

A Resource Guide for Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault in Northeast Michigan

Alcona, Alpena, Iosco, Montmorency and Presque Isle Counties



Shelter, Inc.

Illuminating Pathways for
Survivors of Domestic and
Sexual Violence Since 1978



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Auxiliary Aids, Services and Alternative formats of written materials
will be made available upon request.

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Please Note: Throughout this booklet we refer to batterers as male and victims/survivors as female because the overwhelming majority of people abused in the pattern we describe are women. We hope, however, this booklet will be helpful to men who are experiencing abuse, as well as individuals in abusive gay and lesbian relationships.

WHAT IS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE?

Domestic violence is a pattern of controlling behaviors carried out by a spouse, intimate partner or family member in the home to maintain power and control.

Anyone Can Be A Victim!

It is easier to think that domestic violence could never happen to you or a loved one, but there is no “predisposing” factor that can make you a victim.

Domestic Violence

Domestic violence may include physical assaults, emotional abuse, sexual assaults, social isolation, financial control, use of children, threats, stalking, and intimidation. These are all tactics used by one person in a home to control another. The person may be a spouse, intimate partner, or family member. You do not have to be physically assaulted to be abused. When someone you love hurts you, you may feel alone, as if you are the only one having the problem. Although nobody likes to think of herself as battered or abused, over 50% of all women are battered at some time in their lives and more than 1/3 are battered repeatedly every year.

Emotional Abuse

While reading this book you will see the word battering. This refers not only to physically hurting, but emotional wounding as well. It is the pummeling of one’s spirit. Emotional abuse may occur along with physical abuse or by itself. It is a very effective tool all on its own to gain and maintain power and control over someone.

Emotional abuse includes a range of behaviors:

- ⇒ Name-calling
- ⇒ Threatening

Mio

Emergency Tool Free 1-800-824-7053
Non-Emergency Calls (989) 826-2316

Presque Isle County

Emergency Calls 911
Non-Emergency Calls (989) 734-2204

Rogers City

Emergency Calls 911
Non-Emergency Calls (989) 734-2621

County Sheriff Departments

Alcona County

Emergency Calls 911
Non-Emergency Calls (989) 724-6271

Alpena County

Emergency Calls 911
Non-Emergency Calls (989) 354-9830

Iosco County

Emergency Calls 911
Non-Emergency Calls (989) 362-6164

Montmorency County

Emergency Calls 911
Non-Emergency Calls
(989) 785-4238 Atlanta
(898) 742-3387 Hillman

Presque Isle County

Emergency Calls 911
Non-Emergency Calls (989) 734-2156

FREQUENTLY CALLED TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Northeast Michigan Hospitals

Alpena Regional Medical Center

1501 West Chisholm Street, Alpena, MI
Main Switchboard (989) 356-7390
Emergency Room (989) 356-7252
Toll Free 1-800-556-8842

Otsego Memorial Hospital

825 North Center Street, Gaylord, MI
(989) 731-2100
Toll Free 1-800-322-3664

Tawas St. Joseph Hospital

200 Hemlock Street, Tawas City, MI
(989) 362-3411

Michigan State Police Posts

Alpena

Emergency Calls 911
Non-Emergency Calls (989) 354-4101

Atlanta

Emergency Calls 911
Non-Emergency Calls (989) 785-2932

East Tawas

Emergency Calls 911
Non-Emergency Calls (989) 362-3434

Lewiston

Emergency Calls 911
Non-Emergency Calls (989) 786-2275

- ⇒ Manipulating
- ⇒ Humiliating/Degrading
- ⇒ Blaming
- ⇒ Trivializing
- ⇒ Controlling
- ⇒ Angry Outbursts
- ⇒ Undermining

This system is efficient for keeping power in a relationship because it makes the victim vulnerable through loss of confidence, self-esteem, and sense of worth. Women who are verbally/emotionally abused report feeling embarrassed, confused, hurt, guilty, and unworthy. They attempt to find explanations for the abuse, such as: is it because he has had a hard day at work or bad upbringing? Maybe it is due to insecurity, worries or drinking? Most commonly, however, women look to themselves more for the cause and make various changes only to find his behavior remains the same. The reason he does not change is because he is the one in control of his behavior. He chooses the things he says and does because he benefits from them.

