

When a person discloses domestic violence

Remember:

- Never counsel a victim and abuser together.
- Never go to the scene of an incident in progress.
- Assist the person to get medical, legal or social services.

- Listen. She/he needs the affirmation of listening.
- Allow the person to make their own decisions.
- Be cautious about giving advice.
- Be patient: the first disclosure may be confused or partial.
- Look for and appreciate the inner strength of each person.

What you can say:

I believe you.
You are not alone.
You have good reason to be afraid.
What do you see as the next step?
What can we do to help you right now?

Do not say:

This is God's will.
We all have burdens.
You must forgive and
take your partner back.

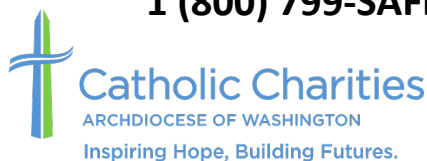
If there is an immediate threat of violence call 9-1-1!

If the violence occurred in the past, ask the individual if the police have been called, if she/he would like to contact police or file for a protective order. If the person doesn't want to contact the police or obtain a protective order, respect that choice. Survivors know their situation best.

Assess safety

Many people suffer psychological, emotional, and economic abuse and need counseling and support. Individuals living with intimate partner abuse may not realize that some situations are very dangerous. Guns, threats of murder or suicide, a recent or planned separation indicate high risk for lethal violence. Connect her/him to:

**The National Domestic Violence hotline:
1 (800) 799-SAFE (7233)**



**St. Mary's County
Domestic Violence Prevention Resources
in the Catholic Archdiocese of Washington, D.C.**
National Domestic Violence Hotline 1 (800) 799-7233
1 (800) 787-3224 (TTY for Hearing Impaired)
Website: <http://www.thehotline.org/>

Southern MD Center for Family Advocacy (301) 373-4141
The Center provides domestic violence counseling, shelter, and advocates or free legal representation in court when possible.

- Advocates in each district courthouse in Southern Maryland
- Safety planning and legal consultation
- Legal representation in protective order cases
- Transportation assistance
- Emergency shelter up to three nights, children and pets welcome, food available.

Protective orders/legal inquiries call:

Calvert County (240) 925 8549
Charles County (240) 925 8535
St. Mary County (240) 925 8550
Anger management, general inquiries (240) 925 8753
Sexual Assault (240) 925-8711
Crisis Hotline (240) 925-0084 (operates 24/7)

For emergency situations only call the 24-hour hotline (240) 925-0084.

For life threatening emergencies – Encourage the family to call 911.

Adult Protective Services, elder abuse (800) 917-7383
Child Protective Services, child abuse (800) 917-7383
National Dating Abuse Helpline(Love is Respect) (866) 331-9474
National Domestic Violence Hotline (800) 799-7233

For more information: www.catholiccharitiesdc.org/familypeace
Contact Catholic Charities: Evette.Howard@CC-DC.org

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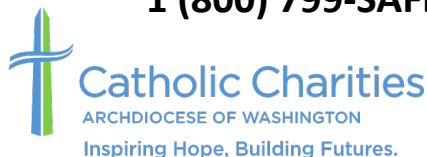
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