Welcome to the counseling center at the YWCA’s Alternatives to Domestic Violence Program. We recognize that coming here today was a big step for you.

We serve adult and teen survivors of intimate partner violence as well as children who have been affected by their parents experiencing intimate partner violence. As advocates, we are not here to tell you what you need to do or how to do it. We believe in your ability to make your own choices for yourself and your children.

We are here to listen and help you determine what you are feeling, help identify your options, and help you discover your own strength and ability to choose your future.

We will make sure that you get the information you need and help you get what you need from whatever system you are working with (i.e., Legal, DSHS, etc.).

Specifically, your advocate can provide ongoing emotional support and practical information. For example, she can provide referrals to services such as housing, public assistance, childcare, reproductive health, counseling, shelter, education, training, children’s therapy, etc.

Thank you for coming in today.

Alternatives to Domestic Violence Program  
YWCA of Spokane  
930 N. Monroe  
Spokane, WA 99201  
www.ywca.org/spokane

24-Hour Crisis Line:  
(509) 326-CALL (2255)

Counseling Center:  
(509) 789-9297  
Walk-ins available Monday 8:30-11:30am

Legal Advocates:  
(509) 477-3656  
Protection Order services available via walk-in  
MTW 8:30-12:00pm & 1-5pm  
Friday 8:30-12:00pm & 1-3pm
Alternatives to Domestic Violence Program
YWCA of Spokane

Agency Services

The Alternatives to Domestic Violence Program provides a wide range of services designed to meet the needs of survivors of intimate partner domestic violence. All services are free and confidential.

24-Hour Crisis Line  (509) 326-CALL
Crisis intervention, emotional support, information and referral. Collect calls accepted. Please take appropriate safety measures before calling (i.e. clear call log, dial from another phone, call while partner is away, etc.)

Shelter  (509) 326-CALL
24-hour confidential shelter for survivors fleeing domestic violence. Survivors are welcome to bring their children and pets during this transitional period. For many, this is a place to rest, sort out feelings, decide what is next, and get information and support to make changes. This is a large home-like residence that is completely confidential and secure. Staff are available to help with practical and emotional support while connecting you to community resources and services, including financial assistance. We also provide safe shelter options for male survivors.

Counseling Center  (509) 789-9297
Counseling and advocacy is available for adult and teen survivors. This includes safety planning and referrals to community resources such as therapy, shelter, housing, reproductive health, food banks, health care and public assistance. Our counseling is client-centered and emotionally supportive; you are encouraged to make your own choices. We also offer similar advocacy-based services for children and teens who have witnessed domestic violence in their families.

Mental Health Therapy  (509) 789-9297
The counseling office offers trauma-informed, empowerment based mental health care provided by licensed therapists, including EMDR.

Women’s Support Group  (509) 789-9297
The counseling office also offers support groups. A support group is simply a safe place to talk to other women who have also experienced any form of abuse in their relationship. Many women feel for the first time that they are not alone, and discover that there are other women who share their feelings and may even share similar experiences. Childcare is available during support groups.

Legal Clinics  (509) 789-9297
The Civil Legal Assistance Center at the YWCA Counseling Center has a legal staff available to answer legal questions in the areas of Family Law, i.e. divorce, custody, modification, child support, parentage, etc. Every Wednesday afternoon at 1:00pm the Center holds a weekly legal advice clinic to answer questions, help with paperwork and assist victims of domestic violence with family law issues. Please note that we cannot guarantee legal representation. Numbers are handed out at 12:45pm at the downstairs front desk. Childcare is provided during this time.

Legal Advocacy  (509) 477-3656
Information, referrals, and/or assistance with legal matters regarding Protection Orders, No-Contact Orders, and criminal cases. Legal advocates provide support for you within the legal system, with your safety and your children’s safety in mind.

Community Education  (509) 789-9297
Community educators are available to speak to community groups, schools, and businesses about domestic violence and the YWCA’s services.
What is Domestic Violence?

Domestic Violence is a pattern of behavior used in an intimate relationship to establish control of one partner over the other, often (but not always) including the threat or use of violence. The abuser uses physical, sexual, social, and emotional abuse to terrorize, intimidate, and manipulate the targeted partner. Domestic violence can occur regardless of age, socioeconomic status, race, religion, sexual orientation, disability, or gender identity.