Emotional Abuse Tactics

Emotional abuse begins subtly and many times not until partners have made some type of commitment to each other. He may control places you go or for how long. He will try to cut you off gradually from family and friends unless they are ones he approves of—that are less likely to cause trouble. Control may extend to money, possessions, and even phone calls. Abusers may be wonderful and charming to friends and others in the community. This may add to the confusion a woman feels and reinforce the feeling that she is the one doing something wrong.

Batterers have many excuses for the things they do and say. They may say they're jealous, it's your fault, it was a joke, or they may outright deny everything. Manipulation can take many forms including presents, dinner out, and even apologizing or giving in on something they usually protest.

Coping

How then do you take care of yourself in the midst of all this? First of all, do not change yourself in an attempt to change him. This is most important because the more you change to please someone else, the more you lose your sense of who you are and what you want. As much as possible, seek out activities you enjoy and people who are supportive. Read affirmations or write in a journal, whatever will make you feel stronger. Always remember the abuser's behavior is his choice; he is aware of right and wrong, and abuses to control.

WHAT IS SEXUAL ABUSE?

Sexual abuse includes a variety of acts and behaviors. It ranges from calling you sexually degrading names, grabbing or injuring sexual parts of your body, making you feel guilty, threatening or coercing you into sex, or physically forced sex acts and intercourse.

No matter what form sexual abuse takes, the intention is to objectify the victim and send the message that she is not in control of her body. If an abuser can turn his victim into an object, he can more easily justify his treatment of her.

Remember, sexual abuse or assault is never okay, even in a relationship or a marriage. There is no inherent "right" or entitlement simply because two people have made a commitment to each other.

PHONE DIRECTORY

Shelter, Inc. serves five counties including Alcona, Alpena, Iosco, Presque Isle and Montmorency. Crisis Line and Shelter, Inc. offices are listed below:

Shelter, Inc., Alpena(989) 356-9650

Shelter, Inc., Oscoda(989) 739-0144

Shelter, Inc., Rogers City area(989) 734-7306

Shelter, Inc., Atlanta area(989) 464-1352

24 Hour Crisis Line(989) 356-9650

Long Distance Callers(800) 396-9129

Emergency911

National Domestic Violence Hotline(800) 799-SAFE

Legal Services

**Legal Services of Northern Michigan
123 N. Second Ave., Alpena, MI 49707
(989) 356-9081**

If a trial is held.

The victim is normally subpoenaed and needs to serve as a witness and testify. The victim can meet with the prosecutor before trial and have any questions answered about the proceedings.

The defendant is either found guilty or not guilty.

If found guilty, a date is set for sentencing.

The defendant is sentenced.

The judge will hear any input from the victim either through a written statement or speaking in the courtroom. You do not have to attend if you do not want to.

How To Help Someone Who Is Being Abused

1. Listen and believe.
2. Do not minimize or make excuses for abusive behavior.
3. Tell survivors they are not to blame, it's not their fault.
4. Tell them they are not alone.
5. Offer your support and assistance.
6. Point out their strengths.
7. Respect the decisions they make about leaving or staying in the relationship.
8. Help them develop a safety plan.
9. Learn about and be aware of the dynamics of domestic violence.
10. Contact Shelter, Inc.'s Domestic Violence/Sexual Assault Program at 1-800-396-9129.

How Am I Being Treated?

These Questions May Help You See if You Are Being Abused

- ◇ Do you ever feel like you are walking on eggshells to avoid upsetting your partner?
- ◇ Does your partner put you down, call you names, or make you feel bad about yourself?
- ◇ Has your partner ever made you do something humiliating or degrading, or embarrassed you in front of others?
- ◇ Has your partner intentionally damaged your possessions or threatened to do so?
- ◇ Does your partner make all the big decisions and/or control the money?
- ◇ Are you afraid that if you left, you would be attacked, harassed, followed, or spied on?
- ◇ Has your partner threatened your children, family, friends, or pets?
- ◇ Has your partner ever pushed, shoved, slapped, kicked, choked, restrained you physically, or hurt you in any other way?
- ◇ Has your partner ever used a weapon to threaten you or threatened to kill you?
- ◇ Has your partner forced you to have sex or do sex acts against your will?

Am I Abused?

If you answer yes to any of the questions on the preceding page you may be feeling confused, scared, embarrassed, and unsure of where to turn. You may even feel you are to blame and that you did something to somehow cause the abuse. You are not alone. Abuse can affect women of all ages, races, ethnic groups, backgrounds, income levels, and educational levels. You do not deserve to be abused! It can be helpful to talk things over with someone.

Am I to Blame?

