

Statewide Resources

Legal Resources

Massachusetts Legal Resource Finder

www.massLRF.org

The Massachusetts Law Reform Institute is a statewide non-profit legal services organization. The Legal Resource Finder will direct you to legal aid services in your community.

MassLegalHelp

www.masslegalhelp.org

Practical information regarding your legal rights.

Victim Rights Law Center (VRLC)

617-399-6720 ■ www.victimrights.org

VRLC provides civil legal assistance to victims of rape and sexual assault.

State Agencies

Department of Children and Families (DCF, formerly DSS)

Hotline: 800-792-5200 ■ www.mass.gov/dcf

Department of Revenue (DOR)

Child Support: 800-332-2733

Customer Service: 800-392-6089

www.mass.gov/dor

Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) ■ 877-382-2363

www.mass.gov/dta

Massachusetts Office for Victim Assistance

617-586-1340 ■ www.mass.gov/mova

Office of the Attorney General, Victim Compensation Division (VCD)

617-727-2200, ext. 2160 ■ www.mass.gov/ago

The Victim Compensation Division can provide financial assistance to eligible victims of violent crime for medical and dental care, mental health counseling, funeral and burial costs, crime scene clean-up services, and security measures.

24-Hour Hotlines

SafeLink

877-785-2020/877-521-2601 (TTY)

The Massachusetts 24/7 statewide domestic violence hotline operated by Casa Myrna.

All calls to SafeLink are free, confidential and anonymous.

SafeLink hotline advocates are multilingual, and have access to a translation services in more than 130 languages.

Llámanos y hablemos

800-223-5001 (limited hours)

Toll-free Spanish sexual assault helpline.

National Domestic Violence Hotline

800-799-7233/ 800-787-3224 (TTY)

Help is available in more than 170 different languages through interpreter services.

Asian Task Force Against Domestic Violence

617-338-2355 ■ www.atask.org

Saheli, Friendship for South Asian Women

866-472-4354 ■ www.saheliboston.org

The Network/La Red

617-742-4911 / 617-227-4911 (TTY)

(limited hours) ■ www.TNLR.org

The Network/La Red offers free services in English and Spanish for survivors of partner abuse in lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer and/or transgender (LGBQ/T), SM/kink and polyamorous communities.

Resources for Safety and Support

Everyone is entitled
to a relationship that
is healthy and safe.



Information compiled in accordance with
Chapter 260 of the Acts of 2014

Executive Office of the Trial Court
One Pemberton Square
Boston, MA 02108
www.mass.gov/courts

Everyone is entitled to a relationship that is healthy and safe.

Sometimes relationships between family members, or current and former spouses, partners, or significant others become unsafe. The relationships can involve a pattern of abusive behaviors when one person seeks to control the other. This behavior may include:

- Name-calling and put-downs, threatening to harm themselves, their partner, or someone else.
- Limiting access to money, preventing a partner from getting or keeping a job, destroying property, and/or ruining a partner's credit.
- Tracking a partner's daily activities directly or through the use of technology like social networks, email, or smartphones.
- Hitting, pushing, kicking, choking, or using weapons or other objects that cause injury.
- Threats or violence directed at children in the family, or directed at family pets.
- Forcing or pressuring a partner into unwanted sexual acts or refusing to practice safe sex.
- Threatening an immigrant with deportation.
- Threatening to out an LGBT/Q person to family or friends.

These are examples of what is commonly referred to as domestic violence. Domestic violence can happen to anyone, no matter who you are or where you come from. It can have short and long-term impacts on a person's physical and emotional health.

If domestic violence is a part of your life, you may blame yourself, feel confused, afraid, angry, and/or trapped. These are normal responses. It is important for you to know that **this is not your fault**. You are not responsible for your partner's behavior. Abusing someone is a choice that is never acceptable.

Meeting Your Needs

If you need to speak to someone about domestic violence services and supports, you may contact the free and confidential 24-hour SafeLink Hotline at (877) 785-2020. Multiple languages are available.

If you would like to connect with an advocate who can help you to understand what options are available to you or connect with others who share your experience, please reach out to a domestic violence program in your community.

If you have been forced or pressured into unwanted sexual activity and would like to speak with someone confidentially, please contact a sexual assault program in your community.

You can find local programs in your community by entering your zip code at this website: http://www.janedoe.org/find_help/search. **Domestic and sexual violence programs in the community offer free and confidential services.**

If you are concerned about your children's behavior at home or at school related to the impact of violence or stress in the home, please contact a child witness to violence program.

If you have questions about a pending criminal matter involving violence against you, please contact the District Attorney's victim-witness program.

If you are interested in knowing what public benefits may be available to you, please contact your regional Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) office.

Safety Planning

Safety is critical if you are in or planning to leave an abusive relationship. Below are some ideas that you can use to increase your safety. Some people choose to write them down, but Safety Plans may need to change for different situations.

Considerations for Immediate Safety

- Think about who you would call for help in an unsafe situation and tell them about what is happening.
- Memorize emergency numbers for the local police (such as 911), support persons, and crisis hotlines such as SafeLink: (877) 785-2020.
- Identify escape routes and places to go if you need to flee from an unsafe situation quickly. Consider which rooms in the house have multiple doors and exits. Avoid rooms that have weapons or items that can be used as weapons (such as the kitchen).
- Talk with your children about what they should do if a violent incident occurs or if they are afraid.
- Put together an emergency bag with money/bank documents, extra car keys, medicine, and important papers such as birth certificates, social security cards, immigration documents, or health insurance cards. Keep it somewhere safe and accessible, such as with a trusted friend.
- **Trust your instincts.** If you think you are in immediate danger, it is important to get to a safe place as soon as you can.