: the fee is too high, I’m not like those other men, they want to brainwash me, they blame men for everything, the hours are not reasonable, and so on. Some assailants lie and say they are going to counseling when they are not.

What does NOT work
Traditional counseling that seeks a solution to violence by looking at and resolving the batterer’s personal problems (such as violence in the home where he grew up).

What does NOT work
Traditional counseling that sees the survivor as having a role in the violence.

What does NOT work
Marital or couple’s counseling. In addition to almost never working, this can be dangerous for survivors. Batterers often push for this type of counseling because they insist that the violence is caused by their partners or is a mutual problem.

What does NOT work
Programs that concentrate solely on reducing stress, managing anger, or stopping substance abuse.

What does NOT work
Quick-fix programs that are short term and promise immediate results.
You can go to an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting or another self-help group. (Note: Some self-help groups may tell you that you are as sick as your batterer and enmeshed and responsible for his violence. This is not true. Stick to their message about alcohol and drugs and ignore their ideas about battering.)

If You Are a Lesbian or Gay Male Survivor

Physical and sexual violence also occurs in lesbian and gay relationships. Many of the same things happen: isolation, psychological abuse, sexual violence, and physical assault. If you are a lesbian or a gay man who is being battered by your partner, you may have some additional issues as well.

The bottom line is that getting help for the violence usually means coming out. Choosing to come out can be a difficult decision. While it can be an empowering and freeing experience, for some people it can have negative consequences such as physical violence, loss of family, eviction from housing, loss of children to the state or the batterer, or loss of a job. Your partner may threaten you with outing if you leave. She or she may use the special concerns and issues of the lesbian and gay community to keep you under control. He or she may tell you that by letting others know about the abuse you’re reinforcing the homophobia of the straight culture and “selling out” lesbians and gay men. If this is your first sexual relationship with someone of the same gender, your partner may lie and tell you that all same-gender sex involves humiliation, force, or coercion. Lesbians and gay men cannot routinely turn on the television and find portrayals of positive lesbian and gay relationships. This leaves them vulnerable to partners who tell them that “all gay men” do this or they are not “real lesbians.”

You may be afraid to tell members of your family because this may reinforce their view that you are living a “sick” lifestyle. You may not want your partner to lose his or her job or family by reporting him or her to the police. You may not want to expose the lesbian or gay male community to more criticism. You may be new to relationships and think that your partner’s behavior is normal. That is not the way a healthy relationship works.

Professionals from whom you seek help may be homophobic and may not view your relationship as being as valid or legitimate as heterosexual...
al ones. Further, they may misunderstand the pattern of battering that you are experiencing. You may even encounter a therapist, religious leader, or other professional who believes that lesbian and gay relationships are sick or sinful.

If you are a lesbian, you may have trouble recognizing that you are being battered because you may believe that only men use violence in intimate relationships. Your partner may tell you that she is not "butch" and you have to be butch to batter. That is not true.

If you are a gay man, you may think that real men do not get beat up or that you should be able to protect yourself because you are a man. In addition, you may in danger if your partner refuses to practice safe sex, rapes you, or causes cuts or abrasions. If you practice anal sex, you may be at a higher risk for contracting HIV. If you are HIV positive, your partner may threaten to tell people. You may have heard the myth that shelters do not help or accept men, and you may not see SafeHouse Center as a potential source of help. SafeHouse Center provides services to people of all genders and sexual orientations.

You may be particularly concerned about confidentiality because of how small the lesbian and gay male community is. All information given to any employee or volunteer at SafeHouse Center is confidential. However, you might want to use a different name. You might also want to get counseling or support in a different county. We can provide you with a referral.

You may be concerned about encountering homophobia among the staff, volunteers, or straight survivors. All staff and volunteers of SafeHouse Center have training on homophobia and are given information about the special issues lesbians and gay men face in battering relationships. If you feel that the counselor you’re talking to is not as sensitive as you would like, ask to talk to a supervisor.

Our experience has been that lesbian and gay male survivors are usually treated sympathetically by heterosexual survivors in our programs. The commonalities of being battered seem to outweigh the differences between you.

If you are a lesbian or gay male survivor, you can get a personal protection order and/or an antistalking civil order. Your partner can be prosecuted for criminal assault.

You may have heard that domestic violence programs accept only heterosexuals. That’s not true. You are always welcome at SafeHouse Center.

section 14 If You Have a Physical Disability

Assailants may perceive people with physical disabilities as easier to control. For this reason, some assailants target people with disabilities. They may use the disability to promote a sense of self-blame and worthlessness in the survivor. They may blame the abuse on your disability and make you feel that no one else could love you. Domestic violence and sexual assault happen to women all over the world, regardless of physical ability, race, education, and income. You are not alone, and you deserve to be treated with respect.

Because of environmental barriers (inaccessible services, buildings, bathrooms, buses, and so on), people with physical disabilities are already isolated. The batterer may increase that isolation through such tactics as removing a wheelchair ramp, removing a TTY, or not helping you go places. If you are unable to drive a car, use a bus, or take a cab, it will be difficult for you to escape. Batterers might withhold food or not help you use the bathroom. He might give you too much medicine or refuse to give you any.

Most domestic violence agencies try to be as accessible as possible to those with physical disabilities. They will work with you in a variety of ways to provide the services you need. Many shelters can house both you and your personal care attendant if he or she is not your assailant.

Some helping professionals may see people with disabilities as sexless and have trouble perceiving your relationship with your assailant as legitimate. Alternatively, it may be that you are being battered by your caretaker. If you are being battered by your caretaker, you can call Adult Protective Services.

section 15 If You Are a Survivor and a Senior Citizen

Many elderly survivors face additional obstacles and challenges. Most people assume that “elder abuse” only means adult children hurting or exploiting their parents. If you’re being battered by an older partner, it may be ignored. Some think that “old” men are not physically strong
enough to batter or rape. This is not true.

You may be concerned about losing your home, your income from social security, or your health insurance if you leave your assailant. Shelters, which tend to be noisy and chaotic. You may be concerned about losing your independence or being institutionalized.

If you are in poor health or are experiencing problems with a disability, your assailant may capitalize on this. He may withhold your medication or give you too much. If you rely on your assailant for personal care, he might withhold food or water (see the previous section on disability). If you are not working outside the home, he might find it easy to isolate you from supportive friends. You may be worried about your assailant’s poor health or destructive behavior and wonder what will happen to him if you leave.

You may not think of yourself as “battered,” but if you’re being hurt and controlled, or threatened, by another person you are a survivor. SafeHouse Center can help you find the resources you need to become safe and stay independent. We work closely with area organizations concerned with the economic and social well-being of older citizens. Please call us at 734-995-5444 so we can work out a plan with you. If you are being battered by your caretaker, you can also call Adult Protective Services.

section 16 If You Are a Woman of Color

Because of racism women of color are much less likely to receive help from social service agencies than white women are. Women of color are less likely to be believed. Some people think that violence is “normal” in communities of color and that battered women do not want or need help. Some professionals may use the excuse “Well, battering is acceptable in that culture” to not help women of color.

Your assailant may use your experiences with racism and understandable fear of it to keep you under control or keep you from reaching beyond your community for help and support. He may tell you that if you “have him arrested” he will be beaten or killed by the police. If you know that this is a real possibility, it may be hard for you to make the decision to call the police.

He may suggest that you are “selling out” to the white man by seeking help from outside your own community. He may ridicule you by saying that you are going to a bunch of white women for help.

Those who don’t speak English fluently, or are from another country, you may face additional barriers in finding help. You may be concerned about encountering racism among the staff, volunteers, or white survivors at SafeHouse Center. All of our staff and volunteers have received training on racism and oppression and are given information about the special issues that women of color face in battering relationships. Our experience has been that in general women of color and white women support each other when they use our services and that the commonalities of being battered seem to outweigh the differences of race.

