



# It Shouldn't Hurt to Go Home



*The Domestic Violence Victim's Handbook*



## SAN DIEGO COUNTY

### Acknowledgments

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San Diego Domestic Violence Council

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# IT SHOULDN'T HURT TO GO HOME

## Domestic Violence Victim's Handbook

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# NOW IS THE TIME!

**If you are a victim of domestic violence, now is the time to start thinking about protecting yourself and those who count on you for safety.**

## **FACTS:**

Every year in the United States there are over 3 million incidents of domestic violence. That means that every nine seconds someone is abused by a current or former partner!

We hope you will begin to explore the options that are available to you.

Domestic violence can happen to anyone, including you.

Domestic violence occurs in 25–33% of all relationships.

The fact that you are reading this handbook is a very good sign! It means that you are seriously considering your situation.

**Domestic Violence (DV)** may include physical, sexual, emotional/psychological, financial abuse and stalking. It involves a current or former partner including a spouse, girlfriend, boyfriend, fiancée, dating partner, or individuals with a child in common.

# WHERE TO TURN

## CALL 911 IF YOU ARE IN IMMEDIATE DANGER!

- **NATIONAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HOTLINE**  
(CONFIDENTIAL, 24/7 MULTIPLE LANGUAGES)  
(800) 799-SAFE (7233)  
(800) 787-3224 (TTY)

Trained professionals provide safety planning, support and referrals to local resources.

- **SAN DIEGO COUNTY ACCESS AND CRISIS LINE**  
(888) 724-7240
- **211 SAN DIEGO**  
CALL 211 OR (800) 227-0997
- **SAN DIEGO COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE, VICTIM ASSISTANCE PROGRAM** (619) 531-4041
- **SAN DIEGO CITY ATTORNEY'S OFFICE, VICTIM SERVICE COORDINATORS**  
(619) 533-5544

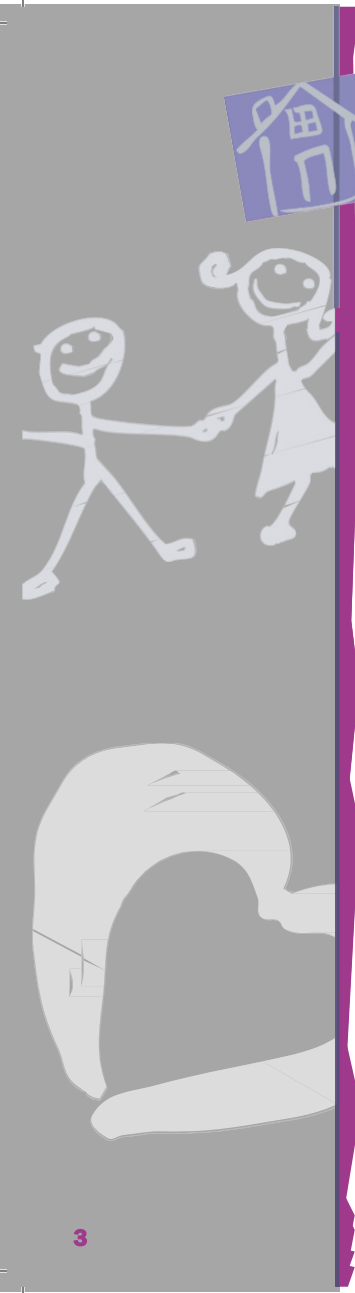
## DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SERVICES

There are domestic violence shelters and services available throughout San Diego County. See page 19 for a list.

### Available Services:

- Confidential Emergency & Transitional Shelter
- Domestic Violence Counseling
- Support Groups
- Legal Assistance
- Victim Compensation
- Restraining Order Clinics
- Children's Services

# WHAT IS



Domestic violence can take different forms, but its goal is always the same: Domestic violence offenders control their intimate partners through fear. They do this by regularly abusing them physically, sexually, psychologically and economically.