The Power and Control wheel is a helpful tool in understanding the overall pattern of abusive and violent behaviors. Everyone will experience domestic violence differently, but there are some common methods used by abusers. Very often, violent incidents are accompanied by many of the other types of abuse shown here, and they establish a pattern of intimidation and control in a relationship.
Domestic Violence is a Pattern of Power & Control

Domestic violence is not an isolated event, but a pattern of behaviors consisting of a variety of abuses occurring repeatedly throughout the relationship. It is a systematic pattern of domination and control with the specific intent to induce fear and ultimately gain or maintain control over someone. It is this systematic, repeated cycle that makes domestic violence different from “relationship problems.” It also makes it difficult to leave a relationship.

Every relationship is different, and not all abusive relationships will follow the same patterns.
The Equality Wheel

Healthy relationships are based on equality and respect. Every relationship is different, and you have the right to be involved in deciding what relationship dynamics are appropriate for you. These are some examples of what can be found in a safe and healthy relationship. The Equality Wheel is a helpful guide to determine whether your relationship is based on equality or power and control.
Common Questions and Answers

Am I to blame for the violence?

Absolutely not. Even in the heat of anger, the abuser makes the choice to use violence, whether physical, emotional or verbal. An abuser is not “crazy” or “out of control” but often knows how to hit, where to hit, and how hard to hit to accomplish an end. The abuser also knows how to manipulate the targeted partner and make them believe that they are to blame for the violence or “caused it” in some way.

What if the abuser apologizes?

It is common that an abuser will promise to stop abusing, go to therapy, go to church, buy you presents, whatever it takes to win you back. Yet, often when you return, the pattern of abuse and controlling behavior begins again. In many cases, apologies and remorse are just another way to maintain control.

Should I stay with this person?

Your first consideration should be your safety and, if applicable, your children’s safety. We encourage you to get support for yourself, if it is safe to do so, through the YWCA’s counseling office or by calling our helpline (326-2255) when you need to. Your abuser may pressure you to stay in the relationship while you are coming for counseling in an attempt to keep you from making up your own mind. If an abuser is serious about changing, they will respect your wishes about the relationship.

Why is it so hard to leave an abusive relationship?

The reasons for returning to an abusive partner are complex, yet simple. For the most part, it is normal to hope that a partner will change their behavior; sometimes we think that we are the ones who can help them change. Many survivors DO leave or attempt to leave the relationship, only to find that the violence escalates or that stalking begins. Also, when deciding to leave, survivors often discover that there are few resources available and that the system does not support those who are trying to make enormous changes to live independently. The reality is that it is hard to make ends meet, much less with a low-paying job or in combination with the cost of childcare. And many welfare programs are simply inadequate. Strong cultural pressures may discourage legal separation and divorce, and religious convictions may play a significant role. We often mistakenly believe that we should stay for the children: “Children need both of their parents.” For all these reasons, survivors are often encouraged to forgive their partner’s behavior and return home. We may either be fearful of what they might do if we don’t go back, or we are convinced by our partner’s manipulation and coercive tactics, believing we have no option other than to remain in or return to the relationship.

I am deciding to leave this relationship, what can I do? What is the first step?

The first step is to develop a safety plan.
1. Think of a safe place where you could go and stay while in transition: with friends, family, a motel, or the YWCA’s confidential safe shelter (326-CALL).
2. Important papers, money, keys, and personal items should be kept in an escape bag. Keep the bag in a safe place where you can get access to it if you need to leave quickly, such as hidden in the car or at a friend’s house. Have an extra set of house and car keys made and give copies to someone you trust. Hide an extra key in a safe place.
3. When you leave, take all of the children with you if you can. Inform sitters, schools, etc. that your children should not leave with the abuser. Explain the situation to your children. Our Youth Advocate can help you prepare for this conversation (789-9297).
4. It is important to keep records of any violence or threatening texts/emails that were sent to you. If there has been recent violence, think about getting a civil protection order that will order the abuser not to have contact with you or your children. This may mean that the abuser will not be able to return to the home and you will be able to continue living at the same residence with the children attending their school. Our legal advocates can help you make this decision.
5. Get support with the process of leaving. Reach out to someone you trust or contact our helpline advocates, 326-2255. You can also make an appointment to see an advocate in our Counseling Center, 789-9297.
Common Questions and Answers

What about marriage counseling?