SafeHouse Center is a diverse place, and many of our counselors are women of color. If you feel that a counselor is not as sensitive as you would like, ask to talk to a supervisor.

We are committed to helping you in any way we can. Please call us!

section 17 If You Are a Survivor of Dating Violence*

For a long time, people did not realize that domestic violence happens among young people in high school and college who are dating. It is not true that domestic violence only occurs among people who are married or living together.

One problem is the term dating. High school students today may not describe their relationships with other kids as dating. They may hang out in a group or never go out on a date. But wherever there are romantic or sexual relationships there is the potential for violence or abuse.

Young people face many obstacles to getting help when they’re being abused. If this is the first time you’ve had a serious boyfriend or girlfriend, he or she may tell you, “This is the way it is. All relationships are like this.” If your dating partner is intensely jealous and possessive, he or she may say, “This is what real love looks like.” You may be confused because he says he cannot live without you and wants to be with you every moment. He may convince you that the abuse is your fault because you dress in a certain way or like to dance or flirt. He may have cut you off from relationships with your friends to make it hard for you to approach any of them for help. He may threaten to ruin your reputation if you break up with him, and you may think you will never
find another boyfriend. Separation can be especially difficult if you go to the same school.

You may not want to tell your parents or other adults about the abuse because they don’t approve of the relationship. You may have broken rules in seeing your friend, and you don’t want to get yourself or him in serious trouble or to be saddled with more rules and restrictions. Adults may not take your relationship seriously.

If you are being hurt or abused in a dating relationship, please call us at 734-995-5444. Survivors of dating violence can get a personal protection order, and assailants can be prosecuted for domestic violence or stalking within the criminal court system. SafeHouse Center will listen and believe you. There is help available, and healthy, nonviolent relationships can happen! We have a group of teens called Teen Voice who work hard to educate other teens and adults about dating violence. Call us for more information.

* Although this section focuses on the special issues of young people, we recognize that people other than high school and college students are in dating relationships.

section 18 If You Are a Battered Immigrant Woman

If you are a battered immigrant woman, you may have special concerns or issues with which you need help.

First, some people in the United States think that battering and abuse are “normal” in your culture, and therefore they might not make vigorous attempts to stop the violence or help you. In fact, battering and abuse occur in all cultures, and they are always wrong.

Those who do not speak English may have trouble getting help. SafeHouse Center has a “language line” which can provide translation. This line can be reached by calling the SafeHouse Center HelpLine at 734-995-5444.

If your immigration status depends on an abusive husband, you will need special assistance. Do not believe anything your abuser says about the USICS or the laws of the United States. Assailants often lie. They can and will use threats of deportation to keep you under control.

As part of the 1994 Violence against Women Act, Congress allowed abused women who are married to a U.S. citizen or lawful permanent resident to file their own application for lawful permanent residency. Abused women are not forced to obtain permission or help from their abusers in order to become legal residents. Rather, they can “self-petition” for residency Congress also allowed immigration judges the discretion to waive the deportation of abused women who have been married to U.S. citizens or lawful permanent residents, a process called “VAWA cancellation.”

Do not call the USICS.

As you may already know, immigration issues are confusing and complicated. You will need to find an immigration attorney who knows about domestic violence. SafeHouse Center can help you find one. Call the HelpLine to discuss your options.
LEIN is the Law Enforcement Information Network. All police officers have access to the LEIN computer network, which has a record of active warrants for people’s arrest, valid personal protection orders (PPOs), and conditional bonds. If you have a personal protection order or if, as part of criminal charges against your assailant, a judge has ordered him not to contact you, not to return to your residence, not to drink, not to threaten you, and so on, all of these conditions should come up on the LEIN computer when the police run your assailant’s name. This will allow them to arrest him for violating any orders. It will also notify the police if your assailant has any warrants out for his arrest.

a magistrate functions like a judge but in a restricted role. In district court, arraignments and pleas are often handled by a magistrate.

Mediation is a process of alternative dispute resolution in which a neutral third party, the mediator, helps two or more parties negotiate an agreement, with concrete effects, on a matter of common interest. More and more cases involving families in Washtenaw County are being referred to mediation. If you do not want to enter into mediation with the assailant, let your attorney or SafeHouse Center staff know. You do not have to mediate if you do not want to.

a personal Protection Order (PPO) is a civil order issued by the court that can prohibit the batterer from doing many things, including having contact with the survivor or minor children; threatening the survivor; sending objects or correspondence to the survivor; going to the survivor’s home, school, or workplace; interfering with the survivor’s work or educational opportunities; gaining access to any school or medical records of the minor children that would disclose the survivor’s location or residence; and stalking the survivor.

a petitioner is a person who files paperwork with the court requesting a personal protection order.

a plaintiff is a person who brings an action, sues, or files the complaint. If you file for divorce, you are the plaintiff.

a plea is entered in court. The person who has been arrested will at some point “enter a plea,” telling the court that he is guilty or not guilty. He can also stand mute or plead no contest (nolo contendere). No contest means “I will not contend” and is similar to a guilty plea. However, a no contest plea cannot be used against the defendant in a civil trial.

a prosecutor is an attorney employed by the county whose job it is to
prove that the suspect or defendant committed the crime with which he is charged. If there are criminal charges against your assailant, it is the prosecutor who will prepare the case and present the evidence against him. You will not need to hire an attorney. The prosecutor will prosecute the criminal case against your assailant.

a public defender is a defense attorney employed by the county to defend people in criminal cases who do not have enough money to hire an attorney.

**Reasonable cause/probable cause** means any facts that would lead a “fair-minded person of average intelligence” to believe that the suspect has committed a crime.

**Reasonable doubt** means that the prosecutor must prove to the judge or jury that the defendant committed the crime without a “reasonable doubt” in the mind of a “reasonable person.” This carries a greater burden of proof than probable cause and is used during a trial.

a respondent is a person against whom a personal protection order is issued.

a subpoena is an official order of the court that tells people they must come to court. You may receive a subpoena as a witness.

**Suspect** is used to refer to the person the police suspect committed a crime. In assault and battery cases, this would be the assailant.

a venue is the neighborhood, place, or county in which an injury is declared to have been done. It also can refer to the geographical division in which an action or prosecution is brought for trial.

**Victim** is used by the police to refer to the person against whom a crime was committed.

**Civil Cases**

Civil cases are initiated by an individual or group against another individual or group. Each individual must provide his or her own attorney. Divorce, custody, parenting time, and property settlement are civil matters. If you sue your assailant, that is a civil matter.

Your assailant may drag out a divorce and property settlement in an attempt to wear you down or make you run out of money. He may use court-ordered parenting time with children as a way to track and harass you. He may use the threat that you will never see your children again if you pursue a divorce. Since 1993, judges have been required to consider domestic violence when granting custody of children.

Domestic violence personal protection orders, and antistalking personal protection orders can be confusing because they are civil orders of the court but may be enforced by arrest and criminal contempt penalties.

**Differences Between Civil and Criminal Cases**

Criminal cases are those in which the state (or municipal or federal) government initiates a case against an individual (the defendant) in the belief that the defendant has violated the law. Criminal cases are based on the belief that the defendant’s actions constitute a violation of the rights of all citizens or a danger to the community. The community pays for the prosecution (through a prosecutor or city attorney). The defendant is guaranteed the right to representation by an attorney appointed by the court (sometimes the public defender) if he or she cannot afford to hire one.

In the past, too many people thought of domestic violence as a private, family matter (that is, a civil matter) and not a crime. However, it is always a crime, and fortunately these attitudes are slowly changing.

**Civil Cases**

Civil cases are initiated by an individual or group against another individual or group. Each individual must provide his or her own attorney. Divorce, custody, parenting time, and property settlement are civil matters. If you sue your assailant, that is a civil matter.