Here are some of the forms domestic violence can take:

## **PHYSICAL ABUSE**

Hitting • Slapping • Kicking  
• Strangulation • Pushing •  
Punching • Beating

## **VERBAL ABUSE**

Constant criticism • Making humiliating remarks • Not responding to what the victim is saying • Mocking • Name-calling • Yelling • Swearing • Interrupting • Changing the subject

## **SEXUAL VIOLENCE**

Forcing sex on an unwilling partner • Demanding sexual acts that the victim does not want to perform • Degrading treatment

## **ISOLATION**

Making it hard for the victim to see friends and relatives • Monitoring phone calls • Reading mail • Controlling where the victim goes • Taking the victim's car keys

## **COERCION**

Making the victim feel guilty • Pushing the victim into decisions • Sulking • Manipulating children and other family members • Always insisting on being right • Making up impossible "rules" and punishing the victim for breaking them

# DOMESTIC VIOLENCE?



## **HARASSMENT**

Following or stalking • Embarrassing the victim in public • Constantly checking up on the victim

- Refusing to leave when asked

## **ECONOMIC CONTROL**

Not paying bills • Refusing to give the victim money • Not letting the victim work • Interfering with the victim's job • Refusing to work and support the family

## **ABUSING TRUST**

Lying • Breaking promises • Withholding important information • Being unfaithful • Being overly jealous • Not sharing domestic responsibilities

## **THREATS and INTIMIDATION**

Threatening to harm the victim, the children, family members and pets • Using physical size to intimidate • Shouting • Keeping weapons and threatening to use them

## **EMOTIONAL WITHHOLDING**

Name calling • Not giving compliments • Not paying attention • Not respecting the victim's feelings, rights and opinions • Not taking the victim's concerns seriously

## **DESTRUCTION OF PROPERTY**

Destroying furniture • Punching walls • Throwing things • Breaking dishes

## **SELF DESTRUCTIVE BEHAVIOR**

Abusing drugs or alcohol • Threatening self-harm or suicide • Driving recklessly • Deliberately doing things that will cause trouble (like telling off the boss)



## DON'T BELIEVE THESE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE MYTHS

*You can't believe everything you read and hear about domestic violence. Here are eight common "myths" about domestic violence. They are not true.*

**MYTH #1:**  
*Domestic violence is just a momentary loss of temper.*

Domestic abuse is just the opposite of a "momentary loss of temper". The offender makes a conscious decision to abuse. It is an ongoing technique used to enforce control through the use of fear.

**MYTH #2:**  
*Domestic violence only happens in poor families.*

Domestic violence occurs throughout all levels of society. There is no evidence that suggests that any income level, occupation, social class, or culture is immune

from domestic violence. Wealthy, educated, professionals are just as prone to violence as anyone.

**MYTH #3:**  
*Domestic violence is just an occasional slap or punch that isn't serious.*

Victims are often seriously injured. Female victims are more likely to suffer miscarriages or to give birth prematurely. Male victims also suffer physical injury.

**MYTH #4:**  
*Heads of households have the right to control the people they support.*

No partner in a relationship has the right to control the other partner.



**MYTH #5:**  
***The victim can always walk away from the relationship.***

Victims usually do not have any place to go where they will be safe from the abuser. Because of the ongoing history of the abusive relationship, the abuser knows all of the victim's options and can follow the victim there. It takes money, a support network, and time for detailed planning to ensure that a victim can escape - luxuries often not available to victims. Sometimes it's safer for the victim to stay with the abuser for the time being than to try and escape. When family or friends are not an option, the victim may need help from a domestic violence shelter.

**MYTH #6:**  
***If the DV offender is truly sorry and promises to reform, the abuse is going to stop.***

Remorse and begging for forgiveness are part of the

method used by abusers to control their victims.

DV offenders rarely stop the abuse without intervention.

