

ELDER ABUSE

WHAT IS ELDER ABUSE?

As outlined by the Suffolk County Executive's Task Force on Family Violence, elder abuse encompasses five areas of mistreatment:

PHYSICAL ABUSE

Bodily harm resulting from such actions as hitting, shaking, pushing, beating, or restraining.

PSYCHOLOGICAL ABUSE

Actions or threats that result in mental distress or emotional disturbance, such as.... Yelling, insults, name-calling, threats, infantilization of the older person, or prolonged silence.

NEGLECT

Active: Purposeful withholding of necessary services such as food, medication, or shelter.
Passive: Ignorance or inability to meet an older person's fundamental needs.

MATERIAL ABUSE/FINANCIAL EXPLOITATION

Illegal or improper use of funds or other resources, including money, possessions, or property.

SEXUAL ABUSE

Any form of sexual contact or assault without consent or through coercion.

VICTIMS INFORMATION BUREAU OF SUFFOLK (VIBS) **ELDER ABUSE PROJECT**

PURPOSE

- ❖ To help reduce the incidence and prevalence of abuse and neglect of elderly residents of Suffolk County.
- ❖ To educate the elderly, the community, and professionals concerning the incidence and issues relating to elder abuse.
- ❖ To provide assistance for victims of elder abuse.

WHO QUALIFIES?

60 + year old women or men who are victims of:

- ❖ Physical abuse
- ❖ Emotional abuse
- ❖ Financial abuse
- ❖ Neglect
- ❖ Sexual abuse
- ❖ Other crimes

WHAT CAN WE DO FOR YOU?

- ❖ Counseling
- ❖ Court/Law Enforcement Advocacy and Accompaniment
- ❖ Case Management
- ❖ Social Service Advocacy
- ❖ Community Education Programs
- ❖ Crime Victims Board Compensation Applications
- ❖ Referrals

Adult Protective Services Phone Numbers – 631-854-3195, 854-3196, or 854-3197

Victims Information Bureau of Suffolk County (VIBS) Phone Number – 631-360-3606 (24 hour)

SUFFOLK COUNTY EXECUTIVE’S TASK FORCE ON FAMILY VIOLENCE – BATTERER’S PROGRAM

HELP ABUSERS LEARN TOGETHER (HALT)

HALT is a domestic violence prevention program of VIBS. It’s your choice to end the abuse.

DO YOU NEED HELP TO STOP ABUSING YOUR PARTNER?

Ask yourself these questions to find out:

- ❖ Does your partner or child ever feel afraid of you?
- ❖ Have you ever physically hurt or threatened your partner?
- ❖ Does your partner feel you are possessive or jealous?
- ❖ Do you “overreact” to minor events?
- ❖ Has your partner left you, called police, or filed for an order of protection as a result of your behavior?
- ❖ Do you sometimes apologize for being “too rough” and then do it again? Does your partner think you are trying to control her?

If you answered yes to even one of these questions, you would benefit from attending HALT, a program offered by Victims Information Bureau of Suffolk County.

YOU ARE NOT ALONE. Men come to HALT to get help in changing abusive and controlling behavior. Being in a group with other men who are ending abusive behavior provides tremendous support for change.

**HELP IS AVAILABLE
CALL TODAY: 631-360-3606**

Recognizing you have a problem is the first step to ending violent behavior.

Calling HALT is the second.

Many men call HALT to get help in changing physically or verbally abusive behavior. Some men call because wives or friends suggest it. Some men call because a judge or probation officer mandates program participation. Some men call because they realize their behavior is causing harm to their wives and children and want to stop.

Wanting to change abusive behavior isn't enough. Most men find that they continue to be violent even after they have promised themselves and their partners that they will stop. Although men may want to change, most do not stop being abusive without getting help. **HALT CAN HELP.**

HALT assists men in applying three basic principles:

- ❖ You are always responsible for your own behavior.
- ❖ Using violent or controlling behavior is a CHOICE.
- ❖ Abuse is a LEARNED BEHAVIOR and therefore can be changed.

HALT CONSISTS OF TWO PHASES

PHASE ONE focuses solely on the elimination of physically, verbally and emotionally abusive behavior. Participants are introduced to the basic concepts of HALT, and challenged to begin to apply them to interactions with their wives or girlfriends. Men are challenged to examine the effects of their behavior on children as well.

PHASE ONE consists of eighteen weeks of structured group counseling. The group meets weekly for one and one half hours. Groups are led by professional counselors who have expertise in domestic violence. Eight men are accepted into each group. Some groups are comprised entirely of men who have come voluntarily, while others include both volunteer and mandated men.

