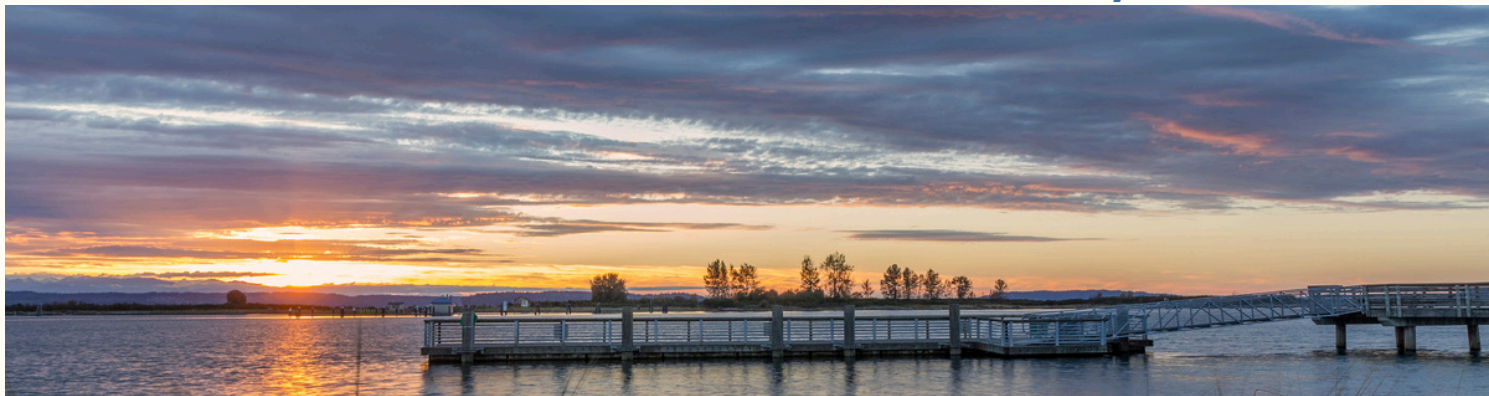


THE DOVE

Domestic Violence Services of Snohomish County Newsletter



Dear Friends,

As spring begins to bloom around us, we are reminded of renewal, growth, and the strength it takes to start again. At Domestic Violence Services of Snohomish County, we witness that strength daily in the survivors we serve—and in the community that stands beside them.

This quarter's newsletter centers around one of the most important questions we hear: **"How can I help?"** This question forms the foundation of our work and our purpose. When someone asks how they can support a loved one in an abusive relationship, it's more than a question—it's an act of love, courage, and hope.

But we would be remiss not to share that we are facing challenging times. Like many nonprofits across the country, we are experiencing funding cuts that threaten our ability to maintain the level of support, shelter, and advocacy that our community relies on. It is, quite frankly, a scary time—not just for us as an organization but for the people whose safety and futures depend on these services.

And yet, in the face of uncertainty, we are still showing up because the need is great. Survivors deserve to be believed, supported, and safe. The question **"How can I help?"** continues to echo across living rooms, courtrooms, classrooms, and communities.

So we ask you a question now: How can you help?

Whether it's through a donation, attending our upcoming Purse Auction, volunteering your time, or simply sharing our support line with someone who may need it, your support matters more than ever. It is the reason we can keep answering calls at 2 a.m., keep doors open, and keep hearts safe.

Thank you for standing with us in hard times and hopeful ones. Together, we can weather this storm and continue to be a lifeline for those who need us most.

With gratitude and resolve,

Debra Borden
DVS CEO

In This Issue

Letter from CEO

How can I help?

Impact Stories

Out and About

Community & Events

Legal Advocacy



How Can I Help My Loved One Suffering in An Abusive Relationship?

The domestic violence service industry was started by a common, important question that we are still asked today—“How can I help?”

It's this care for other people that inspires people to volunteer or work in this field. It leads generous donors to offer quilts, supplies, and much needed funds. It brings other organizations to the table to strengthen partnerships that benefit our clients. Oftentimes, it's what builds community between shelter residents as they prepare to start over—“oh, how can I help you?”

This question is often asked by the friends and family of those currently in IPV relationships. Watching a loved one navigate an abusive relationship is incredibly difficult, and it can be overwhelming to figure out how you can help.

With that in mind, every relationship is different, and survivors need different forms of support. There are some pieces of advice we offer to support line callers who want to help their loved ones.

1. Believe Them

Believing a survivor can be easier said than done, especially when you know both parties in the relationship. It can be hard to reconcile the image of the person you know and who they are in this relationship. Abusers use this knowledge to control and isolate survivors—“nobody will believe you.” By believing a loved one who discloses abuse, you are offering space that may not exist elsewhere in their lives.

