Tips You Can Use to Stay Safe

- Have important phone numbers nearby for you and your children. Numbers to have include the police, hotlines, friends and the local shelter.
- Think of friends or neighbors you could tell about the abuse. Ask them to call the police if they hear angry or violent noises.
- If you have children, teach them how to dial 911. Make up a code word that you can use when you need help.
- Think of safer places in your home where there are exits and no weapons. If you feel abuse is going to happen try to get your abuser to one of these safer places.
- Even if you do not plan to leave, think of where you could go. Try doing things that get you out of the house-taking out the trash, walking the pet or going to the store.
- Always seek medical attention after a physical assault. You may be more injured than you realize.
- Establish your history of abuse. Try to save anything that will show how badly you were injured. Keep a dairy or journal, take photographs of your injuries.
- Put together a bag of things you need. Hide it and make it easy for you to get. Include important papers, identification, medications, and a change of clothes.

Memphis Area Legal Services, Inc. (MALS) is a nonprofit law firm providing free legal assistance in civil matters to low-income and elderly persons living in Shelby, Fayette, Lauderdale and Tipton counties in West Tennessee. Since 1970, MALS has been dedicated to helping families and individuals solve problems that affect their basic needs.

The Domestic Violence Project is funded by the Women’s Foundation for a Greater Memphis and Legal Services Corporation.

Note: This pamphlet cannot take the place of legal advice.

Memphis Area Legal Services, Inc.

22 N. Front Street, Suite 1100
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General Phone: 901.523.8822
OPP Assistance: 901.523.8890

www.malsi.org

Memphis Area Legal Services, Inc.
Opportunity Plus
A Domestic Violence Project Program

The Opportunity Plus program provides assistance to victims of domestic violence in achieving self-sufficiency after leaving their abusive relationships.

For assistance, please call 901.523.8890
The **Opportunity Plus** Program

Promoting **self-sufficiency** for families in crisis

Our staff can assist with:

- **Developing a safety plan**
- Assistance with the **Order of Protection** process
- Providing direct client services to include intensive **case management**
- Locating emergency, transitional and temporary **housing** and referrals for rent and utility payment assistance

**Financial Security**, literacy, and management

Developing a resume, cover letter, Internet and **job search skills**

Referrals to **mental & physical health** providers for the client and her children

Education in daily living and **coping skills**

Assistance with:

- Cover Letter and Resume Writing
- Basic Internet and Computer Skills
- Short and Long Term Goal Planning
- Financial Literacy and Management

For assistance, please call **901.523.8890**

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**What is Domestic Violence?**

**Domestic Violence** can take different forms, but its goal is always the same. Batterers want to control their domestic partners through fear and intimidation. They use many methods to do this:

- **Physical Abuse**: Hitting, Slapping, Kicking, Strangling, Restraining, Pushing, Beating, Punching
- **Verbal Abuse**: Constant criticism, Making humiliating remarks, Not responding to what victim is saying, Mocking, Name-calling, Yelling, Swearing, Interrupting, Changing the subject
- **Sexual Violence**: Forcing sex on an unwilling partner, Demanding sexual acts the victim does not want to perform, Degrading treatment
- **Isolation**: Making it hard for the victim to see friends and family, Monitoring phone calls and emails, Controlling where the victim goes, Taking victim’s car keys, Destroying important documents
- **Harassment**: Following or stalking, Refusing to leave when asked, Embarrassing victim in public, Constantly checking up on victim

**Other Forms Include**: Self-Destructive Behavior, Economic Control, Destruction of Property, Using Threats and Intimidation

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**What you can do if You are being abused**

1. If you recognize these activities in your home, educate yourself about your right to safety.
2. Review the safety tips in this brochure to create a safety plan. Victims are most in danger when leaving their abuser.
3. Use community resources such as Memphis Area Legal Services, victim’s assistance, shelters, case management, and counseling programs to heal and stay safe.
4. Develop a plan to achieve your dreams. Increased education, employment, savings, and increased self-esteem are good ways to protect yourself from future violence.

For assistance, please call **901.523.8890**

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**Whether you stay or leave, You will be safer if you have a plan!**