PHASE TWO of HALT assists men in maintaining their commitment to non-violent behavior. This commitment is reinforced by:

- ❖ Helping men examine the more subtle ways in which they are controlling.
- ❖ Learning more respectful ways of communicating with partners and children.
- ❖ Increasing understanding of partner needs.

Abusive, controlling behavior is learned over a life-time. Continuing PHASE TWO is critical for most participants to truly maintain new ways of relating to partners and families.

PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY

HALT is open to any man eighteen years old and over who has been physically or verbally aggressive toward his partner.

Men are scheduled for both an initial screening and interview with a group leader prior to acceptance into HALT.

To be accepted into HALT, men must make a commitment to:

- ❖ Refrain from all forms of violence.
- ❖ Attend all eighteen weeks of PHASE ONE.
- ❖ Remain drug and alcohol free during the program.

Men with alcohol or drug addiction problems will be referred for treatment and evaluated again upon completion of that treatment.

Fees are charged according to a sliding-scale based on income and number of dependents. Insurance reimbursement is often accepted; however, some out-of-pocket expense must be paid by the participant.

HALT is offered in Smithtown. Both evening and daytime programs are available.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CALL:
VIBS HOTLINE: 631-360-3606**

CHILD ABUSE

An “abused child” is a child less than eighteen years of age whose parent or other person legally responsible for his/her care:

1. Inflicts or allows to be inflicted upon the child serious physical injury, or
2. Creates or allows to be created a substantial risk of physical injury, or
3. Commits or allows to be committed against the child a sexual offense as defined in the penal law.

A “maltreated child” is a child under eighteen years of age who has had serious physical injury inflicted upon him/her by other than accidental means.

A “maltreated child” is also a child under eighteen years of age whose physical, mental or emotional condition has been impaired or is in danger of becoming impaired as a result of the failure of his/her parent or other person legally responsible for his/her care to exercise a minimum degree of care:

1. In supplying the child with adequate food, clothing, shelter, education, medical or surgical care, though financially able to do so or offered financial or other reasonable means to do so; or
2. In providing the child with proper supervision or guardianship; or
3. By unreasonable inflicting, or allowing to be inflicted, harm or substantial risk thereof, including the infliction of excessive corporal punishment; or
4. By using a drug or drugs; or
5. By using alcoholic beverages to the extent that he/she loses self-control of his/her actions; or
6. By any other acts of a similarly serious nature requiring the aid of the Family Court.

PHYSICAL INDICATORS OF POSSIBLE CHILD ABUSE

Bruises in different stages of healing, welts, or bite marks on face, lips, mouth, neck, wrist, thighs, ankles, or torso, or on several areas of the body such as:

- ❖ Injuries to both eyes or both cheeks (usually only one side of the face is injured in an accident)
- ❖ Marks that are clustered, that form regular patterns, that reflect the shape of such articles as an electrical cord, belt buckle, fork tines, or human teeth.
- ❖ Grab marks on the arms or shoulders; and/or
- ❖ Bizarre marks, such as permanent tattoos

Lacerations or abrasions to mouth, lips, gums, eyes, external genitalia, arms, legs, or torso.

Burns:

- ❖ From cigars or cigarettes, especially on soles, palms, back, or buttocks.
- ❖ From immersion in scalding water (socklike or glovelike on feet or on hands, doughnut-shaped on buttocks or genitalia)
- ❖ That are patterned like an object, such as an iron or electric burner; burns from ropes on arms, legs, neck, or torso.

Any fractures:

- ❖ Multiple or spiral, of the long bones, to skull, nose, or facial structure.
- ❖ Other injuries, such as dislocation.

Head injuries:

- ❖ Absence of hair or hemorrhage beneath the scalp from hair pulling.
- ❖ Subdural hematomas.
- ❖ Retinal hemorrhage or detachment, from shaking.
- ❖ Eye injuries.
- ❖ Jaw and nasal fractures.
- ❖ Tooth or frenulum injury.

Symptoms that suggest fabricated or induced illness, sometimes known as Munchausen's Syndrome by Proxy (MSP); for example, a parent might be repeatedly feeding a child quantities of laxatives sufficient to cause diarrhea, dehydration, or hospitalization, without revealing the child has been medicated.