Women in abusive relationships look to themselves as the source for change of their partner's behavior. The fact is, women in abusive relationships do everything possible to please their partners and adjust to the ever-changing demands. They have dinner on time, keep up the house, hold down a job, wear their clothes and their hair the way he likes, and have little contact with family and friends. Then with his next whim, typically accompanied by abuse—such as name-calling, throwing things, threats or physical violence—she is expected to change again or face the consequences. What needs to change is his behavior, because domestic violence is not about arguments, late dinners, too many bills, anger, or losing control—it is about a batterers' desire to keep control and power. Any other explanation is an excuse. Women have been socialized to be responsible for any "fixing" their relationships need. Every time a woman is asked, "Why did you stay?" the blame is being placed on her.

The most important thing to remember is that if someone abused you, it is not your fault. Batterers are responsible for their own behavior.

sonal Protection Order (PPO), and how to contact the police, the domestic violence program, and the prosecuting attorney.

The prosecutor determines whether to proceed with the case.

After receiving a report from the police officer, the prosecutor decides whether there is enough evidence to charge the assailant. The prosecutor will either issue a warrant and continue the case or end the case because there isn't enough evidence.

The victim should receive a packet of information in the mail from the prosecuting attorney's office.

This packet contains information about your rights and how to exercise them. You need to either fill out and return the form or call the victim's advocate and ask to be given your rights as a crime victim if you want them. Also in the packet will be a Victim Impact Statement. You have an opportunity to tell the prosecutor's office how you feel about this crime, how it has affected your life, and what you think would be the best sentence for the defendant.

The assailant is arraigned.

The judge will read the charges and determine bond. For your safety a "no contact" order may be issued and may remain in effect until sentencing. At the arraignment the assailant enters a plea. He could plead guilty, not guilty, or stand mute. The victim normally does not need to attend.

A court date is set.

If the assailant pleads guilty, a date is set for sentencing. If he pleads not guilty or stands mute, a date is set for a pre-trial conference and a trial.

The assailant and his attorney (if he has one) meet with the prosecutor for a pre-trial conference.

The prosecutor may give the defendant an opportunity to discuss a plea agreement. The assailant can plead guilty at any point up to the start of the trial. It is important to note most domestic violence cases do not go to trial. If the assailant pleads guilty, a time is set for sentencing.

Abuse Case Progression

The following is the typical progression of a misdemeanor domestic assault case through the criminal justice system.

A crime is committed.

The crime is reported to the police.

This is done either by someone calling the police to the scene or by the victim going to the police station and filing a complaint.

The police investigate.

If they have been called to the scene, normally two officers will respond. They should interview the victim and the assailant separately. They may also ask questions of any other witnesses including children. They may want to take pictures for evidence. If there are injuries which need treatment, police can help the victim get to the hospital.

If you have gone to the police station to file a complaint, you will probably be given some forms to complete. An officer may interview you. The officer will attempt to interview any other witnesses and the assailant. If you sought medical treatment, they will want the physician's record. The officer will complete a report and submit it to the prosecuting attorney for review and a possible warrant for the assailant's arrest.

The police may arrest the assailant.

If the police are called to the scene and determine that probable cause exists, they should arrest the assailant on the spot. If the assailant has left the scene, they may attempt to find him.

If the police do not feel they have sufficient probable cause, they will complete a report and submit it to the prosecuting attorney for review. The prosecutor will decide whether to issue a warrant for the assailant's arrest or not.

The victim should be given a Victim's Rights Information Sheet.

It contains information about your rights, how to obtain a Per-

Common Abusive Tactics to Maintain Control

Jealousy

At the beginning of a relationship, an abuser will say jealousy is a sign of love. Jealousy has nothing to do with love, it's a sign of possessiveness and lack of trust. He will question the woman about who she talks to, accuse her of flirting, or be jealous of time she spends with family, friends, or children. As the jealousy progresses, he may call her frequently during the day or drop by unexpectedly. He may refuse to let her work for fear she'll meet someone else, he may engage in strange behaviors such as checking her car mileage or asking friends to watch her.

Controlling Behavior

At the beginning the batterer will say this behavior is because he is concerned for the woman's safety, her need to use her time well, or her need to make good decisions. He will be angry if the woman is "late" coming back from the store or an appointment. He will question her closely about where she went and with whom she talked. As this behavior gets worse, he may not let the woman make personal decisions about the house, her clothing, or even going to church. He may keep all the money or even make her ask permission to leave the room or house.