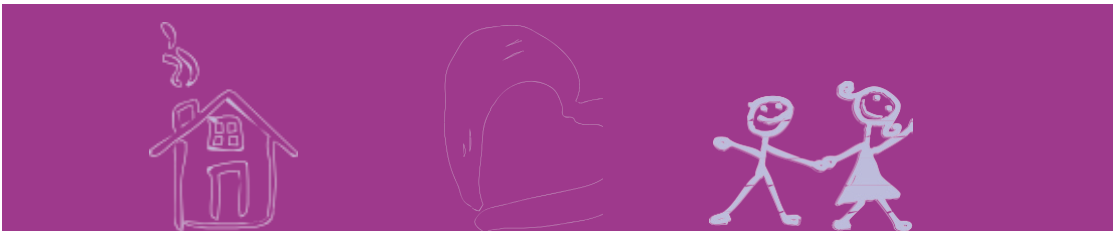
**MYTH #7:**  
***If the violent episodes don't happen very often the situation is not that serious.***

Even if the violence doesn't happen often, the threat of it remains as a terrorizing means of control.

No matter how far apart the violent episodes are, each one is a reminder of the one that happened before and creates fear of the one that will happen in the future.

**MYTH #8**  
***Victims have the types of personalities that seek out and encourage abuse.***

A number of studies have determined that there is no set of personality traits that describe victims of domestic violence. It is the DV offender who is responsible for the abuse, not the victim.



## WHO ARE THE ABUSERS?

### ***ABUSERS TYPICALLY:***

- Have very short fuses and become immediately angry with their partners.
- Deny that the abuse has occurred or minimize a violent episode.
- Blame the victim, other people or outside events for the abusive behavior and/or violent attack.

### ***ABUSERS DON'T ACT BECAUSE THEY ARE "OUT OF CONTROL":***

- Abusers choose to respond to a situation violently. They are making a conscious decision to behave in a violent manner.
- They know what they're doing and what they want from their victims.
- They are not acting out of control because they have anger management issues.
- They are not reacting to stress.
- They are not helplessly under the control of drugs and alcohol.

### ***ABUSE IS A LEARNED BEHAVIOR:***

- It is not "normal" to behave in a violent manner within a personal relationship.
- It is usually learned from seeing abuse used as a successful tactic of control often in the home in which the abuser grew up.
- It is reinforced when abusers are not arrested or prosecuted or otherwise held responsible for their acts.
- Learned behavior is through observation, experience, reinforcement, culture, family, and community.

### ***ABUSERS MAY:***

- Express remorse and beg for forgiveness with seemingly loving gestures.
- Be hard workers and good providers.
- Be witty, charming, attractive and intelligent.
- At times, be loving parents.



# WHO ARE THE VICTIMS?

## ***SOME EXAMPLES OF VICTIMS***

- A large majority of all reported heterosexual victims are women. However, heterosexual men can be victims as well. In lesbian, gay, & transgender relationships men and women are equally victimized.
- Teens, pregnant women and elderly individuals are especially at risk.

## ***CHILDREN CAN BE DIRECT OR INDIRECT VICTIMS***

- They may be abused themselves.
- They may be forced to see their parent abused in front of them.
- The DV offender may use threats to harm them as a means of controlling the victim.
- They grow up seeing abuse as the natural way for partners to relate to each other.
- They grow up in an insecure environment filled with tension and violence.

## ***TEENAGERS EXPERIENCE DATING VIOLENCE***

- Teenagers are just as vulnerable to intimate partner violence and it is just as dangerous.
- Teenagers may not seek help because they distrust adults.

## ***DOMESTIC VIOLENCE OCCURS IN LESBIAN, GAY AND TRANSGENDER HOUSEHOLDS***

- Gay and lesbian relationships are not immune to the pattern of abusive and coercive behaviors that constitute domestic violence.
- Victims often will not seek help because they fear that no one will believe that violence occurs in lesbian, gay, and transgender relationships and they fear that they will experience homophobia and transphobia among service providers.

## ***ELDERLY PEOPLE CAN BE VICTIMS***

- They may be abused by their intimate partners
- They may be physically unable to defend themselves or escape from the abuse.
- They may be physically or mentally unable to report the abuse to anyone.

