

From a survivor...

When I first came to First Step I had lived with an alcoholic off and on for 5 years who was very abusive. I have also been in several other abusive relationships since childhood leading to low self-esteem and poor survival skills.

Many agencies in the area have been helpful to me. One of which has been First Step. First Step is there for someone who wants to help themselves but doesn't know how. First Step not only provides shelter for abused women and their children, but also provides counseling, group meetings, nutrition awareness, and assists with job searches and housing opportunities. First Step may also help with some legal assistance.

I continue to go to counseling and I have come a long way and I realize that I still have some things to work on, but I look to each day with a bright future with God's help knowing I'm pointed in the right direction. I very much appreciate what First Step has done for me and for the support they have given me.

- Ruth



First Step, Inc. is dedicated to providing emergency shelter and assistance to people in crisis as a result of domestic violence.

The agency program and services are directed towards the ultimate goal of ending domestic violence. First Step assists the community through direct services, as well as through outreach and education.

WHAT IS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE?

"How do I know if it's actually domestic violence or not?"

Domestic violence is any type of behavior that is used to control another person in an intimate relationship. This means that an abuser could be a husband/wife, boyfriend/girlfriend, or another person who is close to you.

Abuse comes in many forms. It can be physical, sexual, emotional, verbal, or economic. In addition, threats, intimidation, and using children to control the other person are also types of abuse. Domestic violence can include ALL of these things. If you think you or a friend MAY be in an abusive relationship, you are probably right. Domestic violence can potentially affect everyone.

First Step's Services Include:

- * EMERGENCY TEMPORARY SHELTER FOR PEOPLE IN CRISIS AS A RESULT OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE.
- * SUPPORT/EDUCATION GROUPS FOR VICTIMS AND THEIR CHILDREN.
- * SHORT TERM INDIVIDUAL AND COUPLES COUNSELING FOR VICTIMS AND/OR THEIR PARTNERS.
- * HOUSING/EMPLOYMENT COUNSELING
- * 24 HOUR, 7 DAY/WEEK CRISIS INTERVENTION HOTLINE

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According to FBI statistics, 1 out of every 3 marriages in the United States has at least one incident of domestic violence.

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In Virginia, every 12 minutes an abusee seeks help from a domestic violence program.

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ALL types of people can be in crisis as a result of domestic violence regardless of race, age, sex, class, or color.

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What can you do to help?
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- * Volunteer to work at your local domestic violence program or show your support through contributions and donations.
- * Model non-violent behavior to those around you.
- * Confront people who make jokes or comments which trivialize violence.
- * Understand that domestic violence is NEVER acceptable behavior.
- * Spread the word.

FIRST STEP:
A RESPONSE TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
129 Franklin St.
Harrisonburg, VA 22801
Phone (540) 434-0295
1-800-578-3433
TTY on site



A United Way Agency

First Step is committed to the policy of equal opportunity services for all people without regard to race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation or national origin.

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FIRST STEP:

A Response to Domestic Violence, Inc.



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*Regain your life ...
take that first step.*