What to Expect From a Domestic Violence Program

What to expect if you call a program:

- A caring listening ear. All programs have people who can listen and help you sort out options.
- Advocacy services. Most programs have specially trained advocates who can help with welfare, CPS, disAbilityservices, immigration, housing, employment protections, and more.
- Emergency shelter. Many programs offer shelter or safe homes.
- Transitional housing. Some programs have longer term housing for survivors.
- Support groups. Some programs run groups for children, youth and adults.
- Legal advocacy. Most programs offer information about protection orders and other civil matters. Most do not provide legal counsel, but can refer you to free or low cost attorneys.
- Crisis services. Many programs offer 24-hour crisis services.

What to expect if you go to an emergency shelter:

- Shelters are free — no fees are charged to stay. Many shelters have time limits for how long you can stay.
- Most shelters have shared kitchens, common areas, and bathrooms. Shelters provide the food but if you have special dietary concerns (i.e., gluten-free, allergies), you should let the staff know.
- If you have children, you will probably all share one bedroom.
- If you are alone, you may have to share a room.
- You are responsible for taking care of your own children.
- All shelters must welcome service animals.
- However, most shelters cannot accommodate pets. Many will work with you to make arrangements to have your pets cared for elsewhere.
- Shelters have laundry facilities and supply linens (sheets, towels and blankets).
- Many have emergency clothing and toiletries available for the first few days of a stay.
- You will be asked to honor the privacy of other residents by not discussing their names or situations with anyone else.
- Shelters are concerned about everybody's safety, so you may be asked to keep the location a secret.
- Visitors are generally not allowed.
- Shelters can be stressful---you will be in a group living situation with others who are experiencing tough times too!

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