## ***VICTIMS ARE NOT TO BLAME FOR THE VIOLENCE.***

- Studies have found no characteristic link between personality type and being a victim
  - Victims cannot stop the abuse by simply changing how they behave
  - Victims deserve to be safe from violence, regardless of age, gender or sexual orientation.

# BREAKING THE

## The Power and Control Wheel

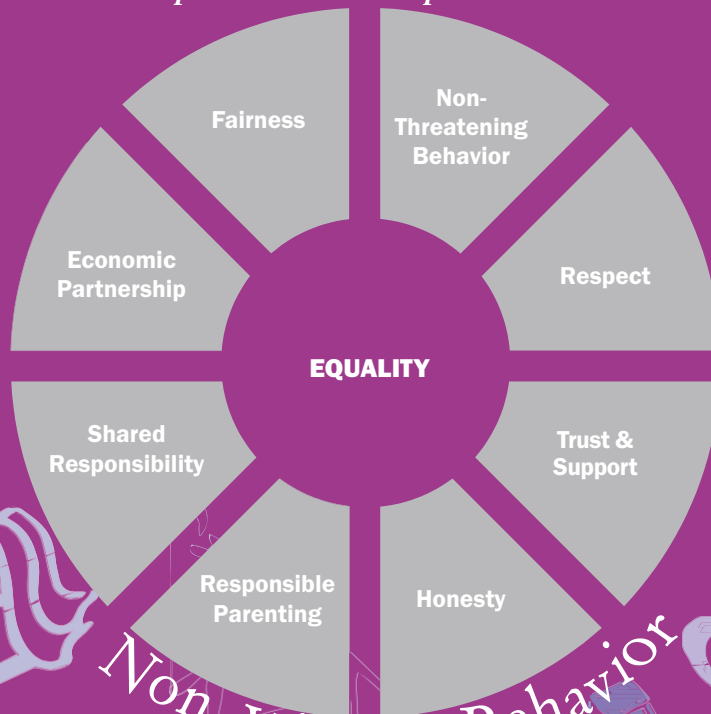
*This Power and Control Wheel helps link the different behaviors that together form a pattern of violence. It shows the relationship as a whole and how each seemingly unrelated behavior is an important part in an overall effort to control someone.*



# CYCLE OF VIOLENCE

## Equality Wheel

*This Equality Wheel offers a view of a relationship that is based on equality and non-violence. Use this chart to compare the characteristics of a non-violent relationship to those of an abusive relationship in the Power and Control Wheel. The Equality Wheel is helpful in setting goals and boundaries in personal relationships.*



Non-Violent Behavior

Adapted from the Domestic Abuse Intervention Project - Duluth Minnesota



# HOW TO HELP A FRIEND WHO IS A DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIM

## **1. Bring up the subject.**

Don't be afraid to let victims/survivors know your concerns. Say that you can see what's happening and that you want to help. Let them know they are not alone.

## **2. Acknowledge that they are in a very difficult, scary situation.**

Let them know that it's not their fault that they are being abused. Encourage them to express their feelings of hurt or anger or humiliation. Remind them that the abuser, not the victim, is responsible for the abuse. Remember that it may be difficult for them to talk about what they are experiencing.

## **3. Don't buy into their denial.**

If they refuse to acknowledge that they are in a dangerous situation, express your concern for their safety.

## **4. Respect their right to make their own decisions.**

Let them

make their own decisions. Don't start with what you think they should do, or insist that your plan be followed.

## **5. Discuss this handbook with them.**

Help them identify the abusive behavior they are experiencing. Go over the *Power & Control and Equality wheels*. Talk about services and the hotline.

## **6. Go with them.**

If they need medical care, go with them. If they are going to the police, to court, or to see a lawyer, offer to go along. But let them do the talking.

## **7. Plan safe strategies with them.**

If they are contemplating leaving an abusive relationship, help them to develop a "safety plan". Make sure they're comfortable with the plan. Never encourage them to follow a plan that they don't consider "safe".

