



# Memphis Area WOMEN'S COUNCIL

CONVENE COLLABORATE COMMUNICATE  CHANGE

Domestic violence is a persistent and devastating, traumatizing scourge in our community.

In Memphis more than half of all violent crime is domestic violence related. Memphis police investigated 17,761 reports in 2018 and arrested 7,513 for DV-related crimes. Most involve intimate partners - spouses, boyfriends, girlfriends or exes - and is called Intimate Partner Violence (IPV).

It takes place in homes across Memphis and Shelby County every day, in every zip code and neighborhood, and affects workers in every kind of business and industry.

## HOW JUDGES, ATTORNEYS AND OTHER LEGAL PROFESSIONALS CAN RESPOND.

In 2010 the Memphis Police Department took reports on 26,00 domestic violence cases. Of those, 6,180 were referred for prosecution by the Shelby County District Attorney General's Domestic Violence Unit.

These thousands of victims approach the legal system for assistance in formulating a plan to escape their abusive environments. It is crucial to the health and well-being of our community that the legal system participate in crafting a solution for these victims and in lessening system barriers that block their access to justice and discourage them from escaping the violence.

To help stop domestic violence and assist victims to survive, the legal community can:

1. **UNDERSTAND** and recognize the various forms of abuse that place victims in dangerous situations. Forms of abuse include emotional, sexual, physical, financial as well as damage to property and abuse of pets.
2. **LISTEN** to the victim. Carefully determine who the victim is. Your demeanor demonstrates to the victim that you are concerned about his/her circumstances and underlying events.
3. **IDENTIFY** the abuse. Often in attempts to explain the victimization, victims will deny, rationalize and minimize the behavior of the abuser. The first step in your role of ending the violence is to identify it as such. The court should take advantage of all resources available to provide safety for the victim.
4. **PROVIDE** a courtroom atmosphere free of intimidation. A judge can use his or her authority to instruct sheriff's officers not to permit interaction between litigants or their families during court recess. Years of prior exposure to intimidation by the abuser can lead a victim to perceive such interaction as confirmation that the abuser is immune to the court's authority.
5. **EXPLAIN** all the options available to victims. Abuse victims are often on an emotional roller coaster. Comprehending all the available options becomes difficult. A judge or an attorney must take the time to explain the available options and ask enough questions to ensure that the victim understands those options.
6. **BUILD TRUST** with the victim. At every opportunity presented, the attorney or judge must instill a sense of trust of the system in the victim. In order for any domestic violence intervention to be successful, the victim must trust the court and the judicial system to provide safety and to hold the batterer accountable for his/her actions. Victims will not access systems in which they have no confidence.
7. **EDUCATE** yourself and your staff on the dynamics of domestic violence. Understand why a victim would stay in an abusive environment and what the cycle of violence is. Know where to tell a victim of abuse to go for help.
8. **SCREEN** your clients for domestic violence. Given the prevalence of domestic violence in our community, it is likely that some of your clients are in, or have been in, violent relationships that will impact the legal advice that you give them. To ensure you are ethically representing your client and to avoid malpractice, it is critical that you learn if she is a survivor and consider how this information affects your representation. Also, if their safety is at risk while you are representing them, your safety may be at risk as well.

**9. DEVELOP** a safety plan with your client. In domestic violence situations, safety planning is crucial. Seeking legal advice is a step to independence for victims. This threatens an abuser's sense of power and control and could lead to increased violence to your client. To learn more about how to develop a client safety plan, contact the Family Safety Center at (901) 222-4400 or Shelby County Crime Victims & Rape Crisis Center at 545-4357 or go to [memphisaysnomore.com](http://memphisaysnomore.com) for guidelines.

## Safety Planning

Identify "safe" areas in your house. These are areas with more than one exit and areas that do not contain items which could be used as weapons.

Tell people you trust in the neighborhood or at work what is happening and make a plan with them in case you need help.

If possible, always have an easily accessible phone.

Keep important items (documents, medications) together in a place you can get to quickly if you need to leave.

Talk to your children about safety. Tell them not to get involved in violence between you and your partner. Teach them how to get help and practice your safety plan with them.

### Sexual Assault/Rape:

Shelby County Crime Victims & Rape Crisis Center  
*24/7 help for victims of sexual assault*  
(901) 222-4350  
1060 Madison Avenue 8 a.m. - 6 p.m.

### Non-emergency MPD Sex Crimes:

(901) 636-3438  
For information on your case: MPD Hotline (901) 636-3438 or email  
SAinfo@memphistn.gov

Shelby County Sheriff's Office  
(901) 222-4479 for rape and DV

### Domestic Violence:

Circle of Inspiration Outreach Program  
*Semi-monthly Christian support program; victim advocacy*  
(901) 214-4577

### Cocaine Alcohol Awareness Program

*Serves disadvantaged DV victims*  
Hotline (901) 272-2221  
4023 Knight Arnold Road

### Community Legal Center

*Legal assistance*  
(901) 543-3395  
910 Vance Avenue

### Family Safety Center of Memphis and Shelby County

*Comprehensive civil, criminal, health and social services for victims of family violence*  
(901) 222-4400 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. Monday thru Friday  
1750 Madison Avenue, Suite 600

### Kindred Place

*Comprehensive services for victims, perpetrators and children; lethality assessments, custodial evaluations*  
(901) 276-2200 8:30 a.m. - 5 p.m.  
2180 Union Avenue

### The Healing Word Counseling Center

*Counseling and various services*  
(901) 370-4673  
3885 Tchulahoma Road

### Memphis Area Legal Services

*Comprehensive legal services to eligible domestic violence victims*  
(901) 523-8822 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.  
22 N. Front Street, 11th floor

### Memphis Area Women's Council/Employer Alliance Against Violence/ Memphis Says NO MORE

*Community advocacy, awareness and education; system coordination, change and support; prevention; Employer/workplace outreach "Violence at Home. Victims at Work. Employers Confront Domestic Violence"*  
(901) 378-3866  
2574 Sam Cooper Blvd.

### Memphis Child Advocacy Center

*Counseling for child victims of sexual and severe physical abuse*  
(901) 525-2377  
1085 Poplar Avenue

### Memphis Police Department Domestic Violence Investigative Unit

*Assault investigation, transport to victim services*  
(901) 636-3741  
1750 Madison Avenue

### Shelby County Crime Victims & Rape Crisis Center

*Court assistance, orders of protection, counseling, support groups*  
(901) 222-3950 8 a.m. - 6 p.m.  
1060 Madison Avenue

### Shelby County District Attorney General's DV Unit

*Prosecution of DV cases; victim advocacy and links to services*  
(901) 222-1485  
1750 Madison Avenue

### Shelby County Sheriff's Office DV Unit

*Investigations* (901) 222-5600; *Non-emergency/reports* (901) 379-7625  
1750 Madison Avenue

### Tennessee Department of Children's Services

*Social services, child protection*  
(901) 947-8800 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.  
1925 S. Third St.

### Victims to Victory Incorporated

*Support groups for victims of homicide; court advocacy*  
(901) 274-6828 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.  
2181 Union Avenue, Room 306

### YWCA of Greater Memphis

*Shelter for abused women with children; counseling, court advocacy, Immigrant Women's Services*  
24-hour Hotline (901) 725-4277