Your assailant may drag out a divorce and property settlement in an attempt to wear you down or make you run out of money. He may use court-ordered parenting time with children as a way to track and harass you. He may use the threat that you will never see your children again if you pursue a divorce. Since 1993, judges have been required to consider domestic violence when granting custody of children.

Domestic violence personal protection orders, and antistalking personal protection orders can be confusing because they are civil orders of the court but may be enforced by arrest and criminal contempt penalties.

**Different Types of Courts**

In Washtenaw County, judges are assigned to one of the three divisions listed below, but any judge may act in any capacity.

1. **Civil/Criminal Division of Washtenaw County Trial Court**

The Civil/Criminal Division has jurisdiction over all civil lawsuits over $25,000, all civil appeals from administrative agencies, and all felony criminal cases (as well as high misdemeanors such as criminal sexual conduct in the fourth degree). If your assailant is charged with a felony crime such as attempted murder or aggravated stalking, the case will be handled in this division.

2. **District Court Division**

The District Court handles small claims, landlord-tenant issues, misdemeanors, and traffic violations. Crimes are misdemeanors if the
potential sentence is one year or less.

Most domestic assault cases (the ones charged as assault, assault and battery, aggravated assault, or stalking) are handled here. The District Court also performs initial arraignments, sets and accepts bail, and conducts preliminary examinations for the Criminal/Civil Division in felony and high misdemeanor cases. District Courts also issues arrest warrants and search warrants. It does not handle civil suits over $25,000, divorce cases, or custody cases. For lawsuits involving financial claims of less than $1,750, there is a special section of the District Court called the Small Claims Division. A small claims case is hard to use against an assailant because he has to agree to give up his rights to a jury trial, representation by an attorney, and appeal. A District Court may order a magistrate to do some of the work involved in a case such as arraignments, setting bail, accepting guilty pleas, and authorizing warrants. The magistrate’s decision can be appealed to the judge.

3. THE FAMILY DIVISION (UNDER THE “CIRCUIT COURT”)
The Family Division includes the Juvenile Court and the Probate Court. It handles estates and wills, commitment to hospital care for mentally ill and/or addicted persons, adoption of children, guardianship, juvenile delinquency, and abuse and neglect cases that involve foster care. The Family Division also handles divorce, custody, and parenting time orders. Mediation is frequently ordered within this division. If you do not wish to pursue mediation, tell your attorney or call SafeHouse Center.

The Family Division also handles personal protection orders. There is usually one judge assigned to these. It may be a judge who is assigned to the Family Division for that purpose.

section D > When is Abuse or Battering a Crime?

Abuse becomes a crime under certain circumstances. Most abusers commit a number of different crimes. Most assailants contact their partners repeatedly and may be guilty of stalking. Many abusers hurt children and may be guilty of the crimes of child abuse, child neglect, or criminal sexual conduct. Many hurt or kill pets, and most destroy property. They might be charged with arson or malicious destruction of property or cruelty to animals. An assailant who breaks into your home can be charged with breaking and entering if he does not also own or rent the home. If he is not the father of your children and you have a custody order, he might be charged with kidnapping if he takes the children away. Many assailants force their partners to have sexual contact or sexual penetration. Assailants can also be arrested if they violate personal protection orders or a no-contact order. These are crimes.

Name calling, isolation, and intimidation are often not considered assaults. But you can talk to your advocate about your specific experiences. It takes help to sort out what abusive behavior is criminal.

ASSAULT

Abuse becomes a crime when there is an assault. An assault is legally defined as “any willful attempt or threat to inflict injury upon the person of another when coupled with an apparent present ability to do so, and any intentional display of force that give the victim reason to fear or to expect immediate bodily harm.” This means that if your partner pulls out a knife and threatens to kill you with it, that is a felonious assault. If he calls you on the telephone and says he is going to kill you, that probably would not be considered an assault, because it lacks the “apparent present ability” to carry out the threat.

Battery is the “actual application of force.” It occurs when your partner hits, pushes, grabs, kicks, or shoves you. You should be aware that what your assailant calls “restraint” may be assault or battery under the law.

For a crime to be considered a domestic assault, you and the assailant would have to be dating, formerly dating, married, formerly married, living together, formerly living together, or have a child in common. Someone convicted of a domestic assault could spend up to ninety-three days in jail and/or receive a $500 fine. Most assailants do not go to jail for the first conviction; they receive probation.

The second offense of a domestic assault [MCLA 750.81(3)] is committed when a defendant has a prior (misdemeanor or felony) assault conviction involving a victim who meets the above criteria for a domestic relationship. The penalty is up to one year in jail and/or $1,000 in fines.

When a person is convicted of a third domestic assault offense [MCLA 750.81(4)] and has two prior misdemeanor or felony assault convictions involving a victim who meets the criteria for a domestic relationship, it is considered a felony. The penalty is up to five years in prison and/or $2,500 in fines.
Aggravated Stalking [MCLA 750.411i]
An individual who engages in stalking is guilty of aggravated stalking if his actions include one or more of the following:

- Making a credible threat to kill or injure the victim or a member of the victim’s family or household;
- Violating a domestic assault or antistalking personal protection order (when the assailant has received actual notice of the order);
- Violating a condition of bond, pretrial release, or probation;
- Having a previous conviction for stalking or aggravated stalking.

Aggravated stalking is a felony, punishable by imprisonment of up to five years and/or a fine of up to $10,000. In addition to incarceration and fines, probation may be ordered for any number of years, though not less than five years. The terms of probation may include an anti-stalking order, a no contact order, and/or mandatory counseling for the stalker at his expense.

If the victim was less than eighteen years of age at any time during the conduct constituting aggravated stalking and the perpetrator is at least five years older than the victim, the crime is punishable by imprisonment for not more than ten years, a fine of not more than $15,000, or both.

Antistalking Personal Protection Orders [MCLA 600.2950a, MCLA 764.15b]
An individual who violates an antistalking order may also be prosecuted and convicted of aggravated stalking for the same violation [MCLA 750.411I(6)].

The Crime of Criminal Sexual Conduct [MCLA 750.520a et seq.]
Many assailants do sexual things to hurt their partners. Some of these things are crimes. Some people think that if you are married it is not a crime to be forced into sex. That is not true.

There are four degrees of criminal sexual conduct. The first, second, and third degrees are felonies. The fourth degree is a misdemeanor.

The first and third degrees involve forced or coerced penetration. This is vaginal intercourse (penis into vagina), anal or oral intercourse (penis into anus or mouth), or putting a finger or object in another per-
Whether you are going for a divorce, a custody hearing, or a criminal trial in which you are a witness, going to court is difficult and can be frightening. Knowledge about the court system and process can make it easier.

You can make a difference in court. Some women find testifying a positive and empowering experience. All that is expected of you is to try to do the best you can. Unfortunately, you cannot control the outcome of the proceedings. You can only control your own behavior. Just tell what you know and what you believe to be true.

Get a map of the courthouse and find out where the parking is. On the day you go to court, leave yourself enough time to park. Parking is sometimes difficult, particularly if you are in downtown Ann Arbor. Bring coins if you are going to be in a metered lot. If you can, do a trial run by driving by a day or two before court. Inevitably, you will end up waiting (often for hours). Sometimes you will wait and the case will be adjourned. Bring a book, or something else to do while you wait.

Ask your attorney or an advocate to go over with you what is going to happen in court. Find out whether you will be able to stay in the courtroom the entire time or whether you will need to be outside the courtroom until and after you testify. Let your attorney or the prosecutor know the things you think are particularly important to stress and ask your attorney what questions he or she plans to ask you. Make sure you’ve told your attorney (or the prosecutor) anything that your assailant could possibly use against you (such as past arrests or a history of drug abuse).