# HOW TO LET YOUR FRIENDS HELP YOU

*If you are being abused, let people who care about you help you.*

## **1. Confide in someone you trust.**

If you have a friend or relative who cares about your safety, tell them about the abuse. Sharing a burden with someone makes it lighter. If you've left your abusive relationship and are feeling lonely and tempted to return, talk it out with a friend who knows the situation.

## **2. Don't get talked into taking action that doesn't feel right to you.**

You are the only one who knows if you're ready to leave your relationship, or go to the police, or seek emergency shelter. Make your own decisions, based on your own comfort level.

**3. Leave an "emergency supply" with a friend.** This could include extra money, a set of car keys, a change of clothes and copies of important documents that may come in handy in an emergency. Think of what you might need if you have to leave your home in a hurry.

**4. Ask a friend to accompany you to important appointments.** If you have medical appointments, or are going to the police, or to court, or to see a lawyer, take a friend along for moral support.

**5. Discuss this handbook with a friend.** Go over the Power & Control and Equality wheels. Discuss the types of abuse you are experiencing. Discuss your emergency plans.

**6. Make sure a friend knows about your Personal Safety Plan.** Pages 15-18 show you how to start making your own Personal Safety Plan. Go over them with a friend and give that friend a copy of the plan.

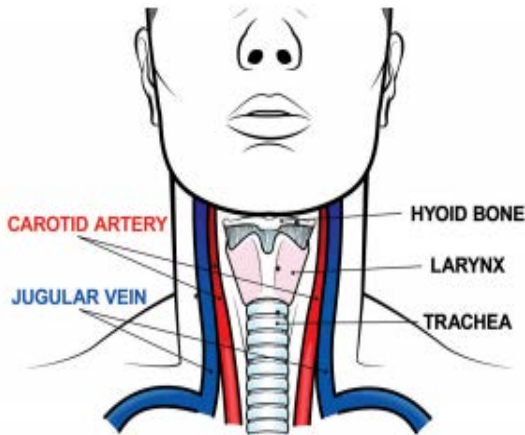
# STRANGULATION

*Your safety is our first concern.*

*Did someone place their hands on your neck or throat?*



If you or someone you know has been strangled, contact the police immediately. You will need a medical evaluation.



## ***What is Strangulation?***

When the body is deprived of oxygen, loss of consciousness will result and, if continued, ultimately death. Loss of consciousness may happen within seconds and death within minutes.

Strangulation is external pressure applied to the neck sufficient enough to cause the closure of blood vessels and/or air passages of the neck, resulting in a lack of oxygen to the brain.





# SYMPTOMS OF STRANGULATION

**Voice Changes** – Raspy and/or hoarse voice, coughing, unable to speak, complete loss of voice.

**Swallowing Changes** – Trouble swallowing, painful swallowing, neck pain, nausea/vomiting, drooling.

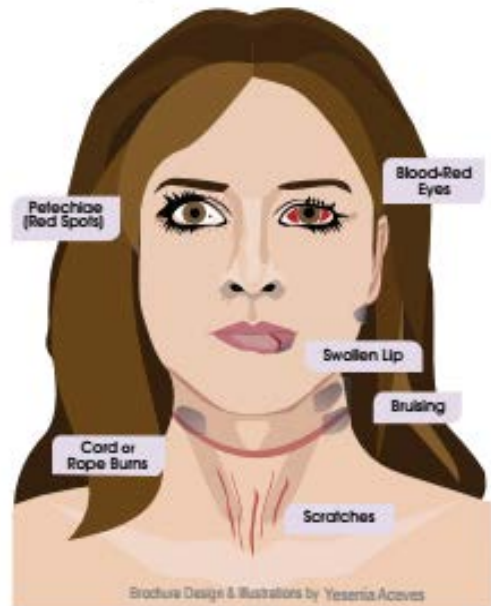
**Breathing Changes** – Difficulty breathing, hyper-ventilation, unable to breathe.