Some of the emotional and behavioral signs of possible child abuse:

- ❖ Aggressiveness
- ❖ Withdrawal
- ❖ Fear of going home
- ❖ Fear of parents and other adults
- ❖ Attempted suicide

Some of the physical signs of possible child neglect:

- ❖ Newborn with positive toxicology for drugs
- ❖ Lags in physical development
- ❖ Constant hunger
- ❖ Poor hygiene
- ❖ Inappropriate dress for the season

Some of the emotional and behavioral indicators of possible child neglect:

- ❖ Chronic fatigue
- ❖ Frequent absences from school or lateness
- ❖ Begging for food
- ❖ Hypochondria
- ❖ Reports no caregiver at home

Some of the signs of possible child sexual abuse:

- ❖ Difficulty in walking and sitting
- ❖ Pain or itching in the genital area
- ❖ Torn, stained, or bloody underclothing
- ❖ Sexually transmitted diseases, especially in preteens
- ❖ Pregnancy, especially in early adolescence

Some emotional and behavioral signs of possible child sexual abuse:

Many of the following indicators may also reflect problems unrelated to sexual abuse. Moreover, no one child will show all of these signs.

Particularly in children who are less than eight years of age look for:

- ❖ Eating disorders
- ❖ Fear of sleeping alone
- ❖ Bed wetting at night or daytime accidents
- ❖ Separation anxiety
- ❖ Thumb or object sucking
- ❖ Sexual talk
- ❖ Excessive masturbation
- ❖ Crying spells
- ❖ Excessive fear
- ❖ Sadness or depression
- ❖ Suicidal thoughts
- ❖ Hypochondria

In children over eight through adolescence:

- ❖ Fear of being alone
- ❖ Peer problems
- ❖ Frequent fights with family members
- ❖ Poor self-esteem
- ❖ Emotional numbness

- ❖ Substance abuse
- ❖ Mood swings
- ❖ Excessive guilt or shame
- ❖ Withdrawn, isolated behavior
- ❖ Suicidal thoughts or gestures
- ❖ Self-mutilation
- ❖ Sexual acting out
- ❖ Unwillingness to change into gym clothes
- ❖ Memory problems
- ❖ Fear of future abuse
- ❖ Intrusive, recurrent thoughts, or flashbacks

RAPE AND SEXUAL ASSAULT

**24 HOUR RAPE HOTLINE: 631-360-3607
FOR APPOINTMENTS CALL – 631-360-3730**

WHAT IS SEXUAL ASSAULT?

Sexual assault is any non-consensual sexual act which is forced by one or more persons upon another. The term sexual assault includes rape (forced vaginal intercourse), sodomy (forced anal or oral intercourse), or any unwanted touching of the sexual parts of the body.

Rape and sexual assault are crimes that affect all of us. Statistics show at least 20% of women are raped in their lifetimes and 14% of rape survivors are male.

The impact of sexual violence is traumatic to the victim. Common reactions after an assault are fear, depression, shame, guilt and anger. Some people experience nightmares or flashbacks to the attack. All of these reactions are normal. Over time, victims regain their sense of control and safety. Victims become survivors.

If you have been a victim of a sexual assault there is help at VIBS. You can call our rape hotline, 631-360-3607, 24 hours a day, seven days a week to have your questions answered, or simply to have someone listen... someone who understands, and can help. **All calls are confidential.**

ACQUAINTANCE OR DATE RAPE

When someone you know forces you to have sex, it is called acquaintance rape. Most rapes that occur are date rapes. (1) It is a crime. It doesn't matter if you have had sex with that person before, if you are in a relationship, or if you are friends. No one has the right to coerce or pressure you into a sexual activity you do not want.

MALE SEXUAL ASSAULT

Men and boys can be sexually assaulted too. One study cited one out of six boys had been sexually abused. (1) Most adult males are sexually assaulted by other adult males. Many men are reluctant to seek help after a sexual assault. The trauma after a sexual assault can be devastating if you are a man or a woman. Help is available at VIBS.

CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

Child sexual abuse is an epidemic in our society. Child sexual abuse is any sexual act that involves an adult and a child. Over 85% of sexually abused children are molested by a family member. (1) This is a crime that involves the abuse of power and betrayal of trust. VIBS provides counseling and referrals to child victims of sexual abuse.

ANY UNWANTED SEXUAL ACT IS A CRIME OF VIOLENCE. YOU DON'T HAVE TO GO THROUGH IT ALONE. CALL VIBS. WE CAN HELP.

631-360-3607 24 HOURS A DAY

(1) These statistics and more are available at VIBS. Call 631-360-3730.

STAYING SAFE: PREVENTING FAMILY VIOLENCE

WHAT CAN I DO.....

IF I AM A VICTIM?

1. If you are in physical danger call 911, or on the East End call your police department.
2. If you need someone to talk to, or are considering leaving an abusive relationship, you can call any of the hotline numbers listed at this end of this packet. They can provide you with referrals for shelter, counseling and other services.
3. Make sure you have a safety plan as outlined in this brochure.
4. Tell someone about the violence. The first step in breaking a violent pattern is telling someone. It can be a friend, relative, member of the clergy, counselor, someone at a hotline, etc.
5. Get an order of protection.

