



# Domestic Violence

## Information & Resources

### DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Domestic violence is a tragic and violent issue that touches our community in many ways. Victims commonly do not seek help or report the crimes committed against them. The fear of leaving an abusive relationship is often one of the reasons why a person stays in their relationship. The most dangerous time in a violent relationship is when a victim is trying to leave.

In our community, it is likely that many friends, neighbors, co-workers and family members are dealing with these issues and don't know where to turn for help, or are unsure of what will happen if they seek help. Law enforcement, prosecutors and advocate organizations work together to address these crimes with responses that help victims.

Whether you were hurt last night, last month or last year, you can find help. We can also support friends and family members who want to support someone they know, but don't know how. There is assistance even if the victim does not want to report the situation to law enforcement. Developing a safety plan can be a first step to saving your life.

All of the advocate programs listed below offer assistance regardless of whether you choose to report to law enforcement, are unsure about reporting, or have reported and the case is under investigation. ***All services are free and confidential.*** What you say to an advocate stays with an advocate – unless you give permission for them to share what you said.

*\*Advocates are mandatory reporters of child abuse, threats to another person, and threats of self-harm.*

### YWCA Pathways Program

The YWCA Pathways Program offers 24-hour response to those who have experienced sexual assault, domestic violence and stalking. Services include crisis counseling through the 24-hour crisis line and/or in-person peer counseling; safe shelter; support groups; in-house licensed therapist; referrals to community resources; and legal, personal and medical advocacy.

- Walk-in hours: Monday through Thursday 12 to 4 p.m.; Friday 12 to 5 p.m. or by appointment.
- 24-hour crisis line: (406) 542-1944 or 1-800-483-7858.  
Address: 1130 W. Broadway, Missoula.
- Website: [www.ywcaofmissoula.org](http://www.ywcaofmissoula.org)



## Missoula Crime Victim Advocate Program

Advocates at the Crime Victim Advocate Program help victims of domestic and sexual and other crimes understand their options, gain information they need and obtain Temporary Orders of Protection from the courts. Advocates also assist victims with filing police reports and offer support and assistance throughout the court process.

- Walk-in/telephone hours: Monday through Friday 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
- Phone: (406) 258-3830 or 1-866-921-6995.
- Address: 317 Woody St., Missoula (across from the Missoula County Courthouse).
- Website: [www.missoulacounty.us/cva](http://www.missoulacounty.us/cva).

## University of Montana Student Advocacy Resource Center (SARC)

The Student Advocacy Resource Center on the U of M campus offers confidential, free and safe services for survivors of discrimination, stalking, sexual assault, relationship violence, and support to their partners, friends and relatives. SARC provides counseling, advocacy and case management. SARC also assists clients with accessing UM and community resources, and advocates on their behalf when requested. SARC is welcoming, accessible, available and safe for the entire UM community without bias, prejudice or preference.

- Walk-in hours: Monday through Friday 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- 24-hour support line: (406) 243-6559 (SARC support line is available 24/7 during *fall and spring semesters*).
- Address: 634 Eddy Ave., Missoula; Curry Health Center – Room 108.
- Website: [www.umt.edu/curry-health-center/student-advocacy-resource-center](http://www.umt.edu/curry-health-center/student-advocacy-resource-center).

The Missoula Police Department, the Missoula County Sheriff's Office and the University of Montana Police Department have highly trained officers who understand domestic violence. In non-emergency situations you can call to ask questions without filing a report. Their non-emergency numbers are:

- **Missoula Police Department** business line: (406) 552-6300.
- **Missoula County Sheriff** business line: (406) 258-4810.
- **UM Police Department** business line: (406) 243-6131.
- **For emergencies, call 9-1-1.**



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

There are many steps you can take to help a friend or family member who you may be concerned about. Most domestic violence victims feel very alone and confused as a result of the abuse. Victims often feel they have nowhere to turn – they may worry no one will believe them, they may blame themselves for the abuse, and they may fear their abuser will hurt them, their children, or their pets if they reveal the abuse to anyone outside their home. You *can* take steps to help. Each of us has the power to reach out to someone we love and tell them that abuse is not their fault. If you have friends or family members who are in unhealthy or abusive relationships, the most important thing you can do is be supportive and listen to them. Understand that leaving an unhealthy or abusive relationship is never easy. Feel free to call any of Missoula's advocacy programs if you need support as a friend or family member. If you hear or see an assault taking place, call 9-1-1. Police are trained to help in emergency situations.

### How Can I Know For Sure if Someone is Being Abused?

The only way to know for sure if someone is being abused is to ask. A common myth about someone experiencing abuse is that they don't want to talk about their victimization. While many try to hide the battering, they do so because they fear being blamed, not being believed, or being pressured to do something they're not ready or able to do. Directly asking your friend in private, without judgement (and even without expectation that they will trust you enough to disclose) relieves her/him of the burden of coming forward on their own, and can tell her/him a lot about your caring and willingness to help.

### Seven Helpful Things to Say:

1. *I believe you.*
2. No one deserved to be abused.
3. There is help available.
4. I am afraid for your safety/life.
5. I am afraid for your children's safety/lives.
6. The violence may get worse.
7. I will be here for you if you want my support.

### Three Helpful Things to Do:

1. **Be non-judgmental.** Respect your friend or family member's decisions. There are many reasons why victims stay in abusive relationships. They may leave and return to the relationship many times. Do not criticize their decisions; they will need your support even more during those times. If they do end the relationship, continue to be supportive. Even though the relationship was abusive, your friend or family member may still feel sad and lonely once it is over. They will need time to mourn the loss of the relationship.
2. **Encourage them to talk to people who can provide help and guidance.** Share information about local support programs. Help is available even if they do not want to report the violence to law enforcement. Advocates are trained in helping victims create safety plans if they are planning on staying or leaving the relationship. They can also help someone explore options like obtaining an order of protection, staying in an emergency shelter, options for safely retrieving their belongings, etc. Help is free and confidential.



3. **Take care of yourself. Ask local experts!** Helping a friend in an abusive relationship is stressful and can leave you feeling drained and helpless. Seek support for yourself to help you with your feelings, fears, frustrations and reactions to the abuse. Advocates can help you talk to your friend and give you resources for safety planning. You need to look after your own physical and emotional well-being. Call 9-1-1 if you are ever in danger.

### **What if My Friend is Abusive in Their Relationship?**

By focusing on victims rather than abusers, we will never really end domestic and dating violence. If you have a friend or family member who is hurting someone else, you can still offer help. There are counseling programs aimed at stopping abusive behavior through Batterer's Treatment. Please call these local programs for more information:

- Community Awareness in Violence Education (CAVE) program: (406) 239-9911.
- Men Advocating Non-Violence (MAN) program: (406) 549-3727.

**If you hear or see a violent situation happening, call 9-1-1 for help. Our law enforcement officers are trained to help. You may even save a life.**

