

# Disability and Domestic Violence: Getting Help and Support



# What is Domestic Violence?

Abuse in a relationship when someone keeps hurting, threatening, or controlling you. They do this to have power over you or to stay in control.

It is also often called domestic abuse. This can apply to any one you are living with. It could be parents, siblings, a paid caregiver or a romantic partner.



# Part One

## Identifying an abusive relationship



# Types of Abuse

- **Physical** – Hurting your body, like hitting, pushing, or grabbing you.
- **Emotional or Psychological** – Saying or doing things to scare you, control you, or make you feel bad about yourself.
- **Sexual** – Touching you or doing sexual things without your permission.
- **Economic or Financial** – Controlling your money or taking it from you.
- **Technological** – Using phones, computers, or the internet to watch you, control you, or scare you.



# Physical Abuse

- Hitting, slapping, punching, kicking
- Pushing, shaking, choking
- Leaving cuts and bruises



# Emotional Abuse

- Name calling, insults, making fun of you
- Yelling and screaming
- Constantly criticizing you
- Threatening you
- Blaming you for everything



# Sexual Abuse

- Touching you when you do not want to be touched.
- Forcing you to have sex.
- Pushing you to do something private or sexual that makes you uncomfortable.
- Doing sexual things to you when you did not say yes.
- Not stopping when you say “no.”

\*this can happen in romantic relationships and marriages, too.



# Economic or Money Abuse

- Stealing your money or your things.
- Telling you what you are allowed to buy.
- Making you depend on them for money or basic needs.
- Stopping you from getting a job or taking a class.
- Controlling your phone, computer, car, or debit cards.





# Types of Abuse That Can Happen More Often to People With Disabilities

- Taking away your wheelchair, walker, or other equipment
- Not letting you take your medicine the way your doctor told you to.
- Stopping you from going to appointments or community programs.
- Refusing to help you with personal care, like bathing, eating, or talking.
- Touching you in a sexual or unsafe way while helping you with personal care.
- Taking away your phone, tablet, speech device, or other way you communicate.
- Taking your SSI money or using it without your permission.
- Not letting you use transportation that works for you.
- Hurting your service animal.
- Doing things on purpose to upset you.