Quick Involvement

Many batterers come on like a whirlwind claiming, "You're the only person I could ever talk to," or "I've never felt loved like this by anyone." He will often pressure the woman to commit to the relationship in such a way that later a woman may feel very guilty or that she's "letting him down" if she wants to slow down the involvement or break it off.

Unrealistic Expectations

An abuser expects his partner to meet all of his needs. He expects the woman to be the perfect wife, mother, lover and friend. He will say things like, "If you leave me..." "I'm all you need." She is supposed to take care of everything for him emotionally and in the home.

Isolation

The abusive person tries to cut the person off from all resources and support systems. If she has men friends, she's a "whore." If she has women friends, she's a "lesbian." If she's close to family, she's "tied to the apron strings." He may accuse people who are supportive of her of "causing trouble." He may want to live in the country without a phone. He may not let her use a car or have one that is reliable. He may try to keep the woman from working or going to school.

Blames Others for Problems

If he is chronically unemployed, he may claim someone is always doing him wrong or is out to get him. He may make mistakes and then blame the woman for upsetting him and keeping him from concentrating on work. He will tell the woman she is at fault for almost anything that goes wrong.

Blames Others for Feelings

He will tell the woman, "You make me mad." "Everything would be okay if you would just do what I want you to do," or "I can't help being angry." He really makes the decisions about what he thinks or feels but will use feelings to manipulate the woman. Harder to catch are claims that, "You make me happy," or "You control how I feel."

Hypersensitivity

An abuser is often easily insulted. He claims his feelings are "hurt" when really he's angry and he takes the slightest setbacks as personal attacks. He often will "rant and rave" about the injustice of things that have happened-things that are really just part of living like being asked to work overtime, getting a traffic ticket, being told some behavior is annoying, or being asked to help with chores.

Cruelty to Animals or Children

Batterers often punish animals brutally or are insensitive to their pain or suffering. He may expect children to be capable of doing things beyond their ability. He may tease children until they cry and/or he may not want the children to eat at the table. He may expect them to stay in their room all evening. Many men who physically hurt the women they are with, also physically

does not necessarily mean joint physical custody.

· **Physical Custody** means the actual living arrangements of the child and the rights and responsibilities associated with daily childcare; and

· **Legal Custody** means the responsibilities associated with raising a child and includes such questions as religious upbringing, school choice, and medical care.

Q: What is the difference between legal and physical custody?

A: Physical custody refers to where the child physically lives, and who has responsibilities associated with daily childcare. Legal custody deals with the decision making responsibilities associated with the education, health care and general welfare of a child.

The Criminal Justice System

It can be difficult to decide whether or not to report an abuse incident to the police. You may be weighing factors such as, will it just make things worse, will family and friends find out your secret, what is the criminal justice system like?

This section describes how a typical case would proceed. This information may help you with your decision by taking some of the mystery out of the legal process.

Tips for Dealing With the Criminal Justice System

Be as specific as possible about what has happened when talking to police officers or prosecutors. For example, tell the officers, "He slapped me twice in the face then kicked me in the right leg," rather than "He beat on me."

Let police know about past assaults or past abusive behavior of the defendant. Get as much information as possible, such as, incident numbers from the police or the name of your detective.

7. The mental and physical health of the parties involved
8. The home, school, and community record of the child.
9. The reasonable preference of the child, if the court deems the child to be of sufficient age to express preference.
10. The willingness and ability of each of the parents to facilitate and encourage a close and continuing parent-child relationship between the child and the other parent.
11. Any other factor considered by the court to be relevant to a particular child custody dispute.
12. Domestic violence.

Types of Custody Arrangements

Basic Custody Terms

Legally, the set of parental responsibilities regarding day-to-day care of the child as well as the rights to direct the child's activities and make decisions regarding the child's upbringing have been split into the separate categories of physical and legal custody for family law purposes.

- **Sole Custody:** When sole physical custody is awarded or agreed upon, one parent has the exclusive, primary right to have the child live with him or her. That parent is then known as the *custodial parent* and the other parent becomes the *non-custodial parent*.

Sole physical *and* legal custody generally only occurs when there is a history of abuse and neglect. In such instances the non-custodial parent may be limited to restricted or supervised visitation. Currently, the most common type of sole custody is sole physical custody with joint legal custody including the grant of generous visitation for the non-custodial parent.

- **Joint Custody:** In joint custody, parents share responsibility for decision-making and/or for physical control and custody of the children. Couples may agree upon joint custody or the court may order it. Couples with joint physical custody usually share legal custody, but joint legal custody

abuse their children.

