

# Dover New Hampshire Police Department

## Help for Abuse Victims Comes In Many Forms

**QUESTION:** I am a victim of domestic violence. Should I get assistance? I am embarrassed and intimidated about going to court myself. Is there any type of assistance or other resources available to help me get through the court process?

**ANSWER:** The first real concern should be your safety. Domestic violence can and often does escalate in severity. The following services are available to help you with safety and with the court process.

**Protection and Shelter:** If you need immediate protection or information, you can call; toll free, 1-800-854-3552 to get help and advice about your local shelter. The New Hampshire Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence has trained advocates available 24 hours a day to assist you. Usually an advocate can arrange to meet you at the courthouse. Shelter advocate discussions with you are confidential by state law.

**Police:** The police will respond to any emergency call for assistance. The police can arrest a perpetrator for any crime of domestic violence. The police can also assist with obtaining a temporary protection order when the court is closed. If there is an arrest, the prosecutor or a prosecutor's advocate will be contacting you about a future court date if the defendant requests a trial. The prosecutor or advocate will gladly answer any questions you may have. You should note that some police departments now have emergency cellular phones which can be loaned out to domestic violence victims.

**Court Protection Orders:** Your local district or superior court can issue a protective order immediately if you have been physically abused or threatened. Clerks and judges will not expect you to know the details of the legal process and will answer general questions about the legal process.

**AmeriCorps Victim Advocates:** The AmeriCorps Victim Assistance program staffs some district courts with trained advocates to assist you with the protective order process. If one is not available, you can call the toll free crisis center to have an advocate meet with you.

**DOVE Program:** The New Hampshire Bar Association Pro Bono Referral System offers assistance to low-income domestic violence victims by arranging for free legal assistance at Protection Order hearings that are held after a temporary order is issued. You can contact your local crisis center to inquire about presentation or call 224-6942 to obtain information about the program. You may also wish to hire an attorney to assist you.

**New Hampshire Victims Assistance Commission:** If you have been assaulted and received injuries, you may be eligible for compensation to help pay medical expenses. You can call 1-800-300-4500 for information and an application. If you feel you need assistance, you should contact one of the sources of help available to victims of domestic violence.