

What is Domestic Violence?

Domestic Violence is much more than physical abuse. It is one partner controlling the other through a variety of means, including threats of violence, controlling money, isolating the victim from friends and relatives, as well as physical, psychological and sexual abuse.

If your partner does something that restricts your personal freedom or makes you fear for your safety or the safety of your family, you may be the victim of domestic violence.

The first step in any case is to call for help. We can answer questions about the legal system and the criminal process, as well as explain what can be done to protect you and your family.

Criminal Court and Family Court

Family Court is available to victims of domestic violence who are related by blood or marriage, formerly married, or persons with a child in common. A Family Court proceeding is usually initiated by a petition at the Family Court closest to where you live. At Family Court, you may seek an order of protection, custody, and child support.

You may also seek relief in Criminal Court, which is an option available to all victims of domestic violence regardless of your relationship with the abuser. Cases in criminal court are prosecuted by the District Attorney's Office. Criminal Courts can mandate a range of sentences from incarceration to probation or attendance in a drug or alcohol program. Throughout the prosecution of a criminal case, the Domestic Violence Bureau of the District Attorney's Office shares information with victims and seeks their input.

Both Criminal Courts and Family Courts can issue temporary and final orders of protection. Some orders of protection will order abusers to refrain from phone calls, harassment, or physical assaults. Other orders of protection include provisions for an abuser to stay away from a home, work or school. The type of order a court issues will vary depending on the severity of the abuse and the specifics of your situation.

What We Can Do For You

The District Attorney's Domestic Violence Bureau investigates and prosecutes criminal cases of abuse. Specially-trained prosecutors seek to hold offenders accountable while finding outcomes that will be safest for victims and their children. Our staff also includes a team of domestic violence aides who assist victims in navigating the legal system, creating safety plans and finding resources. The Domestic Violence Bureau has bilingual services available. If you believe that you are a victim of domestic violence, you can call our Bureau and discuss your case with one of our aides.

For More Information call the Domestic Violence Bureau at

(914) 995-3000 or visit our website at www.westchesterda.net.

Where to Call for Help

Domestic Violence Bureau
Westchester County District Attorney's Office
(914) 995-3000

Victims Justice Center
For assistance obtaining
social services and counseling
Westchester County District Attorney's Office
(914) 995-3300

Northern Westchester Shelter
(914) 747-0828 or
1 (888) 438-8700 (24 hour Hotline)

My Sisters' Place
(914) 683-1333 or
1 (800) 298-SAFE (24 hour Hotline)

Legal Services of the Hudson Valley
(914) 949-1305

Pace Women's Justice Center
Family Court Legal Program
(914) 995-7400 (White Plains)
(914) 231-2886 (Yonkers)

**Victims Assistance Services
of Westchester, Inc.**
(914) 345-3113

Westchester County Office for Women
(914) 995-5972



Message from District Attorney Janet DiFiore

Domestic Violence strikes at the heart of families. As a judge in the Criminal and Family Courts here in Westchester, I experienced first-hand the complex issues victims of domestic violence face when trying to extricate themselves from abusive relationships. As District Attorney, my staff and I continually strive to create safe havens for families and to prosecute offenders to the fullest extent of the law. We're here to listen and respond.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Janet DiFiore".



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Domestic Violence



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