**Behavioral Changes** – Restlessness or combativeness, problems concentrating, amnesia, agitation, Post-Traumatic Stress Syndrome, hallucinations.

**Vision Changes** – Complete loss or black and white vision, seeing ‘stars,’ blurry, darkness, fuzzy around the eyes.

**Hearing Changes** – Complete loss of hearing, gurgling, ringing, buzzing, popping, pressure, tunnel-like hearing.

## Visible Signs



**Other Changes** – Memory loss, unconsciousness, dizziness, headaches, involuntary urination or defecation, loss of strength, going limp.



## SAFETY MEASURES WHILE YOU'RE IN AN ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIP

*If you are living with the person who is abusing you, here are some things you can do to ensure you and your children's safety.*

Memorize the numbers of friends and relatives whom you can call in an emergency. If your children are old enough, teach them important phone numbers, including when and how to dial 911.

Keep this handbook where your abuser won't find it but where you can get it when you need it.

Keep change or a calling card for pay phones with you at all times.

If you can, open your own bank account.

Stay in touch with friends. Get to know your neighbors. Resist any temptation to cut yourself off from people – even if you feel like you just want to be left alone.

Rehearse your escape plan until you know it by heart.

Leave a set of car keys, extra money, a change of clothes, and copies of the following documents, with a trusted friend or relative.

- You and your children's birth certificates
- Your children's school and medical records
- Bank account(s) information
- Welfare Identification
- Passports or green cards
- Your Social Security card
- Lease agreements or mortgage payment info
- Insurance papers
- Important addresses and telephone numbers
- Any other important docs
- Keep a diary of the abuse you have suffered

# SAFETY AFTER YOU HAVE LEFT THE RELATIONSHIP

*Once you no longer live with the abusive partner, here are some things you can do to enhance you and your children's safety.*



**1. Change the locks** - if you're still in your home and the abuser is the one who has left.

**2. Install as many security features as possible in your home.** These might include metal doors and gates, security alarm system, smoke detectors and outside lights.

**3. Inform neighbors that your former partner is not welcome on the premises.**

Ask them to call the police if they see that person lurking around your property or watching your home.

**4. Make sure the people who care for your children are very clear about who does and who does not have permission to pick up your children.**

**5. Obtain a restraining order.** Keep it near you at all times and make

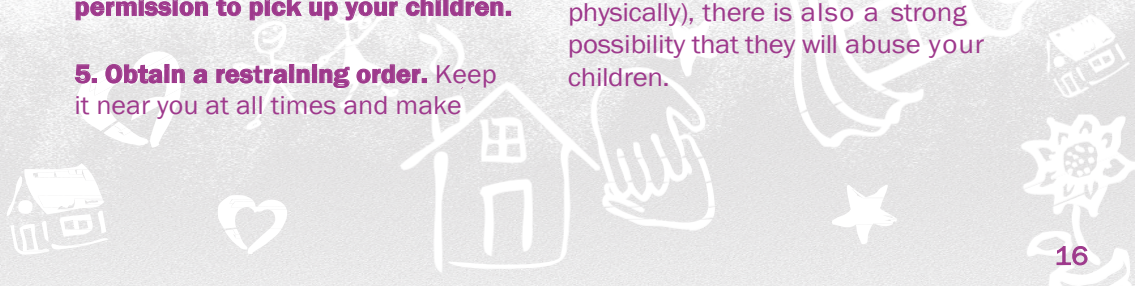
sure friends and neighbors have copies to show the police.

**6. Let your co-workers know about the situation** - if your former partner is likely to come to your work place to bother you. Ask them to warn you if they observe that person around.

**7. Avoid the stores, banks, and businesses you used when you were living with the abuser.**

**8. Get counseling.** Attend workshops. Join support groups. Do whatever it takes to form a supportive network that will be there when you need it.

**9. Keep your children safe.** If your abuser harms you (mentally or physically), there is also a strong possibility that they will abuse your children.





