



## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### ***What is the role of Domestic Violence Crisis Center?***

Since 1980, Domestic Violence Crisis Center (DVCC) has provided counseling and advocacy services for victims of domestic violence and their children. DVCC is the only state-certified agency recognized by the Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence (CCADV) serving the communities of Norwalk, Stamford, New Canaan, Darien, Westport, Weston and Wilton.

DVCC has three major program areas: victim services, awareness raising, and preventive education and training.

### ***What is domestic violence?***

Domestic violence, also known as intimate partner violence (IPV,) is a pattern of coercive, controlling behavior that can include physical abuse, emotional abuse, technological abuse, sexual abuse, or financial abuse. It is a pervasive, life-threatening crime that affects thousands of individuals in Connecticut regardless of age, gender, economic status, race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or education. Victims are left feeling scared, confused, dependent, and insecure about their ability to survive on their own, financially or otherwise.

### ***How does DVCC help victims?***

DVCC's role is to help those experiencing any level of domestic violence and assist them in building a safer environment for the well-being of themselves and their families. Our victim services include 24-hour crisis intervention, housing, financial and legal advocacy, trauma-informed, individual and group counseling, emergency safe housing. Our staff includes licensed MSW's. Our counselors and advocates have been specifically trained to address the unique needs of domestic violence victims.

Our approach is victim-centered. We consider every individual to be the “expert” in their own lives, and, as such, they are best able to tell us what they need. Our staff will safety plan with a client to help them set and reach their own individual goals for safety and well-being. For example, a client may come to us through one of our safe houses and need to find permanent housing, but also require legal advocacy to obtain a protective order. Our staff can address each of those needs and also provide trauma-informed counseling and support to help them heal, emotionally. All victim services are free and confidential, and all services offered are multicultural/multilingual.

***How does domestic violence impact children who witness it?***

Children who grow up witnessing domestic violence experience their own unique trauma as “secondary victims.” According to the Department of Health and Human Services, more than 15 million children in the United States live in homes in which domestic violence has happened at least once. These children are at greater risk for repeating the cycle as adults by entering into abusive relationships *or* becoming abusers themselves. Studies show that the sooner a child gets help, the better his or her chances of becoming a mentally and physically healthy adult. DVCC is committed to helping children of domestic violence victims and has a dedicated youth and family counselor on staff to provide trauma-informed counseling and support.

***What can we do to prevent domestic violence?***

DVCC believes the prevention of relationship violence in our society begins with education of youth. Our team of experienced educators provides tools for youth to help them learn how to maintain healthy relationships and solve conflicts peacefully. We recognize it is imperative to educate young people about safe, healthy behaviors – also about warning signs, and how to intervene when they know something is not okay.

***How is DVCC making a positive impact on our community?***

In FY2021, DVCC served more than 3,418 domestic violence victims and their families. Our legal advocates provided civil and criminal advocacy services for 2,261 individuals in FY2021. DVCC's housing & financial advocates worked with 372 domestic violence victims, helping them gain knowledge and understanding of budgeting and savings goals, repairing damaged credit scores, assisting with job search and employment skills, and providing other vital tools to achieve financial wellness. In FY2021, DVCC's two safe houses were consistently at or above capacity level. Our safe housing served 110 individuals, 52 of whom were children. In addition to providing basic needs of food and shelter, DVCC was able to provide victim-centered, trauma-informed counseling and advocacy to safe house residents and their children through our youth & family counselor. Here is some of the impact data reported from DVCC safe house clients: 97% of victims were safe from their abuser while in DVCC's safe housing and 91% of victims felt supported & less isolated as a result of their stay in our safe housing.

In FY 2021 DVCC's preventive education programs reached more than 5,650 youth in our community. After going through the PeaceWorks program, 98% of students were able to identify red flags in a relationship in a real-life scenario.

If you or someone you know needs help, call or text the hotline at (888) 774-2900; for more information about DVCC visit [dvcct.org](http://dvcct.org).

***For media inquiries please contact:***

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