“Playful” Use of Force in Sex

This kind of person may like to throw the woman down and hold her down during sex. He may want to act out fantasies during sex where the woman is helpless. He's letting her know the idea of rape is exciting. He may show little concern about whether the woman wants to have sex and uses sulking or anger to manipulate her into compliance. He may start having sex with the woman while she is sleeping or demand sex when she is ill or tired.

Verbal Abuse

An abuser will say things that are cruel and hurtful, such as degrading the woman, cursing her, or running down any of her accomplishments. The abuser will tell the woman that she's stupid and unable to function without him. He may wake the woman up to verbally abuse her or not let her go to sleep.

Rigid Sex Roles

The abuser expects a woman to serve him, for instance, he may say the woman must stay at home or she must obey in all things—even things criminal in nature. The abuser may see women as inferior to men, responsible for mental tasks, stupid, and unable to be a whole person without a man.

Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde

Many women are confused by their abuser's “sudden” changes in mood. They may think the abuser has some special mental problem because one minute he's nice and the next he's exploding. A batterer may often appear to be two different people at times. He may behave differently in public than at home.

Past Battering

The woman may hear from relatives, ex-spouses/girlfriends or the batterer himself that he has used force against a partner in the past. A batterer will abuse any partner he is with if she is with him long enough for the abuse to begin. Battering is a lifestyle, never a reaction to a particular situation or person.

Threats of Violence

This could include any threat of physical force meant to control the woman such as, "I'll slap your mouth off!", "I'll kill you!" or "I'll break your neck!" Most people do not threaten their mates, but a batterer will try to excuse threats by saying, "everybody talks like that", or that he was only joking.

Breaking or Striking Objects

This behavior is used as a punishment (breaking loved possessions) but is mostly used to terrorize the woman into submission. The abuser may beat on the table with his fist, or throw objects near or at the woman. Again, this is very notable behavior-not only is this a sign of extreme emotional immaturity, but there is great danger when someone thinks he has the "right" to punish or frighten his partner.

Any Force During an Argument

This may involve a batterer holding a woman down, physically restraining her from leaving the room, pushing, shoving, or other physical act. He may hold the woman against the wall and say, "You're going to listen to me!"

Religion or Spiritual Belief

An abuser will use such tactics as ridiculing the woman's beliefs or forbidding her to practice her faith. The abuser may use scriptural quotes such as "Women must be submissive to men," "God hates divorce," or that "The man is the head of the house."

Getting Help

If you need help with parenting skills or protecting your children, call Department of Human Services (DHS) and ask for help. An abuser may use threats to keep you from seeking out resources and services for you and your children. It may be scary to take that first step, but you'll find that programs such as Child Protective Services (CPS) will want to assist you and work with you, not against you.

Working With the Friend of the Court

The job of the Friend of the Court is to investigate, report, and make recommendations to the court regarding custody, visitation, and child support. They are also responsible for enforcing custody, visitation, and support orders entered by the court. The Friend of the Court does not have a responsibility to investigate alleged abuse or neglect. Allegations of abuse or neglect should be reported to Department of Human Services (DHS). However, you should inform the Friend of the Court about any abuse or neglect during the investigation process.

Determining Custody

Batterers often make threats about taking the children and fighting for custody. Custody is determined based on the following factors:

1. The love, affection, and other emotional ties existing between the parties involved and the child.
2. The capacity and disposition of the parties involved to give the child love, affection, guidance, and continuation of the educating and raising of the child in chosen religion or creed, if any.
3. The capacity and disposition of the parties involved to provide the child with food, clothing, medical care (or other remedial care recognized and permitted under the laws of this state in place of medical care), and other material needs.
4. The length of time the child has lived in a stable, satisfactory environment, and the desirability of maintaining continuity.
5. The performance as a family unit, of the existing or proposed custodial home or homes.
6. The moral fitness of the parties involved.

It is a long, difficult process for the state to remove children permanently from their homes. If you do not abuse your children and their basic needs are being met, you have very little to worry about.

The state agency responsible for investigating all allegations of abuse and neglect is the Department of Human Services (DHS) (previously known as Family Independence Agency (FIA)), and the department within the Department of Human Services that does the investigation is Child Protective Services (CPS). Anyone can report suspected child abuse or neglect to Child Protective Services (CPS). However, some people are obligated to do so by law. Mandatory reporters include doctors, nurses, dentists, school personnel, child care providers, police officers, psychologists, social workers, therapists, counselors, and others. This includes the domestic violence staff and counselors. If you tell a mandatory reporter about abuse or neglect, or if they suspect it, they must report it to Child Protective Services (CPS).