2. Listen Without Judgement

Just as there are no perfect people, there are no perfect survivors. We may not agree with every decision a survivor makes—especially if they want to return to the relationship. It's important to acknowledge that while they may not make choices you like, it's your job as their support

3. Be Clear About What You Can Offer

If your loved one needs to flee, can you offer a bed for a night? A week? Can you take them to the police station? At 2am? First thing in the morning? Can you offer financial support? Buy a meal or three? Watch their kids? For how long? If a survivor knows exactly what resources are available, it's easier to safety plan around their exit. Don't overpromise, and be clear on boundaries. That way, your loved one isn't also navigating surprises during a vulnerable time.

4. Be Patient

Leaving an abusive relationship will upend your loved one's life. There will be changes surrounding work, childcare, school, friends, family, housing, and other logistics that will take time to navigate. There can also be multiple “false starts” when trying to leave. The best support is consistency. If you can reasonably offer the same resources in a month or a year as you can today, the likelihood of success is greater for your loved one.

5. Talk About Resources

Safely offer national and local resources. If your loved one is in Snohomish County, the DVS Support Line is available 24/7. The National Hotline (800-799-7233) can connect survivors to resources nationwide. If your loved one cannot safely keep brochures or safety cards, you can hold onto this information for them.

If you have further questions, do not hesitate to call our Support Line at 425-252-2873. An advocate can address specific scenarios and offer advice on how to help. Having someone willing to ask “how can I help?” is vital to getting survivors to safety, and we are here to help you support your loved one.

Domestic Violence Services

Domestic Violence Services of Snohomish County (DVS) is a private, non-profit organization serving Snohomish County since 1976. We are the only program in Snohomish County providing emergency shelter and comprehensive, confidential services to victims of domestic abuse without regard to age, gender, race, religion, culture, national origin, sexual orientation or income level. DVS provides individual and community awareness programs which can affect the social change necessary to eliminate domestic violence throughout Snohomish County.

Stories of Impact

My client was married and had been with her abuser since they were teenagers. From the outside looking in, they had everything—active in the community, involved in their kids' sports, and her abuser had a very successful career.

For years, my client suffered verbal and financial abuse. Her abuser struggled with substance use, cheated on her, and blamed her for his own failings. Out of the blue after decades of marriage, he decided to divorce her, leaving her and the family.

I worked with her to provide one on one support, court prep, emotional support, and myself and my team members were present during her hearings. We provided information as she navigated the court process.

At her final hearing, chin held high, she spoke of her experiences and need for legal protection. She shared her truth and the court heard her, granting a protection order despite her abuser's minimization and crocodile tears.

My client said, "This is the first time in all these years, even after the divorce, that I feel truly free of his grip. That I am not crazy, and that I am believed." She felt heard by the court, by our office, by the referrals we'd made to legal partners. It was all hands on deck.

It was a privilege to watch my client grow, come forward, put her foot down and rise from the ashes like a phoenix through this entire process.

-DVS Legal Advocate

Arts & Crafts

What started as a simple "Learn the Basics of Crochet" class turned into something truly heartwarming.

Our Family Housing Specialist held our first crochet class for some of our housing clients, and it was nothing short of fabulous!

One mom and four energetic kids came eager to learn, and by the end of the session, something beautiful had taken shape — not just their first stitches, but a sense of community. They were having so much fun that they decided they didn't want it to end. They have started a weekly Crochet Club to continue learning, creating, and connecting - one stitch at a time.

Do you have extra yarn or crochet needles tucked away at home? We'd love to give them new life! Please contact Lauren Stiger at lauren@dvs-snoco.org or 425-259-2827 x 1013 to donate.



Volunteer

Looking to get involved and give back? DVS is always looking for more volunteers. Our Spring Volunteer and DV Advocacy Training will begin on Monday May 5, 2025 at 5:30 pm. If you would like more information or have any questions please contact Lauren Stiger, lauren@dvs-snoco.org or 425-259-2827 x 1013

Legal Advocacy: A Community Based Approach



Emma Titterness, Legal Advocacy Manager

What does “justice” look like for a survivor of intimate partner violence? In our Legal Advocacy Department, we look at it a few different ways. We are community-based advocates who provide both civil legal advocacy and community advocacy. Oftentimes, the law may not reach far enough for our clients to feel justice in a traditional sense. How does that affect the work that we do?

Our vision for our work within the Legal Advocacy Department (LAD) is that at the end of their time with us, clients feel more capable and empowered to make their own decisions. Leaving an abusive partner is freeing, but survivors are often weighed down by the number of decisions they must make to navigate their new reality. Legal and Community Advocates provide support during that transition. Advocates are cross-trained in both kinds of advocacy to strengthen their understanding of survivor needs and area resources.

Our Legal Advocacy focuses on the civil legal system, and we can work with clients regardless of their involvement in the criminal justice system (though we often work with systems based Victim Advocates through referrals). DVS Legal Advocates focus on safety planning through protection orders, Address Confidentiality Program applications, and referrals for family law support. As we are not attorneys, we do not offer legal advice.

