

# Domestic Abuse and How to Find Help Through the Family Advocacy Program

No one deserves to be abused, and that includes you. Even though asking for help may be one of the hardest things you ever do, there're people who can help.

Your installation's Family Advocacy Program or military health care provider can assist you if you're the victim of domestic abuse. If you choose to use non-military support services, one option is the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 800-799-SAFE (7233). Victim advocates offer the following forms of assistance to help keep you safe:

- **Explanation of confidentiality and military reporting options** — Under the restricted reporting option, you can report an incident to a Family Advocacy Program supervisor, clinician, a victim advocate or health care provider. You can also receive victim advocacy services, clinical or crisis counseling, mental health support and medical care without starting a law enforcement investigation or having the command notified.
- **Emergency services and counseling** — Victim advocates can assist you in finding shelter, medical care, counseling, legal services and other resources both on and off the military installation.
- **A safety plan** — Safety plans provide a strategy for finding emergency assistance, a shelter or safe house, legal assistance, financial assistance and child care. If you're not yet prepared to talk to someone, you can still develop a safety plan.
- **Military protective order or restraining order** — If you live on an installation, you may want to consider a military protective order, which is similar to a restraining order issued by a civilian court. A military protective order or restraining order makes it illegal for your spouse to return home or enter your workplace. A military protective order is issued by a military commander and may order the service member to surrender his or her weapons custody card, stay away from the family home or refrain from all forms of contact with the victim. Your military installation recognizes military protective orders, while a civilian restraining order is enforceable on your installation as well as in the civilian community. A victim advocate can help you look into these options, but they can't get one for you.
- **Information about military or civilian response** — Victim advocates can provide information about support services, what the military command can do to protect you, and what civilian law enforcement and courts can do in both military and civilian responses to domestic abuse.
- **Transitional compensation** — Family members of service members separated from the service can receive temporary payments and benefits due to a dependent-abuse offense. Transitional

compensation assists military family members during the financial hardship they may face when they leave an abusive relationship. Remember, the victim advocate can help you through the process of applying, but does not do it for you.

Victim advocates can assist you every step of the way.

Contact a [Domestic Abuse Victim Advocate 325-307-1556 / DSM: 325-307-1556](#) or the [Family Advocacy Program 3245-696-8378 DSN: 461-8378](#) or call the [National Domestic Violence Hotline](#) at 800-799-SAFE (7233), both resources allow you to remain anonymous.

## Keep yourself safe from an abusive spouse or partner

Read

more about making a [restricted report](#) and getting confidential help.

Take these steps to get the help you need to keep yourself safe from an abusive spouse or partner:

- **Seek support.** Talk with a friend, co-worker, relative or neighbor.
- **Find out about military reporting options.** The military offers confidential reporting of domestic abuse so you can get the help you need without immediate command notification or law enforcement involvement. Read "[Domestic Abuse: Military Reporting Options](#)" to learn more.
- **Document evidence of violence.** If you seek medical treatment, explain what happened. Ask the health care provider to document the incident or injuries in your medical record. Save any threatening emails or voicemails.
- **Plan ahead in case you need to leave on short notice.** A domestic abuse victim advocate can help you create a safety plan for you and your children. This plan includes tips, such as gathering important documents in one place, getting a credit card in your own name, saving a secret fund of cash, keeping a change of clothing for yourself and your children, and keeping an extra set of car keys at a friend's home or at work.
- **Gather information.** Resources are available to assist with potential legal issues, such as military or civilian protective orders, counseling, shelters and resources in your community. Visit the [legal assistance office](#) on your installation for information about legal issues.
- **Have a safe place to go.** If you feel threatened or at risk of harm, find a safe place to go, preferably somewhere unknown to your spouse. Sometimes friends and relatives aren't the best option because your abuser will know where to find you.
- **Have a secret code.** If you have children, come up with a secret code word or phrase to use as a signal that to leave the house and go to a specific location — such as a neighbor's home — that you've arranged and practiced in advance.

- **Think about safety at school or child care facilities.** Abusive spouses may try to take children from school and child care settings. Any restraining order or military protective order should include measures to keep your kids safe. Be sure either your children's school or child care center is aware of your domestic situation and give them a copy of the restraining order or military protective order.
- **Plan your escape.** Practice getting out of the house quickly without being noticed when your abuser's not around.
- **Have a cell phone available to call for help.** If you don't own one, recycled cell phones that function only for 911 calls are available through domestic violence prevention programs.
- **Inform your employer.** Let your supervisor know about your situation in case your spouse or partner shows up at your workplace.

You're the only one who can make the decision to walk away from abusive behavior. Whether you decide to stay or go, you can get confidential help. A safety plan can save your life.

Remember, if someone's hurting you — emotionally or physically — you're not alone. There are people willing to listen and assist. Give a domestic abuse advocate a call to see how he or she can help.