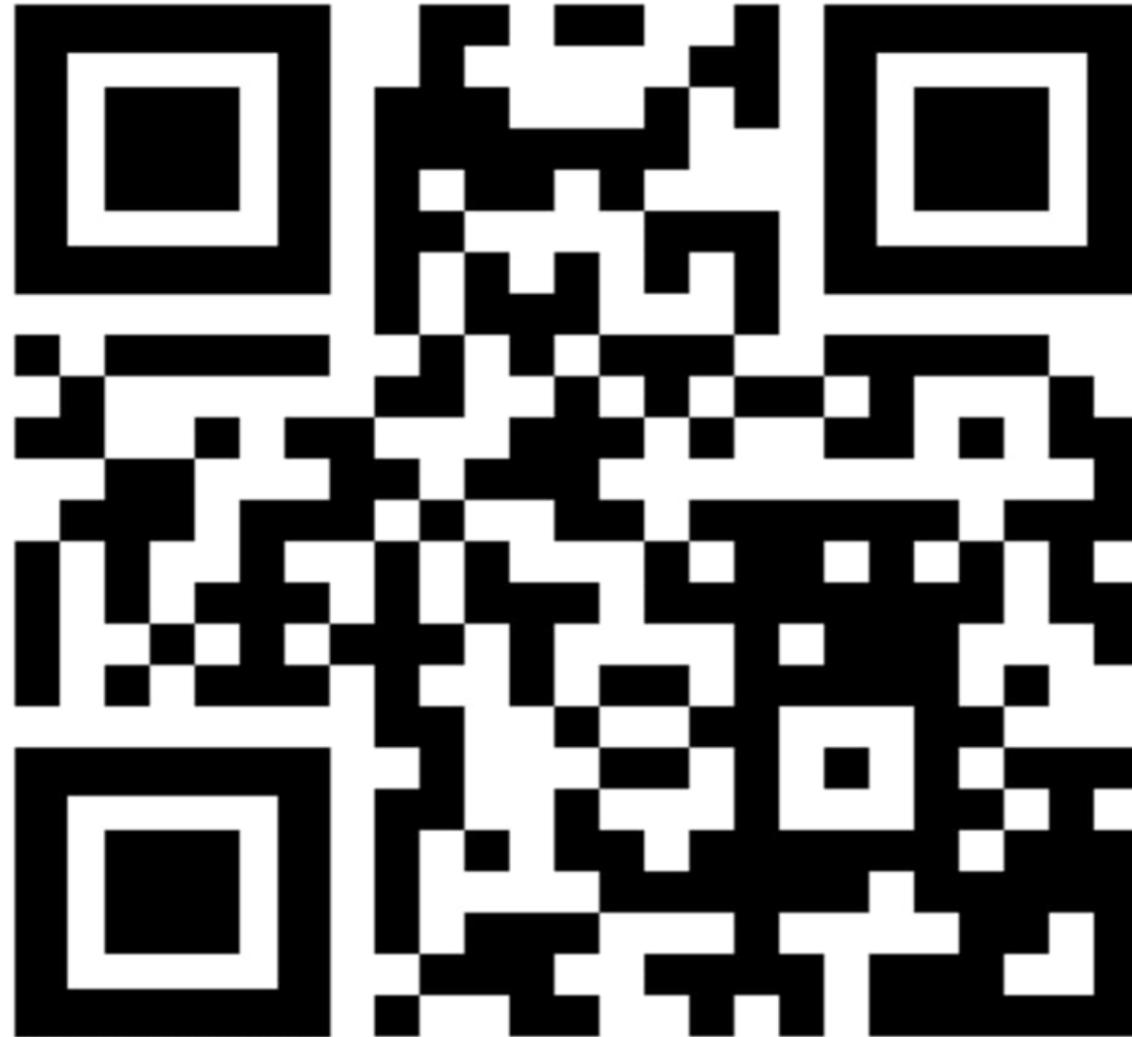


# Part Two

Seeking help and support



# Resources for Help and Support



# Hotlines to Call

**NATIONAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HOTLINE:**



**24/7**

**1-800-799-SAFE (1-800-799-7233)**

**TTY – 1-800-787-3224**

**TEXT “START” or “BEGIN” TO 88788**

**Thehotline.org** – Has an online chat option

**\*Ambos disponibles en Espanol**

**NATIONAL SEXUAL ASSAULT HOTLINE:**



**24/7**

**1-800-656-HOPE (1-800-656-4673)**

**TEXT “HOPE” TO 64673**

**RAINN.ORG** – Online chat option



# Domestic Violence Centers



[nneadv.org](http://nneadv.org)

These places are covered by the ADA, meaning they must be usable by and accessible to people with disabilities.

Every state and U.S. territory has a group that works to stop domestic violence.

These groups have offices or programs in different places to help people get support like:

**Advocacy** – Speaking up for you and helping protect your rights.

**Case management** – Helping you make a plan and connect to services.

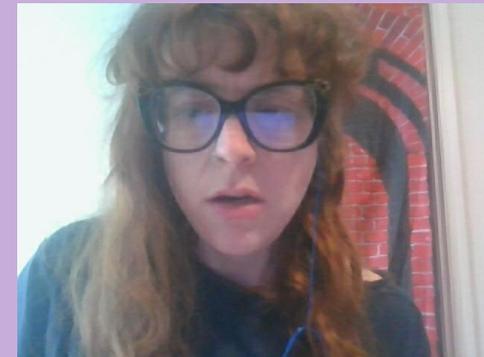
**Safety planning** – Making a plan to help you stay safe.

**Counseling** – Talking with a trained person about your feelings and experiences.

**Help with protective orders** – Helping you ask a judge for a court order to keep someone away from you.

**Going with you to court** – Coming with you for support at court.

**Emergency shelter** – A safe place to stay right away if you are not safe at home.



# Safehouses and DV Shelters

## Accessibility

The **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)**, the **Fair Housing Act (FHA)**, and the **Rehabilitation Act of 1973** all apply to domestic violence shelters and safe houses.

This means shelters must follow disability rights laws. They must make sure people with disabilities can use their services and stay there safely.

If a person with a disability asks for a change or support, the program usually has to provide it.

The program does not have to do it only if it would cost too much money, be too hard to manage, or completely change how the program works.