# YOUR PERSONAL

These pages will help you plan for your safety. If you don't have some of this information, now is the time to get it. Important!

**Keep this information in a safe and private place where your abuser cannot find it!**

## 1. Important phone numbers:

Police: **911** or \_\_\_\_\_

Domestic Violence Hotline 1-800-799-SAFE (7233)

My attorney: \_\_\_\_\_ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## 2. I can call these friends or relatives in an emergency:

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

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

## 3. These neighbors will call the police if they hear me being abused:

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

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

## 4. I can go to these places if I have to leave my home in a hurry:

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

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

# SAFETY PLAN

I have given copies of the documents checked below to a friend for safekeeping:

- My birth certificate
- My children's birth certificates
- My social security card
- My children's school records
- My children's medical records
- Bank Account(s) Information
- Welfare Identification
- My passport or green card
- My children's passports or green cards
- Insurance papers
- My lease agreement or mortgage payment book
- Important addresses and telephone numbers

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

The following are hidden in a safe place:

- An extra set of car keys
- Some extra money
- An extra change of clothes for me and my children

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## LOCAL RESOURCES

YWCA of San Diego County (Central)	619/234-3164
Center for Community Solutions (East County)	619/697-7477, 888/385-4657
Center for Community Solutions (North County)	760/747-6282, 888/385-4657
Community Resource Center (North County)	877/633-1112
Women's Resource Center (North County)	760/757-3500
Center for Community Solutions (Coastal)	858/272-5777, 888/385-4657
South Bay Community Services (South County)	800/640-2933
San Diego Family Justice Center (Central)	619/533-6000
Jewish Family Services – Project Sarah	858/637-3200
Southern Indian Health Council	619/445-1188
Indian Health Council	760/749-1410
License to Freedom	619/401-2800
Rancho Coastal Humane Society – Animal Safehouse Program (North County)	760/753-6413
Stalking Information Line	619/515-8900
The San Diego LGBT Community Center	619/692-2077
SD District Attorney's Office, Victim Assistance Program:	
Central: 619/531-4041, East: 619/441-4538, Juvenile: 858/694-4595, South: 619/498-5650, North: 760/806-4079	
SD City Attorney's Office, Victim Svc. Coordinators	619/533-5544
District Attorney's Office Child Abduction Unit	619/531-4345
Rady Children's Hospital, Chadwick Center	858/966-5803

## OFFICE LOCATIONS

### San Diego County District Attorney

San Diego – Hall of Justice  
330 W. Broadway, San Diego, CA 92101  
(619) 531-4041

North County Branch – Vista Courthouse  
325 S. Melrose Dr., Ste. 5000, Vista, CA 92083  
(760) 806-4079

East County Branch – El Cajon Courthouse  
250 Main St., 5th Floor, El Cajon, CA 92020  
(619) 441-4538

South Bay Branch  
333 H St., Ste. 4000, Chula Vista, CA 91910  
(619) 498-5650

Juvenile Division – Juvenile Courthouse  
2851 Meadowlark Dr., San Diego, CA 92123  
(858) 694-4254



## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

FUTURES WITHOUT VIOLENCE  
[www.futureswithoutviolence.org](http://www.futureswithoutviolence.org)

CALIFORNIA PARTNERSHIP TO  
END DOMESTIC VIOLENCE  
[www.cpedv.org](http://www.cpedv.org)

SAN DIEGO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE COUNCIL  
[www.sddvc.org](http://www.sddvc.org)

NATIONAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HOTLINE  
(Confidential, 24/7) 1-800-799-SAFE (7233)  
[www.thehotline.org](http://www.thehotline.org)



The San Diego County District Attorney  
Victim Assistance Program  
330 W. Broadway, Ste. 700  
San Diego, CA 92101  
(619) 531-4041

To request this handbook please contact:  
San Diego District Attorney's Office  
Family Protection Division  
(619) 531-4300  
[www.sdcca.org](http://www.sdcca.org)

**“It Shouldn't Hurt to Go Home” Domestic Violence Victim's Handbook**

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