We do not recommend couples counseling.

Many people think domestic violence is a problem with the relationship and seek couples therapy or marriage counseling. Unfortunately, couples counseling can increase the danger to the victim and overlook the real abuse dynamics.

- Because the focus is on the relationship, there is an implicit assumption that each person contributes to the abusive behavior, when in truth the perpetrator is fully and solely responsible for their abusive behavior.
- By focusing on issues other than the abusive behavior, it allows and even encourages the abusive behavior to continue.
- It increases the danger to the victim of further or escalated abuse due to the interference of the counselor. Because the abuser’s goal is to maintain control of the relationship, any interference on the counselor’s part may lead to an increase in controlling behavior. The therapist may unwittingly elicit information or initiate interventions that escalate abuse. The victimized partner may be afraid to speak in front of the abuser about what has happened, or may feel safe in the counselor’s office and then pay for it later. Out of fear of further abuse the victim may not be honest about the abuse or other issues in the couples session, giving the false impression to both the therapist and their partner that things are much better than they really are.
- The issue of control and violence may become confused with a family/relationship issue such as communication or parenting. The abuser alone must take responsibility and attend group and/or private counseling that holds them accountable. The abuser must understand that reuniting with their partner is not the goal of treatment.

Does domestic violence have an affect on children?

From Futures Without Violence:

“Children and parents living with domestic violence seek support in different ways. They may turn to their extended families or friends, their faith communities, or their cultural traditions to find connection, stability, and hope. Children may find their own coping strategies and some do not show obvious signs of stress. Others struggle with problems at home, at school, and in the community. You may notice changes in your child’s emotions (such as increased fear or anger) and behavior (such as clinging, difficulty going to sleep, or tantrums) after an incident of domestic violence. Children may also experience longer-term problems with health, behavior, school, and emotions, especially when domestic violence goes on for a long time.

A strong relationship with a caring, nonviolent parent is one of the most important factors in helping children grow in a positive way despite their experiences. Your support can make the difference between fear and security, and can provide a foundation for a healthy future. ”

(If you have questions or concerns about your children, our Youth Advocate can gladly address them with you. Call the Counseling Office (789-9297) to learn more.)

Here are a few more resources for you and your family:

www.ywcaspokane.org
www.futureswithoutviolence.org
www.loveisrespect.org
www.wadvhotline.org
www.domesticshelters.org
Community Resources

YWCA Alternatives to Domestic Violence Program
24-Hour Crisis Line/Safe Shelter 326-CALL (2255)
Counseling Center 789-9297
Civil Legal Assistance Program 789-9297
Legal Advocates (protection orders) 477-3656
DSHS Financial Advocacy 227-2783
227-2372

Other Crisis Services
National Sexual Assault Hotline 1-877-995-5247
Spokane Sexual Assault Hotline 747-7273
First Call for Help 838-4428
Washington State Domestic Violence Hotline 1-800-562-6025
National Domestic Violence Hotline 1-800-799-7233
National LGBT Hotline 1-888-843-4564
Trevor Project (LGBT Youth) 1-866-488-7386

Other Legal Services
Volunteer Lawyers Program 324-0144
CLEAR 1-888-201-1014
Center for Justice 835-5211
Northwest Justice Project 324-9128

Children’s Services
Lutheran Community Services 747-8224
Vanessa Behan Crisis Nursery 535-3155
Child Protective Services Hotline 1-866-363-4276
Children’s Home Society 747-4174
Safe Families For Children 844-244-1769

Other Community Services
Women’s Hearth/Transitions Drop In Center 455-4249
Family Service Spokane 838-4128
Lutheran Community Services 747-8224
Planned Parenthood 1-800-230-7526
The Native Project 325-5502
Arc of Spokane 789-2247
Odyssey Youth Movement 325-3637
Crosswalk for Teens 838-6596
Hope House for Women 455-2886
UGM Women’s and Children’s Shelter 535-0486
UGM Men’s Shelter 535-8510
SNAP 456-7627
Catholic Charities 358-4250

Financial Assistance
Washington Information Network 211
Community Services Office 456-4404
Applications for State Aid, Food Stamps and Medical Coupons:
    DSHS North CSO Office 227-2700
    DSHS Southwest CSO Office 227-2400
    DSHS Valley CSO Office 227-2700