# What Is a Protective Order?

Some people call these a “restraining order.” Different states use different names.

Some states call them Domestic Violence Protective Orders (DVPOs). Others call them:

- harassment restraining orders,
- no-contact orders, 50B orders,
- extreme risk protection orders (ERPOs),
- protective orders, or orders of protection.

**A restraining order and a protective order are not the same.**

Anyone can ask the court for a restraining order against another person.

A protective order is for people who have been hurt or abused by a romantic partner, family member, or someone they have a close relationship with.



# How to File for a Protective Order

\*You can do this yourself, or with the help of an advocate at an advocacy center.

\*Or with **Legal Aid** (a free service for those who qualify):



# 988 vs. 911

988 is not only for suicide. It is a crisis hotline for many kinds of emergencies.

**You can call 988 if you are in any kind of crisis.**

Trained counselors answer the phone 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. They can listen, support you, and help you find resources — including help to leave an unsafe or abusive situation.

**When you call 988, you talk to a trained counselor. The police are not automatically involved. This can be a good option if you do not want to speak with law enforcement.**

**Crisis Text Line – TEXT CONNECT TO 741741**  
**Crisistextline.org**



# Other Resources

- Talk to a trusted friend or loved one.
- Tell a doctor, nurse, therapist, social worker, or other health care worker what is happening.
- Call Adult Protective Services. You can call for yourself. This is through the Department of Social Services.
- Scan the QR code to learn about more options and ways to get help.



# Court Victim Advocates

People who help and support victims during court cases.

They explain what is happening, answer questions, and go with you to court for support.

**Victims' Rights – You have the right to a free advocate.**

An advocate is someone who supports you and explains your options.

If you cannot get help from a local domestic violence program, there may be victim advocates at police departments or sheriff's offices. These advocates help people who report abuse to law enforcement. They will:

- Give you emotional support and listen to you.
- Explain your rights in a clear way.
- Help you understand how the court and legal system work.
- Help you fill out forms and paperwork.
- Go with you to court for support.
- Help connect you to services and other resources.



# Part Three

Trying to get justice



# Reporting to Police: Ways to contact 911

- **Call 911 in an emergency.**
- You can also **text 911** (you can text “911” or send a message).
- This can help if you are deaf, hard of hearing, or have trouble speaking.
- It can also help if it is not safe for you to talk out loud.

**Many police departments still have TTY/TDD access**, but it is often built into their phone system. Many Deaf callers use **Video Relay Service (VRS)** instead.

If you use Video Relay Service, you can make an emergency call through a sign language interpreter. The interpreter signs what you say to 911 and signs back what they say to you. This service is free. Emergency calls are given priority so you can get help quickly.

**Other options if you cannot speak:** Call 911. If it is safe, stay on the line.

- You can make sounds to get the dispatcher’s attention.
- For example, tap or bang on the phone so they know you are there.



- 1. What to expect when reporting to police**
- 2. What to expect if/when charges are filed**
- 3. What to expect if/when a prosecution begins**



# GOING THROUGH COURT



The **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)** says that victims and witnesses with disabilities must have equal access to the justice system.

This means people with intellectual or developmental disabilities, or mental health conditions, must have the same rights and access as people without disabilities.



# Disability Access Coordinators

\*Enforce Title II of the ADA in court houses

Courthouses have a person called an **ADA Coordinator**. This person helps make sure people with disabilities get the accommodations they need when they go to court.

These accommodations can include:

- Providing a sign language interpreter.
- Providing CART (live captioning of what is being said).
- Giving materials in braille or reading written information out loud.
- Providing listening devices to help you hear better.
- Allowing trained guide dogs or service animals.
- Making sure the building is easy to enter and move around in.



# Other Examples of Accommodations

Accommodations that may be able to be provided for “invisible” disabilities include:

- Changing the lighting in the courtroom.
- Changing where you sit.
- Giving you extra breaks.
- Holding the hearing in a different place.
- Letting you testify (share your story) from a different location.
- Letting you hold a comfort item, like a small object that helps you feel calm.
- Making sure people speak slowly and give you time to answer.
- Making sure someone is there to help you understand the questions.