Instead, we provide information, resources, and referrals to our legal partners.

In practice, this is a lot of conversation about weighing different safety factors. Will the other party respect the boundaries of a protection order, or will it escalate their behavior? Are you comfortable going to court in person, or would you prefer to appear via zoom, in our offices or in your own safe space? A protection order may not be the right solution for every survivor, and we emphasize that it is their decision to make. But that does not mean they don't have legal options. Our main legal partners, Snohomish County Legal Services and the Northwest Justice Project, work closely alongside us in terms of understanding how IPV operates to best support survivors as they navigate the family law system as well. Our shared goal is that survivors feel empowered with enough information and support to make decisions that work best for themselves and their families.

Our Community Advocacy offers a similar lifeline. Community Advocates work with survivors referred by DSHS. Meeting with a Community Advocate fulfills some of the time required for adults receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) as a part of their Individual Responsibility Plan (IRP). TANF recipients who disclose a history of IPV can meet with our advocates once a

month to discuss resources and set goals, but also to discuss their experiences.

Many of our Community Advocacy referrals have not interacted with DVS or DV organizations at all before. In some cases, this is the first space where these clients feel believed, which makes this an extremely powerful space. Oftentimes, Community Advocates act as a gateway to other services—for example, most clients will also be referred to a support group during their work us. Though it is meant to be a temporary program, to allow survivors some extra time to breathe while they start to re-enter the workforce, clients often feel deeply connected to Community Advocates and never want to leave the program.

In terms of LAD's work, “justice” is not simple. A protection order is not always granted; the offender is not always arrested or jailed. However, survivors can reclaim the power to make their own decisions and build the life they want to have. By empowering survivors with information, the Legal Advocacy Department aims to help survivors take those steps toward self-sufficiency. Justice, in our view, is survivor-focused, and begins with those first few steps.

To connect with DVS Legal Advocates, or to get more information about any of our services, please contact our support line at 425 252 2873.

If you are concerned about a loved one, or do not feel safe in your own relationship, please call our free, 24 hour support line at

**425-25-ABUSE
425-252-2873**

Out And About

Stop by our table and chat with our Prevention, Education, and Community Outreach team. Learn more about our agency, gather resources, and so much more!



Library and Other Community Drop-In Hours:

Mountlake Terrace Library - First Wednesday of the month
3 - 4pm

Everett Recovery Cafe - First Monday of the month
12:30-1:30 pm

Mukilteo Library - Every Monday, 2:30 - 4:30 pm

Sultan Library - Second Wednesday of the month, 1:30 - 3 pm

Snohomish Library - Fourth Wednesday of the Month, 1 - 3 pm

Carnegie Resource Center - Second & Fourth Monday of the month, 11 am - 1 pm

Events:

Edmonds School District Wellbeing & Financial Fair - April 16,
11:30 - 6:30 pm, Edmonds School District Building

Super Kids Resource Fair - April 26, 10 am - 3 pm, Dawsons
Place

Healthy Living in the Stilly Valley Health & Safety Fair - May
17, 10 am - 2 pm , Legion Park Downtown Arlington

Senior Resource Fair - April 21, 10 am - 2 pm, Carl Gipson
Resource Center

Touch-A-Truck - May 31, 10 am - 2 pm, Lakewood High School

Marysville Farmers Market - June 4

Stanwood Pride - June 7, 12 - 4 pm Freedom Park

Monroe Pride - June 8

Spring Into Recovery - June 13, 10 am - 4 pm, Everett School
District Office

Everett Pride - June 21

Stanwood CRC Summer Concert - June 28, 4 -9 pm, Port
Susan

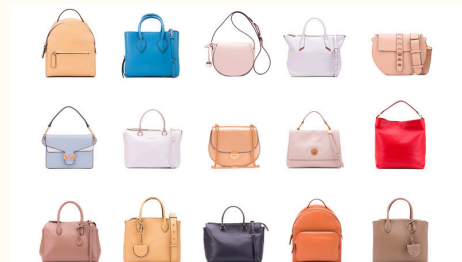


Community Spotlight

As we get ready for our 16th Annual Purse Auction, we received a big donation from Erin Berg, Barbara Lindberg, Meryl, and Dana who all support DVS and our efforts.

Erin has started Project Lemur, raising funds and collecting Lug bags, wallets and other products.

A majority of the items donated go to our clients, but we have saved goodies for the purse auction!



Annual Purse Auction

Join us for our upcoming 16th Annual Purse Auction! Our most favored event is back and better than ever, grab your friends and enjoy a day of purses and giving back!

- Date: Thursday, June 26, 2025
- Time: 11 am - 1 pm
- Location: Edward D. Hansen Conference Center 2000 Hewitt, Ave, Everett, WA
- We are currently accepting donations of new and gently used purses.