Bring someone supportive with you if you can. We understand from other survivors that going to court alone can be difficult. SafeHouse Center can send an advocate to court with you (please let us know in advance of any court dates). If you can manage child care, it may be better to not bring your children. It is hard for them and distracting for you. Although your choices may be limited, choose a support person as carefully as possible.

If you are representing yourself in a divorce, custody, or personal protection order case, let the bailiff or the judge’s clerk know when you arrive in the courtroom. If you are the victim or witness in a criminal case, let the prosecutor know when you arrive.

The assailant, his friends, and members of his family might try to approach you, talk to you, get into an argument with you, or harass you. Sometimes you and the supporters of the assailant will be waiting in the same hall. If your assailant is not in custody, he may be sitting near you. His family or friends might follow you, even to the bathroom. Stay with your support people if you can. There is usually a private room in which you can wait. Check with your attorney, prosecutor, or advocate about this.

Your assailant’s attorney or the defense attorney may come up to you at the hearing (or call beforehand) to talk about the case. He or she may try to make you feel guilty or pressure you. You are not required to talk to the assailant’s attorney.

Report any unwanted contacts to the prosecutor (if it is a criminal case) or your attorney (if it is a civil case). Do not be afraid to approach the bailiff or any police officer. Tell him or her that you are a victim of sexual assault.

The majority of assailants physically or sexually assault children or neglect them. Often assailants destroy property. Unless the property is owned by both partners, this is also a crime.

Many assailants hurt, torture, or kill pets. They can be charged with the crime of animal cruelty.

**OTHER CRIMES**

The majority of assailants physically or sexually assault children or neglect them. Often assailants destroy property. Unless the property is owned by both partners, this is also a crime.

Many assailants hurt, torture, or kill pets. They can be charged with the crime of animal cruelty.

section E — Going to Court
domestic violence, your assailant (or his friends or family) is around, and you would appreciate it if the officer would keep an eye on the situation. Let him or her know about any no contact or personal protection orders that might prohibit the assailant or members of his family from approaching you. You can ask that a law enforcement officer be provided to walk you to your car after the court appearance.

Take care of yourself both physically and emotionally before and during court time. Avoid using alcohol or other drugs and try to eat. Talk to people who are emotionally supportive of you. Before you get on the witness stand, take several deep breaths and center yourself.

Take some time before going to court to think about and accurately recall the events that you will be asked about on the stand. Make notes for yourself if you think that will be helpful. Refresh your memory. If you have a copy of the police report, reread it. The most important thing is to tell the truth as best you can remember it.

Dress conservatively and comfortably. Avoid party or sports clothes and extremes of dress or makeup. Dress the way you would to apply for a job or go to a funeral. If you need assistance in obtaining proper clothing, feel free to contact SafeHouse Center. You can discuss your court preparation with a trained SafeHouse Center Legal Advocate. Frequently it is helpful to talk things out with a caring person; that is what we are here for.

Avoid talking to or looking at the assailant. You may be directed by the judge to identify the assailant by where he is sitting and what he is wearing. Aside from that, the courtroom is typically set up in such a way that if you look straight ahead or at the judge or jury you will not see him.

When you testify, look at the jury. If there is no jury, look at the judge. If one juror looks skeptical or bored, find one that looks interested and look at him or her.

Sometimes your assailant’s attorney will ask you several questions at once. For example, he or she might say “When did the police arrive and what did they do when they got there?” Answer the first question. Do not try to answer them all. Take a deep breath and think for a second before answering questions. It is okay to say “I don’t know” if you do not know the answer to a particular question. It is fine to say, “I don’t understand the question” or “Could you repeat that question?” If the assailant’s attorney asks you something insulting or nasty, pause before you answer and look at your attorney (or the prosecutor), giving him or her time to object. If there is an objection and the judge agrees, you may not have to answer the question.

Sometimes your assailant’s attorney will try to twist or misinterpret what you say. For example, he or she might ask such questions as “You were furious at him, weren’t you?” or “You wanted him to get in trouble and that is why you called the police, right?” Feel free to say “That is not what I meant” or “That is not what I said.”

The assailant’s attorney may try to make you angry or frustrated. If this happens to you, try not to show your frustration because it will be used against you. If the deliberations seem to go on and on or you do not feel well and you need a break, ask the judge if one is possible.

section F The Police Response

When can the police arrest an assailant without a warrant?

1. Felony or misdemeanor committed in the officer’s presence
2. Felony based on probable cause
3. Misdemeanor assault and battery, domestic assault, or aggravated domestic assault when there is probable cause to believe that an assault took place and your partner committed it (even if the officer did not witness the assault) [MCLA 764.15 and MCLA 764.15a]
4. Violation of a personal protection order when there is reasonable cause to believe that a personal protection order has been violated [MCLA 750.15b]
5. Violation of the provisions of a conditional release of bond based on reasonable cause [MCLA 764.15e and MCLA 765.6]
6. Violation of a condition of probation or parole based on reasonable cause [MCLA 764.15g]. When a misdemeanor domestic assault has occurred, a police officer does not have to witness the crime in order to make an arrest. To arrest without witnessing the crime, two things are necessary.

NOTE: the police officer must have probable cause to believe that an assault has taken place. Also, the victim and suspect must have a
“protected” relationship, which means that they must be spouses, former spouses, dating, formerly dating, living together, formerly living together, or have a child in common.

The victim does not need a personal protection order for an arrest to take place if he or she has been assaulted. Visible signs of injury are not necessary. The victim does not have to be “willing to prosecute” for an arrest to take place. If they believe a domestic assault has occurred, the police will probably arrest the assailant even if the victim asks them not to do so.

As of April 1, 2001, the police can also make an arrest without a warrant if you are or were dating the assailant [MCLA 764.15(i)(d)]. However, many officers may not yet realize that they can and should do this. If you are dating the assailant, but not living with him, you can still get a domestic violence or antistalking personal protection order. (See “Stalking,” in section D, for more information.)

What if the police don’t respond?
• If the police don’t come, call again and ask to talk to a supervisor. Say, “I am the victim of a domestic assault. I need protection. Please help me.” Be persistent but courteous. Tell the officer about any weapons present or injuries to you or your children. All calls to 911 are recorded.
• Call the SafeHouse Center HelpLine at 734-995-5444.

What if the police don’t arrest the assailant?
• Ask them to help you get to a safe place.
• Call the SafeHouse Center HelpLine at 734-995-5444.
• If the police don’t arrest your assailant right away, that does not mean that he cannot be arrested or prosecuted later. Call SafeHouse Center to discuss the particular circumstances of your case. We can tell you about your options.

How do I get the best response from the police?
• Try to remain as calm as you can but don’t worry about it if you can’t— it is alright to cry or feel shaky after an assault.
• Do not shout at or make insulting remarks to the police. It won’t help.
• Ask to talk to one of the officers privately so your assailant will not interrupt you.

• Be as specific as you can in telling the officer what happened. “He grabbed me by the arm and threw me on the floor” is more specific than “He came at me and messed me up.”
• Show them any injuries you have. Show them any damaged property.
• Tell them about any witnesses.
• Tell them if there have been past assaults.
• Show them any no-contact or personal protection orders you have.
• Tell them if you have been sexually assaulted.
• Let them know about any injuries to the children.
• If your assailant has been using alcohol or other drugs, tell the police.
• If there is an arrest warrant out for your husband or partner, let them know.

If your assailant is arrested, he will be taken into custody, taken to the police station, and booked. He will be held at the county jail until the next court session, when he will be arraigned. Arraign means that the court is formally charging the person. After arraignment, he may be released on bond. If the arraignment is not held within twenty-four hours, he will be released on “interim bond” after being held for twenty hours. The longest he will be in jail for a misdemeanor assault and battery arrest is twenty hours unless he cannot post the bond set by the court. For your own safety, contact the jail to learn when he will be released. The police should give you a victim’s rights sheet. They should take a report. The victim’s rights sheet should have the report number and the names and badge numbers of the police officers. Police procedures may be somewhat different depending on where you live.

