

SAFE SPACE

August Newsletter, 2014

A Child's Exposure to Domestic Violence

Domestic violence is traumatizing to not only the primary victim who is the center of the abusive behavior, but also to the children in the home as well. Children who witness domestic violence are also known as "secondary survivors". Secondary survivors witness abuse, the threat of abuse, and the many forms of power and control exhibited from one partner to another. There may also be times where the physical abuse is not witnessed by the children, but the destruction that is left behind is seen. This may be broken furniture or appliances, destroyed property with sentimental value, or bruises, cuts, or other physical injuries sustained by the primary victim. The exposure of domestic violence to children can take a drastic toll on many areas of a child's life—educational, emotional, social, and behavioral. The level of impact on each of these areas is affected by factors such as age,

relationship to the abuser, and resources/support available to the child. The impact can be lessened or increased depending on the specifics of these factors. The most effective way to lessen the impact of domestic violence on children in the home is intervention. Early intervention is best. A successful intervention may include safety planning by the abused parent to leave the home, obtain supportive resources, and access programs such as domestic violence programs, shelters, legal assistance, and law enforcement assistance. A child who is experiencing domestic violence in the home may exhibit signs such as bed-wetting, problems sleeping or eating (both too much and too little), anxiety or depression, attention problems, inability to focus in school or a significant change in attendance or academic achievements.

At Safe Space, advocates are able to help parents who are primary victims to plan a safe way to leave the violence as well as teach skills that will help their children to overcome the trauma they have experienced as well. Advocates work with children to redirect anger and fear into positive activities such as puzzles, board games, reading and writing. Safe Space also works with other agencies to help with parenting skills to re-establish a positive, trusting and healthy relationship between parent and children survivors.

Support groups are provided weekly for primary survivors. Children groups are available through the help of trained volunteers and staff.

*Violence is learned.
What lessons are your
children learning?*

Orders of Protection: What You Should Know

The choice to leave any relationship can be wrapped in fear, doubt, anxiety, and concerns about how to start over financially and emotionally. These factors in ending a relationship are heightened when the relationship being ended is a violent one. The fears are about personal safety; doubt is set in by the abuser through many calculated moves meant to destroy and diminish the victim's ability to feel self worth and confidence in decision making; and concerns about financial independence are increased by the likelihood that the victim was conditioned to be unemployed and have no access to the family funds. Obtaining an order of protection may help in easing all of these common hurdles faced by victims leaving a violent relationship.

When obtaining an Order of Protection, it is important that the survivor understands the legal paperwork involved, as well as the process. Speaking with an advocate is one way to obtain this information and assistance in completing and filing the request. In Butte-Silver Bow, a request for an Order of Protection goes before a judge. The judge then reviews the details of the incidents leading up to the request, evaluating the safety of the survivor, the potential for violence by the abuser, and the effect the Order of Protection will have on helping the survivor to remain free from violence. An Order of Protection, if granted, first is granted for a temporary period of time, up to 20 days. During this 20 days, the Order is served upon the abuser by the local Sheriff's department. The abuser then has the right to appear in



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(406)782-9807

SHELTER

24 hr. crisis line
(406) 782-8511

ADVOCACY

An advocate can help with:

- * Locating financial resources
- * Court accompaniment
- * Brainstorming plans for getting away

SAFETY

If you feel unsafe in your home but are not quite ready to leave, call us to discuss safety planning options that might keep you safe until you are ready. Crisis line is available 24 hours/day!



court at a hearing to determine if the Order of Protection will be granted for a permanent length of time. Safe Space understands that this can be traumatizing for victims, and therefore offers legal support by having a trained advocate present with the survivor during the entire process, up to and including the hearing.

Safe Space encourages survivors to evaluate what a request for an Order of Protection will do in their particular situation. Each survivor knows their abuser's potential for violence better than any advocate. It is important to also know that an Order of Protection, once granted and served upon the other party, is mutual on both parties in relation to ceasing communications and contact. This means that an abuser cannot make contact with the survivor, and the survivor cannot make contact with the abuser. If either party does so, either can be charged with breaking the Order of Protection set by the judge.

In a final note, advocates at Safe Space stress the importance of understanding that an Order of Protection is merely a piece of paper when it comes to personal safety. There are legal repercussions if it is broken, but it is not a magical shield that prevents any and all harm from happening. For this reason, Safe Space advocates encourage survivors who seek an Order of Protection to have a thorough safety plan in place to know what to do if they see their abuser, if they are confronted, and how to avoid common routes taken by abusers. Through safety planning, support, and a thorough understanding of what an Order of Protection can and cannot do, survivors increase their ability to leave the violence and begin focusing on becoming financially independent, re-establishing parenting skills, obtaining housing and creating a home that is free from fear of being abused.

*** No information in this article should be considered legal advice and cannot replace the services of an attorney or other legal avenue. The information provided is a basic guideline to provide an overview of possible steps and resource in regards to filing an Order of Protection. Safe Space advocates are not lawyers and cannot provide legal advice or guidance. Safe Space advocates are able to assist in obtaining and filing paperwork in relation to Orders of Protection and provide moral on-site support and advocacy during all court hearings. The information contained within this article is subject to changes at the discretion of the County judicial procedures and are not meant to fully represent all requests presented to the Court. For additional information or to file a request for an Order of Protection due to domestic or sexual violence, contact a Safe Space advocate at 406-782-8511.***

August 2014

| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|--|---|-----|--------------------------------|-----|--|-----|
| | | | | | 1 | 2 |
| 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 Women's Support Group | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| 10 SUPERMOON <small>Grab a blanket and cuddle up and gaze at the Super moon for a healthy relationship activity</small> | 11 | 12 | 13 Women's Support Group | 14 | 15 | 16 |
| 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 Women's Support Group | 21 | 22 | 23 |
| 24 | 25 Visit Cherie @ Highland Campus | 26 | 27 Women's Support Group | 28 | 29 DVAM Meeting 5:30 p.m. @ Jacobs House | 30 |

