



## Options/Reaching Out

Know  
Needs  
Options  
Warn-  
ings  
Learn  
Explore  
Danger  
Grieve  
Em-

**There are several options available for victims who are in a violent relationship and are seeking assistance:**

- Contact a local domestic violence program. These programs are in many communities around the country and can provide: counseling and support groups; information about legal options, the criminal justice system, and social services; shelter; attorney referrals; vocational counseling; safety planning; and case advocacy. Programs will assist victims regardless of their decision to stay in, or leave, the relationship.
- Create a comprehensive safety plan. With assistance from a victim service professional, victims should create an individualized plan for safety in all situations, including a checklist of necessary items to take when leaving an abusive situation.
- Consider legal options. In every state, domestic violence is a crime. For information on criminal penalties for abusers, and protections for victims through the criminal justice system, victims should contact local law enforcement or prosecutor's office.
- Reporting domestic violence incidents may raise safety concerns, so this option should be discussed with a victim service professional. Whether victims choose to report, it may be helpful to document evidence of abuse (i.e., pictures, witness statements, tape recordings), to be used in criminal proceedings, or in custody or divorce hearings.
- Every state has a process for obtaining civil protective orders (also known as no contact orders, or restraining orders) that prohibit contact between an abuser and a victim. For more information on civil protective orders, victims should contact a local domestic violence program.
- From a safe computer you can research domestic violence online at:  
<http://www.ncvc.org>  
<http://alternativestodv.org/home.html>

**Information Taken  
from:**

The National Center for  
Victims of Crime  
Domestic Violence  
[http://www.ncvc.org/ncvc/  
main.aspx?dbID=dash\\_Home](http://www.ncvc.org/ncvc/main.aspx?dbID=dash_Home)