Employees at the jail should try to contact you when your assailant is released, but they do not always do this. They should also contact SafeHouse Center, and we will try to contact you. You may want to call the jail and make sure it has the best phone number at which to reach you when your assailant is released. Your assailant will usually be released
between 10 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. You can also call the jail to find out where and at what time your assailant will be arraigned. The jail can give you a better idea about what time you should call back to find out if your assailant is being released, or if there is a money bond that is keeping him in jail, and if the judge has issued any conditions of bond that will prevent him from contacting you or coming home.

Once the police have made an arrest for domestic assault, the decision about whether or not to “press charges” is made by the prosecutor. The police officers will sign a complaint “based on information and belief.” You do not have to sign the complaint. Your assailant may ask or tell you to “drop the charges.” **Victims may not drop charges in this county;** only the prosecutor can do that. The police will send an incident report and the complaint to the prosecutor for authorization. If the complaint is authorized, it will proceed.

We are available to help and accompany you throughout the court process. A legal advocate can follow up with you to see how you are doing and offer you support throughout your court case.

**Arraignment in District Court**

After the suspect/defendant/assailant has been arrested or charged, he is arraigned. If the defendant has been arrested for assault and battery, arraignment will almost always take place before the assainant is released. At arraignment, he is given notice of the charges against him and advised of his constitutional rights. The defendant can request a court-appointed defense attorney. The conditions and amount of bail are determined, and a date is set for the pretrial.

Domestic violence assailants are usually released on “personal recognizance,” which means that they are let out of jail without putting up any money to make sure they show up in court. Depending on the severity of the crime, the judge may order the assailant to post bail to get out of jail. At the arraignment (or later in the process), a no contact order can be issued. The assailant might also be told not to return to your residence.

**No Contact Orders**

No Contact Orders are **conditions of bond or probation.** They can be issued in misdemeanor or felony cases.

When they are conditions of bond, they are issued by the judge/magistrate during the prosecution of a criminal case of domestic violence. Usually they are issued at the arraignment, but they can also be issued at pretrial or sentencing.

A **No Contact Order** can prohibit your assailant from contacting you in person, by phone, by mail, or through a third party. He can be prohibited from coming to your home or workplace. During the prosecution of the case but before sentencing, the No Contact Order must be listed as a bond condition on LEIN. If the assailant violates the no contact order, he can be arrested immediately. When the no contact order is issued during the criminal trial, what it prohibits is entered on LEIN. A No Contact Order, as part of a bond, lasts only as long as the prosecution of the criminal case. Once the criminal case is dismissed or the case is closed, the No Contact Order expires.

The judge may also order no contact as a condition of probation. If, after your assailant is convicted, he is put on probation, no contact may be ordered. You have the right to inform probation officers, prosecutors, and the judge that you would like a No Contact Order during probation. Ultimately the judge determines if a No Contact Order will be issued. If your assailant violates that order, he could go to jail. If the criminal charges are dismissed, if the defendant is found not guilty, or if the judge does not include the No Contact Order as a condition of probation, you will need to get a Personal Protection Order if you want to keep your assailant from contacting you.

**The Pretrial**

If no attorney is appointed at the arraignment, the court will appoint an attorney to represent the defendant at the pretrial (unless the defendant has hired his own attorney). The defendant can enter a plea of guilty, not guilty, or nolo contendre (no contest) or he can stand mute. If the suspect pleads not guilty, he may choose between a trial by jury or a trial by the judge (known as a bench trial). In a bench trial, there is no jury and the judge makes the decision. At the pretrial, the court usually will set a date for trial and may hear motions to determine what types of evidence will be admitted. The prosecutor and defense attorney may discuss whether your assailant might plead guilty to the crime charged or to some lesser offense. Although you are not required to do so, you may want to be present at the pretrial.
The Trial
At the trial, the prosecutor will try to prove beyond a reasonable doubt that the defendant is guilty of committing the crime. The prosecutor (or city attorney in some jurisdictions) must call witnesses. The defendant is not required to call witnesses, nor is he required to testify. You usually will be required by subpoena to be present, and you may be required to testify. If the defendant is found guilty, the judge will set a date for sentencing.

Sentencing
After the defendant is convicted and before the judge sentences him, the Probation Department will make a presentence investigation report. As part of the presentence investigation, the probation officer may contact you and ask for your opinion. You can talk to a probation officer by telephone or in person or you can submit a letter expressing your feelings about the incident and suggesting an appropriate sentence. At sentencing, the judge will have considered the Probation Department’s report, and its recommendation. The judge may order the defendant to do community service, enter counseling, and/or make restitution to you (e.g., pay you money.) If the defendant is put on probation, it means that he will not go to jail as long as he meets the conditions of probation. If he violates the conditions of probation, he could be sent to jail. A no contact order could be part of his conditions of probation. This is similar to the kind of no contact order issued as a condition of bond pending a criminal trial. All no contact orders are entered on the LEIN computer [MCLA 771.3].

Appeal
After he is convicted, the assailant has the right to appeal to the Circuit Court.

section I  
Felony Crimes: The Procedure

If your partner has been arrested or charged with a felony crime, here is what will happen:

Arraignment in District Court
After the suspect/defendant/assailant has been arrested or charged, he will be arraigned. Most often, arraignment will take place before the assailant is released. You do not need to be present. At the arraignment, he is given notice of the charges against him and advised of his constitutional rights. The conditions and amount of bail are determined, and a date is set for the preliminary examination. The preliminary examination will occur within fourteen days of arraignment. If your assailant harasses after he is released on bail, the prosecutor can ask the judge to revoke his bail. The judge may also issue a no contact order. (See “No Contact Orders” section H.)

Within seven days of the arraignment, but not less than twenty-four hours before the preliminary examination, the prosecutor must give you: (1) a statement of the procedural steps in the trial, (2) information about the Crime Victim’s Compensation Act, (3) suggested procedures if you are subject to threats, and (4) a person to contact for further information.

Upon your request, the prosecutor must give you notice of any court proceedings and schedule changes, consult with you regarding the disposition of the crime (this can include dismissal, plea, or sentence negotiations or pretrial diversion programs), and confer with you prior to a plea. If you are afraid that your assailant will use violence against you again, the prosecutor may ask the court to protect you by not disclosing your address, place of employment, or other personal identification.

You should receive a form from the Washtenaw County Prosecutor’s Office, and you must send it back in order to get these rights. If you request these rights, the statute requires that you keep the Prosecutor’s Office informed of your current address and telephone numbers.

Probable Cause Conference
This is a hearing that will occur within 14 days of arraignment and is an opportunity for the defendant to decide how they want to proceed; plead guilty or not guilty. If the defendant pleads guilty, the judge will schedule a sentencing date. If the defendant pleads not guilty, a Preliminary Examination hearing will be scheduled. The victim is not required to attend this hearing.

Preliminary Examination in District Court
This is a hearing that will occur within 14 days of arraignment. There are various things that can happen: 1. The hearing is adjourned to a later date; 2. The defendant chooses not to have an exam and go next to Circuit Court; 3. The defendant pleads guilty to some crime; 4. A hearing takes place and the prosecutor presents evidence/witnesses to
establish that there is probable cause to believe that a crime was committed and that the defendant was the one who committed it. Even though the defendant is not required to testify at this hearing, his/her attorney can cross-examine witnesses. If the judge finds probable cause, the defendant is “bound over” to Circuit Court. Due to the possibility of a hearing being held, the victim is likely to be subpoenaed for this hearing and may be asked to testify.