IF I AM – A FRIEND/RELATIVE/NEIGHBOR?

1. Do not ignore signs of abuse. Ask a victim how he/she got injured if you notice bruises or other evidence of abuse.
2. Be supportive. Offer to accompany the victim to court to obtain an order of protection.
3. Call 911 if necessary or on the East End call your Police Department.
4. Be patient. You must realize that helping a victim break a pattern of violence can be a slow process and the victim may still choose to remain with the abuser.

POLICE ACTION

When an officer responds to a domestic violence call, it will be determined whether or not a crime has been committed. An arrest may be made depending on the circumstances of the case.

1. **Felony:** This is a very serious offense. Stabbing, shooting or causing serious physical injury to the victim (such as broken bones or damage to internal organs) are felonies. The police will make an arrest of the abuser regardless of what the victim requests.

2. **Misdemeanor:** If police officers see an injury, such as a cut or a bruise, an arrest will be made unless the victim requests otherwise. Officers do not ask victims what their wishes are.
3. **Violation:** This occurs if someone pushes, shoves, kicks, hits or slaps you. It may also include certain types of verbal threats. When the officer arrives, s/he cannot make the arrest unless s/he witnessed the incident. That is the law! But, the victim can request to make a civilian arrest. The officer will take the offender into custody for the victim after the appropriate paperwork is signed.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE MYTHS:

MYTH: Domestic Violence is a private family matter.

REALITY: **DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IS A CRIME.**

MYTH: Battering is rare.

REALITY: **According to the U.S. Attorney General, battering is the single major cause of injury to women in the United States. F.B.I. statistics indicate that a woman is beaten every 18 seconds.**

MYTH: The victim provokes the batterer to violence by saying something or doing something.

REALITY: **Victims do not cause the violence; batterers do. A batterer needs no provocation to become violent. A victim does not control the abuse and is not responsible for its occurrence. The abuser controls the behavior and must be held accountable.**

MYTH: The victim must enjoy the abuse. Why else would the victim stay?

REALITY: **Victims often remain in their abusive relationships because of fear (for themselves and their children), economic dependency, and lack of anyone to help. Leaving is a process. It usually takes a victim an average of six to eight attempts before leaving for good.**

MYTH: Batterers are alcoholic or substance abusers which cause the batterer to abuse.

REALITY: **The use of alcohol or drugs does not cause violence. A batterer's use of violence to control is always there – drugs or alcohol bring that need to the surface.**

MYTH: Battering is caused by an inability to express anger or handle stress.

REALITY: **Though domestic violence is related to anger, studies indicate that anger is not the cause of violence; rather the violence is an attempt to control and dominate.**

MYTH: All the abuser and the victim need is a little marriage counseling.

REALITY: **It can be dangerous for a victim to attend couples counseling while a batterer is still abusive. First a batterer must get counseling for his problem.**

MYTH: Pregnant women rarely experience domestic abuse.

REALITY: **Pregnancy can often increase risk for physical abuse as pregnancy can pose a threat to a batterer's sense of power and control.**

ORDER OF PROTECTION

An order of protection is an order issued by a court directing the abuser to abide by certain conditions such as staying away from and refraining from threatening the victim and other household members.

If a charge is filed against the abuser in criminal court, the victim can apply for an order of protection at the criminal court where the charge is filed.

To obtain an order of protection in criminal court, a Village Justice Court, or an East End Town Justice Court the procedure must start with the Police Department. Contact your Police Department and immediately follow up with the court.

The abuser does not have to be present when the victim applies for the order. Generally, any order issued while the criminal charge is pending will stay in effect until the criminal matter is disposed of. Depending on what the final outcome is, a new order of protection may be issued when the criminal charge ends.

An order of protection can also be issued if a petition is filed in Family Court, and the abuser and victim are related. Once the petition is filed, the victim will be afforded an opportunity to appear before a Family Court judge to request an order of protection. The abuser need not be present. It is possible for any order issued to remain in effect until the petition is disposed of. Depending on what the final outcome is, a new order of protection may be issued when the temporary order ends and may be effective for as long as three years.

In New York State, it is possible for a victim of domestic violence to file a charge in criminal court and Family Court at the same time for the same incident. To file in Family Court:

Probation Department
Cohalan Court Complex
400 Carleton Avenue – 3rd Floor
Central Islip, NY 11722
631-853-5337

Criminal Courts Building
300 Center Drive
Riverhead, NY 11901
631-852-1939

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE is a pattern of abusive behavior which keeps one partner in a position of power over the other partner through the use of fear, intimidation and control.