If the Batterer Abuses the Children

If your partner is abusing the children, you may need to leave in order to protect them. As a parent, you have a legal responsibility to protect your children from known harm. You can be charged with “failure to protect” if you know about the abuse but don’t remove the children from the risk. This can be extremely difficult when living with a violent partner.

Child Protective Services’ Actions

After suspected abuse or neglect is reported to Child Protective Services (CPS), they will investigate to determine if it is occurring and what steps are necessary to protect the children. Their actions can vary from simply speaking to the parties involved, to going to court and asking that the children be removed from the home. However, the goal of Children Protective Services (CPS) is not to remove children from their homes, their job is to ensure the safety and proper care of children. It is in your best interest to work with Child Protective Services (CPS).

Shelter, Inc. Domestic Violence/ Sexual Assault Program

Safe house is a shelter providing a place for a woman and her children to be safe. In a supportive, non-judgmental environment, women are able to gain an understanding of domestic violence/sexual assault, have questions answered, and explore their options.

What is a Safe House like?

The thought of entering a shelter can be frightening, this has been kept in mind in creating a warm, home-like atmosphere where safety is a priority.

What should I bring?

Bring essential clothing, medicine, and maybe your child’s favorite toy. If you have time, bring your marriage license, social security numbers, birth certificates, and other important papers. If you are rushed and don’t have time to bring anything, that is okay. The important thing is that you get to a safe place. Once you have arrived, arrangements can be made to assist with necessary items.

What happens when I first get there?

Your immediate needs will be determined on your arrival, such as, medical care, food, drink and attending to children’s needs. A staff person will talk with you to complete an intake process.

Who will be at the Safe House?

The shelter is staffed 24 hours a day by staff and volunteers trained in domestic violence/sexual assault intervention.

What services are offered in addition to safe house?

Shelter, Inc. can provide individual counseling, support group, advocacy with legal issues to victims of domestic violence/sexual assault, there are also transitional, permanent supportive housing, senior supportive housing and children’s services.

Shelter Safety Concerns

Deciding to obtain counseling and/or shelter is a difficult and often scary time, therefore, shelter rules and confidentiality laws are designed to protect and alleviate some of the worry you may experience.

An important cornerstone of our services is safety. To assure the safety of our clients and their children, we maintain strict confidentiality. This means that what is said between a woman and her counselor, in support groups, or during other aspects of our services remains private.

What About The Children?

Many children who witness their mothers being abused by their fathers

- Suffer anxiety
- Suffer depression
- Act out with parents
- Act out with siblings

Children are often overlooked in the statistics and discussions of domestic violence. Whether directly or indirectly, children are affected by domestic violence. They may not witness the actual episode but can see the bruises, broken furniture and hear the screams.

Victimizing the Children

Perpetrators of domestic violence use and hurt children in many ways including:

- ◇ Intentionally injuring the child.
- ◇ Unintentionally injuring the child while throwing objects at the abused parent or while the mother is holding the child.
- ◇ Often times a child is hurt while trying to intervene and protect the mother.
- ◇ Creating an environment of tension, fear, and uncertainty.
- ◇ Using the children to control the abused partner either while the couple is together or while separated.

Tactics

Assailants may use any of the following tactics:

- ◇ Isolating the children by limiting their involvement with friends and activities.
- ◇ Threatening the children with harm or threatening to hurt pets or favorite toys.
- ◇ Questioning the children about their mother.
- ◇ Using custody battles to control the mother.
- ◇ Physically or sexually harming a child to coerce or control the mother.

Harmful Effects

Effects of the assailant's abuse show up in a variety of physical and psychological symptoms such as; emotional neediness, withdrawal, aggressive acting out, eating or sleeping problems, school difficulties, caretaking (of mother or siblings), and various physical complaints. Symptoms vary from child to child and depend on the child's developmental state in life.

Protecting the Children

Women face many dangers and great odds to protect their children from the assailant. They may directly intervene in an attack, teach safety plans, reinforce to the children they are not at fault for the abuse, and remain very loving and involved with their children. Battered women work at being good mothers in spite of their own fears, depression, and injuries. It is often for the sake of their children that women leave their partners.

Can The State Take My Children?

A threat many batterers make is that he will "get your kids taken away." This is scary for most mothers, especially if you have concerns about your parenting skills.