**Sentencing**

After the suspect is convicted and before the judge sentences him, the Probation Department makes a presentence investigation report. As part of the presentence investigation, the probation officer may contact you and ask for your opinion. At sentencing, the judge will have considered the Probation Department’s report, and its recommendation.

The judge may order the defendant to do community service or enter counseling and has the option of ordering the defendant to make restitution (e.g., pay you money). If the defendant is put on probation, he will probably not go to jail as long as he meets the conditions of probation. If he violates the conditions of probation, he could be sent to jail.

**Appeal**

If he is convicted, the assailant has the right to appeal to the Michigan Court of Appeals. Upon your request, the prosecutor will notify you of the following:

- Notice that the assailant has filed an appeal
- A brief explanation of the appeal process
- Whether the assailant is out on bail
- The time and place of any court proceedings
- The result of the appeal

**Crime Victims’ Compensation**

Victims of crime who suffer personal physical injury may be eligible for compensation through the Crime Victim’s Services Commission (see the address on page 90). Assistance may include compensation for certain kinds of out-of-pocket losses, loss of earnings, and/or loss of support. You can get a claim form from the Prosecuting Attorney’s Office or SafeHouse Center.

You must file within a year of the crime. The crime must be reported to the police within forty-eight hours of its occurrence unless the com-
mission finds there was good cause for the delay. To recover an out-of-pocket loss, you must show a loss of at least $200 in medical expenses.

A person requesting compensation cannot be criminally responsible for the crime and cannot be an accomplice. You must be willing to cooperate with law enforcement agencies in the investigation of the crime and with the courts in the prosecution. You cannot recover losses for personal property or pain and suffering.

If you have lived with your assailant, you cannot receive loss of earnings or loss of support, and any out of pocket loss must be paid by the commission directly to each medical care provider.

**Court-Ordered Restitution**

The court may order that financial restitution be paid to you to compensate for pain and suffering, loss of work time, medical costs, property damage, and so on. Unfortunately, you may encounter some difficulty in getting the assailant to pay you after the court has ordered it.

**Civil Suits for Damages Caused by a Stalker [MCLA 600.2954(1)]**

If you are a victim of stalking, there is a special law that allows you to sue the stalker for the damages caused by the stalking. It allows you to recover actual costs (including property damage, lost wages, and medical/therapy costs), general and special damages (physical and/or emotional pain and suffering), exemplary damages, court costs, and reasonable attorney fees. A lawsuit may be brought regardless of whether or not the stalker has been charged or convicted in a criminal case.

Victims of assaults covered by domestic violence personal protection orders may have a civil claim for damages under common law theories of assault and battery, tortious infliction of emotional distress, or other theories. Recoverable damages, however, will not include attorney fees, since those are only allowed if they are provided for by statute.

**Divorce**

You have to have lived in Michigan for six months before you can file for divorce, and you must have lived in the county in which you are filing for ten days. You do not have to be living apart from your spouse to file. If you are married and have children with your spouse, you must first file for divorce before you can file for custody.

**No-Fault Divorce**

You do not have to prove adultery or cruelty to get a divorce in Michigan. You only have to show that your marriage has broken down [MCLA 552.6, MSA 25.86]. You can get a divorce if your husband does not want one. The judge can look at fault when deciding how the property will be divided. He or she will also decide whether a spouse is entitled to alimony.

The spouse who files first is called the plaintiff. The other spouse is called the defendant. Divorces are filed in the Family Division of Circuit Court.

After the complaint (the divorce case) is filed and before the divorce is final, court orders for temporary custody, parenting time, child support, and alimony can be requested.

A divorce becomes final when the court enters a judgment of divorce after the two parties settle the case. The judgment contains information about who will take what property and who will have custody and deals with issues of parenting time custody. A divorce may be granted in 60 days if there are no minor children. When there are minor children, the waiting period is extended to 180 days.

There is something called a “do-it-yourself divorce kit.” It can only be used when the parties are in total agreement about everything. *It should not be used in cases of domestic violence.*

Engaging a good lawyer who knows about domestic assault is essential if you are going to file for divorce. You can call the SafeHouse Center HelpLine at 734-995-5444 for a referral.

**Separate Maintenance**

Separate maintenance allows the parties to live apart, legally separated and free from the responsibilities of marriage, but still be technically married. A separate maintenance action may provide for the support of a spouse who requires it [MCLA 552.7, MSA 25.87].

Separate maintenance is available only if both parties are willing to accept it. If the defendant in a separate maintenance action files a counterclaim for divorce, the court can grant a divorce but not separate
Custody

A custody order specifies with whom your child(ren) will live. Custody and parenting time are two different things. The judge can give custody to one parent (sole custody) or to both parents (joint custody). Until there is a court order, both parents have equal rights to the custody of their children. Either parent may file a motion to obtain custody.

We do not recommend “joint custody” when there has been domestic violence. Joint custody requires cooperation and agreement between the two parents. It will increase the danger of continuing abuse and harassment by your partner.

Personal protection orders can grant the petitioner “temporary possession” of the children (see section K, “Personal Protection Orders”.) The Friend of the Court is a part of the Family Division of the Circuit Court. It conducts investigations and makes recommendations to the court regarding child custody, parenting time, support, alimony, and property. It also enforces the court’s orders related to child support, alimony, custody, and parenting time.

Married Women and Custody

A married woman can request temporary custody when she files for divorce if the children are hers and are in her possession. The judge can grant such an order “ex parte” (without a hearing or notice to the other party).

The parent who files first and is in possession of the children usually gets temporary custody. When the parent who does not get temporary custody is served with the papers, he or she has ten days in which to request a hearing about the custody. If custody is disputed, you should make an appointment to see the Friend of the Court as soon as you get temporary custody. It will make a recommendation about who gets permanent custody.

Unmarried Women and Custody

If there is no acknowledged paternity (your partner is not on the child’s birth certificate) or other determination that he is the father of the child (such as through Department of Health and Human Services), the mother has legal custody. However, the father may initiate custody proceedings. You should consult an attorney and consider getting a custody order to prevent the father him from doing so first. If the man is legally the father, you cannot get automatic permanent custody. In that case, you should ask your attorney to file for an ex parte custody order.

Parenting Time

The Friend of the Court makes recommendations about what it believes is “reasonable parenting time.” The law assumes that it is in the best interest of the child to have strong relationships with both parents unless it is shown by means of “clear and convincing evidence” that parenting time would endanger the child’s physical, mental, or emotional health.

The court has the power to restrict parenting time by requiring that the visits occur in the presence of a third party or agency, requiring that a party post a bond to assure compliance with the parenting time order; and/or setting any other reasonable conditions determined to be appropriate in the particular case.

Supervised parenting time might be ordered if it is shown (through police reports, hospital records, or SafeHouse Center testimony, for example) that your life is in danger or the children are in danger. The Friend of the Court is more likely to recommend, and the court is more likely to order, supervised parenting time if there is evidence that the assailant has abused or neglected the children.

section K  Personal Protection Orders

[ MCLA 600.2950, 600.295A, 764.15B]  

Personal Protection Orders (PPOs) are civil orders. They were formerly known as restraining orders, injunctions, or domestic assault restraining orders. In Washtenaw County, they are handled by the Family Division of the Circuit Court. Usually one judge handles PPOs.

Personal Protection Orders may be granted by the court whenever there is an immediate danger that you are likely to be physically hurt by your intimate partner.

They were created to protect you from things that your assailant does that may not be crimes but may be part of the battering (such as calling you every hour or showing up where you work). Depending on the facts in your situation, a PPO can also give you temporary maintenance. There is no such thing as a “legal separation” in Michigan.
possession of any minor children you have with your intimate partner. Under certain circumstances, it can order the partner to move out of your home. If your assailant violates the PPO, he can be arrested and sent to jail.

