



## October is National Domestic Violence Awareness Month

### *Defining Domestic Violence:*

*Domestic violence is a pattern of physically, sexually, and/or emotionally abusive behaviors used by one individual to assert power or maintain control over another in the context of an intimate or family relationship.*

### **The Realities of Domestic Violence:**

Approximately 1 in 4 women and nearly 1 in 7 men in the U.S. have experienced severe physical violence by an intimate partner (e.g., hit with a fist or something hard, beaten, slammed against something) at some point in their lifetime. *(National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey, 2010 Summary Report)*

21,562 victims of domestic violence were served by Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) funded projects in FY14. *(Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services, CIMS stats)*

71,091 calls were made to domestic and sexual violence hotlines across Virginia in 2014. *(Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Action Alliance, Domestic Violence Services in Virginia, VAdat Report 2014)*

5,741 adults and children received 201,402 nights of emergency shelter due to domestic violence in 2014. *(Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Action Alliance, Domestic Violence Services in Virginia, VAdat Report 2014)*

51,019 emergency protective orders were issued by magistrates and judges across the Commonwealth to protect the immediate health and safety of victims and their family members. *(Office of the Attorney General, 2013 Annual Report- Domestic and Sexual Violence in Virginia)*

36% of all homicides in 2013 in Virginia were attributed to Family and Intimate Partner Violence (FIPV). While the overall number of homicides has decreased since 2009, the proportion of deaths attributed to FIPV remains stable at one in three or higher.

*(Virginia Chief Medical Examiner's Office, 2013 Family and Intimate Partner Homicide Report)*

If you or someone you know is a victim of crime, you can contact the toll-free **Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services Crime Victim Assistance Info-Line at 1-888-887-3418** for assistance. Callers will be informed of their rights as victims under the Virginia Crime Victim and Witness Rights Act and will receive additional information, support and referrals to programs and resources in their communities.

For additional information, visit: <http://www.dcjs.virginia.gov/victims/documents/InfoCard.cfm>

Additionally, domestic violence and sexual assault victims seeking immediate assistance may also contact the toll-free **Virginia Family Violence and Sexual Assault Hotline at 1-800-838-8238**. Hotline staff is available to help you 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. For additional information, visit <http://www.vsdvalliance.org/#/resources-helpayuda>.

For volunteer opportunities, please contact your local victims' services program.

*Please wear a purple ribbon during the month of October to show your commitment to stopping violence in our communities and across the nation*



[www.dcjs.virginia.gov](http://www.dcjs.virginia.gov)

## **National Domestic Violence Awareness Month**

### **Safety comes first!**

*It is important to have a safety plan in place.*

*In order to enhance the victims' safety as many of the following should be done:*

Plan for a quick escape. Know where to go and how to get there, any time of the day or night. Think this through now, before an attack. Consider going to a domestic violence shelter or the home of a family member or friend. If that is not possible, try a public place such as a library, hospital, shopping center, police or fire station. Know where each is located.

If you believe you are about to be assaulted, stay out of rooms where there are weapons such as guns or knives. Do not attempt to threaten the abuser with a weapon, as it may put you in an even more dangerous situation.

Keep telephone numbers of family, friends, doctors, safe shelter, etc. in a safe place or where it is easily accessible and make sure your abuser does not have access to this information.

Gather important documents such as:

- birth certificates
- passports
- prescriptions
- social security numbers
- copies of any protective orders
- records of the abuser's prior convictions (if any)
- marriage license
- insurance information
- children's school records
- immunization (shot) records
- medical records
- information about bank accounts
- any other information you feel is necessary

Consider giving these important documents to a trusted friend or neighbor to keep for you so the abuser does not try to take or destroy them.

Put aside emergency money.

Hide an extra set of car keys.

Keep an extra set of clothes and shoes for you and your children with a trusted friend or neighbor.

Take a special toy for your child(ren).

Let the people that you trust know about your situation and the violence you are experiencing.

Trust yourself and your decisions. You are the one who can best determine how to stay safe.

*WARNING: Abusers try to control their victims' lives. When abusers feel a loss of control—like when victims try to leave them—the abuse often gets worse. Take special care if you leave.*

*Continue to be careful, even after you have left.*

***If you are in danger please call 911 immediately!***

*Obtained from: Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services.  
"An Informational Guide for Domestic Violence Victims in Virginia" April 2015*