PHYSICAL ABUSE – Grabbing, pinching, shoving, slapping, hitting, hair pulling, biting, etc. Denying medical care or forcing alcohol and/or drug use.

SEXUAL ABUSE – Coercing or attempting to coerce any sexual contact without consent, e.g. marital rape, forcing sex after physical beating, attacks on sexual parts of the body or treating another in a sexually demeaning manner.

ECONOMIC ABUSE – Making or attempting to make a person financially dependent, e.g. maintaining total control over financial resources, withholding access to money, forbidding attendance at school or employment.

EMOTIONAL ABUSE – Undermining a person's sense of self-worth, e.g. constant criticism belittling one's abilities, name calling, damaging a partner's relationship with the children.

PSYCHOLOGICAL ABUSE – Causing fear by intimidation, threatening physical harm to self, partner or children, destruction of pets and property, mind games or forcing isolation from friends, family, school and/or work.

VICTIM'S SAFETY PLAN

BEING AWARE+INFORMING OTHERS+FINDING SUPPORT=INCREASED SAFETY

- ❖ Plan an escape route if you have to leave quickly. Know two exits from every room in your house or apartment.
- ❖ Know where you will go if you have to leave your home.
- ❖ Teach your children how to use the telephone to contact the police and the fire department.
- ❖ Tell a neighbor about the violence and request that s/he call the police if s/he hears suspicious noises coming from your home.

- ❖ Keep some necessary items together in a safe place, either in your home or with a friend. These items should include money, extra car and house keys, medications, extra clothing for you and the children, toiletries, personal phone book, legal documents (identification, birth certificates, social security cards, passports, immigration papers, etc.).
- ❖ If you have an order of protection, keep a copy with you at all times, and hide copies in other safe places, e.g. in your home, in the glove compartment of your car, with a neighbor, or in your desk at work if you work outside the home.
- ❖ Call one of the numbers below for support, shelter, counseling and/or advocacy.
- ❖ Call the police. Physical abuse and some forms of verbal abuse are crimes, regardless of who the abuser is.
- ❖ You should not do anything that may alter or destroy any evidence until it has been witnessed, recorded, and possibly preserved by a police officer. Evidence may include blood or blood stains, hair samples or semen samples, grab marks, bruises, scratches, torn clothing, damaged or tipped over furniture, alcohol containers, pictures of the injuries, x-rays, medical reports, and witness statements by you and anyone else who witnessed the abuse.

THERE IS HELP AVAILABLE FOR BOTH VICTIMS AND BATTERERS. IF YOU ARE A VICTIM OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, OR IF YOUR VIOLENT BEHAVIOR IS ENDANGERING THE LIVES OF OTHERS IN YOUR HOME, PLEASE CONTACT:

SUFFOLK COUNTY REFERRALS

Rape & Sexual Assault Hotline – 631-360-3607

Reporting Suspected Child Abuse or Maltreatment – 1-800-342-3720 **24 Hour Hotline**

Suffolk County 24 Hour Response Hotline for child abuse – 631-751-7500

Adult Protective Services – 631-854-3195, 854-3196, or 854-3197

Victims' Information Bureau of Suffolk County – 631-360-3606

Suffolk County Coalition Against Domestic Violence – 631-666-8833
(TTY) – 233-3626

Suffolk County Department of Social Services – 631-854-9935

Brighter Tomorrows – 631-395-1800 – **24 Hour Hotline**

- ❖ 24 Hour Hotline
- ❖ Legal Advocacy
- ❖ Children's Program
- ❖ Support Groups
- ❖ Shelter
- ❖ Transitional Housing Program
- ❖ Counseling
- ❖ Community Education Program

Long Island Women's Coalition – 631-666-7181 – 24 Hour Emergency Number

- ❖ 24 Hour Hotline
- ❖ Bilingual
- ❖ Shelter and Support Services for Victims and their Families
- ❖ Precinct and Court Advocacy
- ❖ Community and Professional Training
- ❖ Community-based Support Groups

The Retreat – 631-329-2201 **24 Hour Hotline**

- ❖ 24 Hour Hotline
- ❖ Advocacy
- ❖ Shelter
- ❖ Counseling – Individual and Group
- ❖ Children's Counseling
- ❖ Batterer's Program

New York State Domestic Violence Hotline (24 hours)

1-800-942-6906 (English)

1-800-924-6908 (Spanish)

National Domestic Violence Hotline (24 hours)

1-800-799-7233 (Multilingual)

1-800-787-3224 (TDD)