The first step in obtaining a PPO is to fill out a request. This request is called a petition and must include a brief history of what your partner has done to you. The petition must be filed in the Family Division of the Circuit Court at 101 E. Huron in Ann Arbor. A staff person at the court will take the petition to the judge. The judge usually takes twenty-four hours to decide whether to deny or grant the PPO. Personal Protection Orders can be granted in their entirety, granted partially, or denied completely. If denied, you can request a hearing to present evidence to the judge showing why you believe a PPO should be granted. Your assailant must be notified of the hearing so he can appear and present evidence also. SafeHouse Center legal advocates can talk with you about your options and are available to assist you with the application.

More Information about PPOs
There are two types of personal protection orders:

1. Domestic violence personal protection orders (also known as domestic relationship personal protection orders) [MCLA 600.2950], which require a domestic relationship

2. Antistalking personal protection orders (also known as non-domestic relationship stalking personal protection orders) [MCLA 600.2950a], which do not require a domestic relationship but do require a pattern of nonconsensual contact.

To get a domestic violence PPO, you must show the court that there is a domestic relationship and reasonable cause to believe your partner has done and/or will do one or more of the acts that you list in the PPO.

To get an antistalking PPO, you must show the court an individual has committed two or more of the acts you list, and is likely to continue.

The request to the court must state specific incidents of assault and/or threats and may describe injuries and list witnesses. Criminal convictions or police reports are not required to get personal protection orders. However, if you do have a police report (or the number of the police report) or a hospital report, it is helpful to include the report with your request.

Important Things to Remember
You do not need an attorney to go to court and get a PPO. However, the forms can be difficult to understand. A legal advocate is available to assist you.

After being served a PPO, the assailant has the right to object to the personal protection order and request a hearing. If your assailant asks for a hearing on the PPO speak to a legal advocate about your options.

There is no filing fee for obtaining a personal protection order.

The judge decides whether to issue a personal protection order. If the judge does not, he or she must immediately state in writing and on the record the reasons why. You may keep your home address confidential, but you must give the court some kind of address where you can receive mail so that you can be notified of any court hearings.

The PPO goes into effect immediately after the judge signs it. However, if your assailant violates the order, the police might not arrest him unless there is proof that the order was served to the assailant.

If The PPO Has Not Been Served
If the PPO has been signed by the judge but not served and the police are called because your assailant has violated the order, the police must give spoken notice to your assailant and/or personally serve him with the PPO (if he has not left the scene). If he continues to violate the order after being notified by the police, they can arrest him.

PPO Service
A PPO can be served by a process server or any adult who is not a party or witness to the dispute. You cannot personally serve your own PPO. It may be delivered by registered mail, but the signed receipt is needed to demonstrate valid service of the order (this proves that the assailant received a copy of the order). The service must be appropriately filed at the county court clerk’s office. If you need help with PPO service, please speak to your legal advocate.

Your Actions And a PPO
You do not “invalidate” or “nullify” a PPO by your own behavior (for example, by inviting the assailant into your home). The PPO is a court order restraining the assailant, not you, from certain behaviors. However, it is possible that a police officer could be confused about this and
might not arrest the assailant if they believe you invited him into your house.

**Modifying or Cancelling the PPO**

If you decide you want to modify the personal protection order or cancel it, you must petition the court. The judge will ask you if you are being pressured or intimidated into modifying or canceling the order. It is important to tell the truth if you don’t feel that doing so poses too great a danger to you and those you care about.

**Police Enforcement of the Order and Potential Penalties**

If the PPO has been served, the police may arrest the assailant without a warrant when there is probable cause to believe he has violated the order and they can easily find him.

If they make an arrest, a hearing is held. If they do not arrest, you must request a hearing and seek to hold the assailant in contempt of court by contacting the court and filing a petition for a “show cause” hearing. SafeHouse Center can assist you with this.

If the assailant is found by the judge to have violated the order of the court, he can be sentenced to up to ninety-three days in jail, receive a $500 fine, or both.

**Relationship Necessary for a Domestic Violence PPO**

To obtain a domestic violence personal protection order, you must be in one of the following relationships:

- Married or formerly married
- Living together or formerly living together
- Having a child in common
- Dating relationship or former dating relationship

**How Is Dating Defined and What about Lesbians and Gay Men?**

A “dating relationship” is defined legally as frequent, intimate associations primarily characterized by the expectation of affectionate involvement. The term does not include a casual relationship or an ordinary fraternization between two individuals in a business or social context.

High school students, lesbians, and gay male couples who have not lived together can get a domestic violence personal protection order because of the dating violence provision in the law.

**What Can Be Included in Domestic Violence PPOs?**

Domestic violence personal protection orders can order your assailant not to do the following.

- Enter your premises
- Assault, attack, beat, molest, or wound you (note: attacks, beatings, and wounds are crimes for which you do not need a PPO for the police to arrest the assailant)
- Threaten to kill or physically hurt you
- Remove your minor children if you have legal custody unless a custody or parenting time order has been issued by a court of competent jurisdiction
- Purchase or possess firearms
- Interfere with your efforts to remove your children or personal property from premises that he solely owns or leases
- Interfere with you at work or do things that hurt your employment relationship or environment
- Engage in any other specific act or conduct that imposes upon or interferes with your personal liberty or that causes a reasonable apprehension of violence, including stalking.

**Regarding Children’s School and Medical Records**

The law allows a noncustodial parent to have access to a child’s records, including school and medical records. If you are the custodial parent and you are in hiding, you can get a personal protection order to prohibit the record keeper from releasing your address, phone number, and employment information. If you do, a copy of the PPO will have to be served on each record keeper.

**What Can Antistalking Provisions Include?**

Antistalking personal protection orders can be obtained when the stalker does not have a domestic relationship (as defined above) with the victim. When you are being battered and you have a domestic relationship with your assailant, you may want antistalking provisions added to your domestic violence personal protection order [MCLA 600.2950a].
These provisions can order the assailant to stop the following behaviors:

- Following you or appearing within your sight
- Approaching or confronting you in a public place or on private property
- Appearing at your home, workplace, school, or shelter (if you are staying in one)
- Entering onto or remaining on property you own, lease, or occupy
- Contacting you by telephone, mail, or electronic mail
- Placing an object on or delivering an object to property you own, lease, or occupy

**Increasing the Effectiveness of a Personal Protection Order**

To maximize the effectiveness of a personal protection order, it is important that you do the following:

- Carry a copy of the order with you (along with a proof of service) whenever possible. This is not required for enforcement, but it is a good idea because it helps get the order enforced.
- If the assailant violates the order but has not been served and you call the police, the police can serve him if you have a copy.
- Verify (or have your attorney verify) that the order and proof of service is on the LEIN computer.
- Let your employer, school personnel, and friends know about the PPO and ask them to call the police if your assailant shows up.

**What to Do if He Violates the PPO**

Call the police. The police should arrest him if there is probable cause to believe the personal protection order has been violated and the order has been served. The police may not be able to arrest him if he has left the scene and cannot be found within a reasonable period of time.

Unfortunately, the enforcement of PPO’s varies from place to place. Police in Washtenaw County are more likely to enforce protection orders than most other counties in Michigan. Enforcement can be unreliable even within police agencies.

Police officers are less likely to enforce the order if they think you have initiated contact with your assailant. However, it is still a violation of the order. Some police do not know that in Michigan they are allowed to arrest on the scene for violation of a personal protection order [MCL 764.15b; MSA 28.874(2)].

**What to Do if You Have a PPO, He Violates It, and the Police Don’t Arrest Him**

Call the police station and ask to speak to the supervisor or command officer. Explain the situation politely but firmly. If you do not get a helpful response, ask to talk to the next person up.