## Make Sure People Know What You Need

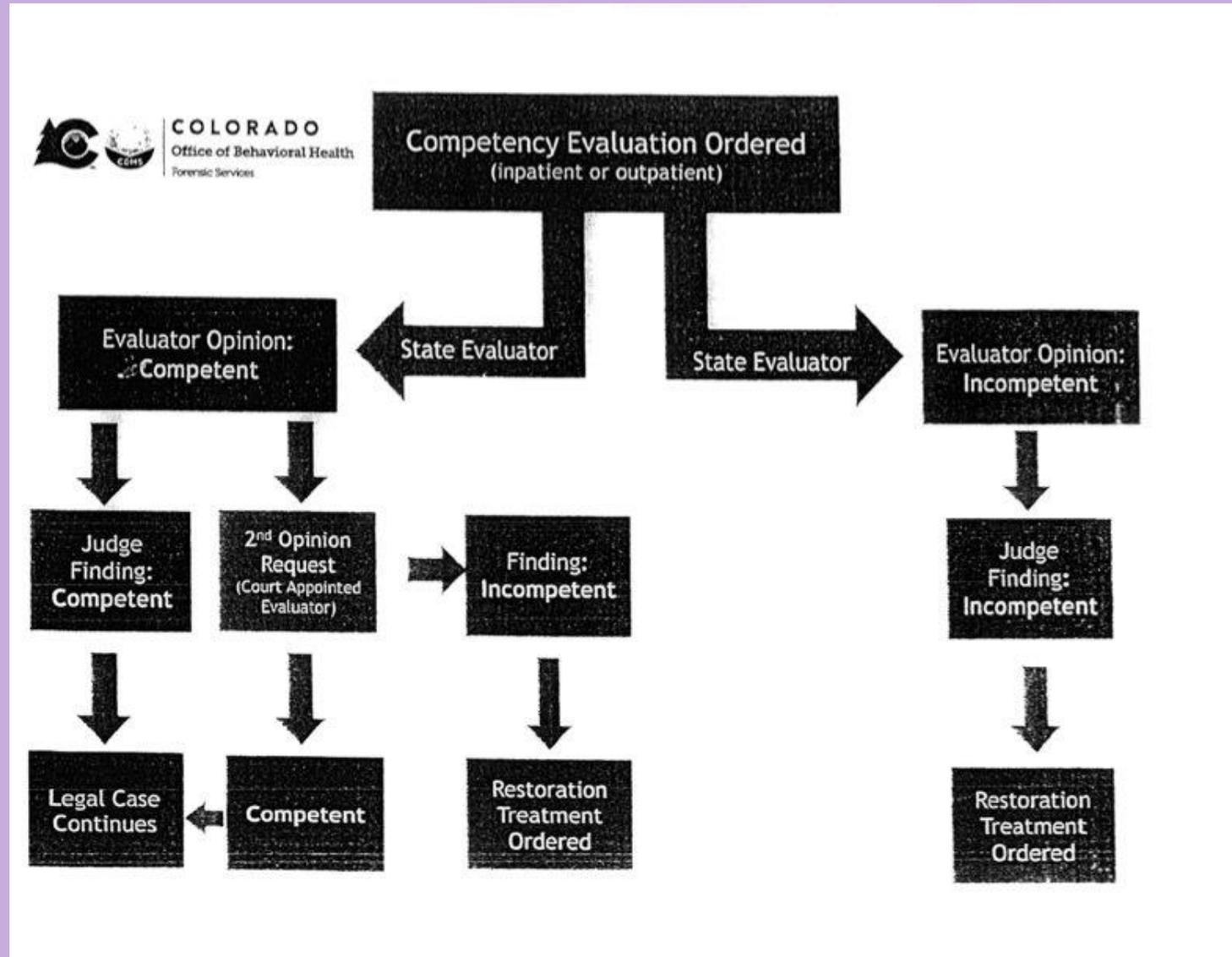
It is important to ask for accommodations that will help you during this process.

Besides having a professional advocate, you can also bring a "**support buddy.**" This person can help speak up for you and support you.

**Note:** If someone is going to testify in court, they must have reasonable accommodations. This helps make sure their voice is heard clearly. The judge or jury needs to understand what the person really means so they can make a fair decision.



# Colorado Competency System



## Resources

