

WHAT IS A PROTECTION ORDER?

- ◆ It is a document issued by the court to help you protect yourself from someone who is abusing or harassing you.
- ◆ **A PROTECTION ORDER CANNOT GUARANTEE YOUR SAFETY!** An abuser can be arrested for violating the order, but it is not always possible to prevent a violation.
- ◆ Have a **SAFETY PLAN** in mind so you will be prepared if something should happen.
- ◆ Family Abuse Services will assist you in navigating the court system and help with the paperwork for protective orders. Advocates CANNOT act as legal counsel.



LEGAL AID NC



Legal Aid of North Carolina

Domestic Violence Program

959 East Street

Post Office Box 1728

Pittsboro, NC 27312

Phone: **(919) 542-0475**

Or **1-800-672-5834**

Fax: (919) 545-0735



1950 Martin Street
Burlington, NC 2717

Phone: 336-226-5982

Fax: 336-226-7303

www.familyabuseservices.org

Funded by:



United Way
of Alamance County



Family Abuse Services of Alamance County

What You Should Know about PROTECTION ORDERS

Zero Tolerance of Domestic Violence!



336-226-5982

CRISIS LINE: 336-226-5985

WHAT A PROTECTION ORDER CAN DO?

- ◆ **Keep the abuser away from you**—at home, work, and anywhere you go. A protection order can also prohibit the abuser from contacting you by phone, fax, mail, e-mail, and other methods.

STEPS FOR OBTAINING A PROTECTIVE ORDER

- 1) Fill out a protection order at Family Abuse Services of Alamance County.
- 2) File at Clerk's office at the Old Courthouse in the center circle - **1 Court Square, Graham, NC**
- 3) Take paperwork to the courtroom and hand the protection order to a bailiff. The judge may order a temporary 10-day order (ex-parte).
- 4) Go back to the Clerk's office.
- 5) A summons will be issued for the respondent and a hearing must be held within 10 days.
- 6) Be present in court on the date of your hearing.



HOW TO BUILD YOUR CASE

- ◆ **Notify the police or sheriff**—if possible, call during an incident of abuse or immediately afterward. The sooner you notify them, the stronger your case will be if you go to court. Get the responding officers' names.

- ◆ **Gather evidence.** Take photographs of your injuries right after an incident of physical abuse; be sure to note the time and date the photos were



taken. Save torn or bloody clothing and anything else that could serve as evidence of abuse.

- ◆ **Document** anything important that may serve as evidence! For example, **write down** dates/times of phone calls or verbal threats; save or take pictures of any text messages received, record voicemails, and print e-mails.

WHEN YOU GO TO COURT BE SURE TO...

- ◆ **Arrive on time**—if you miss the hearing, your case could be dismissed.
- ◆ **Dress neatly.**
- ◆ **Speak clearly** and speak only to the judge.
- ◆ **Stay calm.** The abuser will probably come to the hearing and may say things that upset you.
- ◆ After your hearing, stay in the courtroom for a **copy of your order.**

DO YOUR PART to see that the protection order works!

- ◆ **Report any violation of the order** to the police or sheriff immediately.
- ◆ **Carry your protection order with you at all times.**
- ◆ **Avoid making deliberate contact** with the abuser. A protection order tells the abuser to stay away from you, but you are expected to live by the "no contact" terms as well.

COMMON QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

- ◆ Does it cost anything to file?
No
- ◆ Would it help to get a lawyer?
Getting legal counsel is a good idea, but it does not necessarily mean hiring a lawyer. Legal aid offices can help.
- ◆ How long does a protection order stay in effect?
Usually for one year. Remember to file a motion to renew your protection order about one month prior to its expiration date.
- ◆ What is the penalty for violating a protective order?
A person who knowingly violates a valid protective order shall be guilty of a Class A1 misdemeanor. A law enforcement officer shall arrest and take the person into custody.