Call SafeHouse Center at 734-995-5444 (voice) and tell us what has happened. We may be able to help you explain the situation to the police. Also, as soon as you can, contact your attorney if you have one.

**Moving from Place to Place with a PPO: Full Faith and Credit**

This section is designed to give you concrete information about the laws governing protection orders issued in one place that need to be enforced in other places.

It is usually easier to get a protection order enforced in the place where it was issued than in other places. If you are moving, visiting, working in a different community, or going on vacation, you will need to think about personal protection order issues.

Always carry a true copy of your PPO and proof of service with you. In Washtenaw County, a true copy has a stamp saying “true copy” and a signature.

PPOs can usually be enforced across state, tribal, and territorial lines. The federal law known as the Violence against Women Act has a provision called “Full Faith and Credit.” It states that a valid personal protection order can be enforced in all fifty states, on Indian tribal lands, and in the District of Columbia, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, American Samoa, the Northern Mariana Islands, and Guam. (Note: A valid order of protection issued by a tribe must be recognized by state courts. However, tribes are sovereign nations, and they may or may not recognize protection orders issued by other tribes or states.)

Each jurisdiction has different laws, practices, levels of awareness of full faith and credit, methods of enforcement, and requirements for you to follow. If you are moving to another place, live in one place and
work in another, are visiting a different place, or are going on vacation, you will probably want to consult with advocates in both places about your personal protection order.

Law enforcement officers are required to enforce protection orders from other places the same way that they enforce orders from their own communities. Law enforcement officials will try to verify that your protection order is valid within Michigan by consulting the LEIN computer. Also they may check a national registry. You may want to register your protection order with the national registry, although it is not used by everyone in the same way and is not foolproof.

You should ensure that your PPO is in LEIN and on the national registry.

Note that the federal full faith and credit provision of the Violence against Women Act does not automatically protect your children, even if they are listed in the protection order.

section L Federal Laws Related to Domestic Violence

There are a number of federal laws that relate to domestic violence:

Interstate Travel to Commit Domestic Violence [18 U.S.C. 2261]

It is a federal crime for a person to cross state lines or leave or enter Indian country with the intent to injure, harass, or intimidate an intimate partner when in the course of or as a result of the travel the abuser commits a violent crime that causes bodily injury.

It is a federal crime to cause an intimate partner to cross state lines or leave or enter Indian country by force, coercion, duress, or fraud if the abuser intentionally inflicts bodily injury on the partner during or as a result of the conduct.

Interstate Stalking [18 U.S.C. 2261A]

It is a federal crime to cross a state line with the intent to injure or harass any person if during the course of or as a result of the travel the defendant places the person or a member of the person’s family in reasonable fear of death or serious bodily injury. Note that this law does not apply to Indian tribes.

Firearms

Federal law prohibits an abuser, subject to a qualifying order of protection, from possessing firearms and ammunition.

The legal statute 18 U.S.C. 922(g)(8) states that abusers are not permanently banned from possessing guns but only during the time the order of protection is in existence. Additionally there are “official” use exemptions that allow law enforcement and military personnel to possess their service weapon during their working hours.

18 U.S.C. 922(g)(9) prohibits gun possession by anyone who has been convicted of a qualifying misdemeanor crime of domestic violence. The gun ban is permanent, which means that if a person has been convicted he or she can never legally possess a gun again. There is no “official use” exemption, and the statute is retroactive.

section M State Laws in Michigan

Due to space limitations, all the laws related to domestic violence cannot be included in this handbook.

All the Michigan laws described here (preceded by “MCLA”) can be found on the Michigan legislature’s website at:

In addition, the Michigan bench book on domestic violence, which provides guidance to judges, is available online.
WASHTENAW COUNTY COURTS

CIVIL/CRIMINAL DIVISION

Washtenaw County Trial Court (Circuit Court, 22nd Judicial)
101 East Huron Street
P.O. Box 8645, Ann Arbor, MI 48107-8645
General Court Information ....................................................(734) 222-3270
www.washtenawtrialcourt.org
Jurisdiction: All of Washtenaw County

15th District Court
301 East Huron, P.O. Box 8650
Ann Arbor, MI 48107-8650
Administration .................................................................(734) 794-6759
Civil Division Information ..................................................794-6752
Probation ............................................................................ 794-6761
www.a2gov.org
Jurisdiction: City of Ann Arbor, including the University of Michigan

14B District Court
7200 S. Huron River Drive
Ypsilanti, MI 48197
Criminal & Traffic Information ..............................................(734) 483-1333
Civil Case Information ........................................................483-5300
www.ytown.org
Jurisdiction: Township of Ypsilanti

14A-1 District Court
4133 Washtenaw P.O. Box 8645
Ann Arbor, MI 48107
General Court Information ...................................................(734) 973-4883
www.14adistrictcourt.org
Jurisdiction: Townships of Ann Arbor, Augusta, Pittsfield, Salem and Superior as well as the Village of Barton Hills.

14A-2 District Court
415 W. Michigan Ave
Ypsilanti, MI 48197
General Court Information ....................................................(734) 484-6690
www.14adistrictcourt.org
Jurisdiction: City of Ypsilanti, including Eastern Michigan University

14A-3 District Court
122 S. Main St.
Chelsea, MI 48118
General Court Information ....................................................(734) 475-8606
www.14adistrictcourt.org
Jurisdiction: City of Chelsea, the Townships of Dexter, Lima, Lyndon, Northfield, Scio, Sylvan and Webster as well as the Village of Dexter.

14A-4 District Court
1000 N. Maple Rd.
Saline, MI 48176
General Court Information ....................................................(734) 429-2505
www.14adistrictcourt.org
Jurisdiction: Cities of Saline and Milan, the Townships of Bridgewater, Freedom, Lodi, Manchester, Saline, Sharon and York as well as the Village of Manchester.

Friend of the Court
101 East Huron, Room 104, P.O. Box 8645
Ann Arbor, MI 48107
General Information ............................................................(734) 994-2466
Automated Account Information .............................................994-9261
www.washtenawtrialcourt.org/friend_of_court
RESOURCES

PROSECUTORS

Washtenaw County Prosecutor
Brian Mackie

Main Office
County Prosecutors Office
200 N. Main, 3rd Floor
Ann Arbor, MI 48107

General Information.................................................. (734) 222-6620

www.ewashtenaw.org/government/prosecuting_attorney

Ypsilanti Township Prosecutor
McLain and Winters
61 North Huron
Ypsilanti, MI 48197

Phone ................................................................. (734) 481-1120

www.mclainandwinters.com

PUBLIC DEFENDERS

Lloyd E. Powell

Main Office
110 N. Fourth Ave.
Ann Arbor, MI 48107-8645

General Information.................................................. (734) 222-6970

www.ewashtenaw.org/government/departments/public_defender

WASHTENAW COUNTY COURTS

RESOURCES

POLICE

In case of an emergency, dial 911.

JAIL

Washtenaw County Jail.................................................. (734) 973-4770
2201 Hogback Rd, Ann Arbor 48104

VINE (victim notification network)

Provides information for custody status changes and criminal case information. To sign up go to www.vinelink.com

OTIS (victim notification network)

Provides information on felons and misdemeanants who are, or were, under the supervision of the MDOC. To access go to http://mdocweb.state.mi.us/OTIS2

Crime Victim Services Commission

The CVSC has four programs that serve and support crime victims including: Compensation, Sexual Assault Forensic Exam (S.A.F.E), Victim Rights and Crime Victim Assistance (VOCA). Call 517-373-7373 or 877-251-7373 to learn how the Crime Victim Services Commission can help you, or call. Victims only may call.

Many other helpful resources are available by calling:

National Domestic Violence Hotline (24-Hour).............. (800) 799-7233
Washtenaw United Way Agency Referral.......................... 211
Rape Abuse and Incest National Network (RAINN)......(800) 656-HOPE