



Saint  
Louis  
Mental  
Health  
Board

NEWSLETTER •

FALL 2003

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## ***DOMESTIC ABUSE: WHEN A HOME IS NOT A 'SAFE HOUSE'***

**Chrissie Barfield-Campbell**  
**MHB Trustee/Career Foster Parent**



Welcome to the Fall 2003 issue of “How’s *YOUR* Mental Health?”. The City of St. Louis Mental Health Board of Trustees (MHB) developed this quarterly e-zine to help St. Louis residents become better informed about mental health and substance abuse.

Many people know relatively little about these topics, even though an MHB study found that 31 percent of city voters surveyed have an alcoholic in their immediate family, 22 percent have a relative addicted to other drugs and 25 percent have a close relative who is mentally ill. Directly or indirectly, these are problems that touch all of us.

Each edition of “How’s *YOUR* Mental Health?” focuses on a topic that impacts the lives of many St. Louisans. This issue is devoted to domestic abuse. Most often, this is thought of in connection with battered wives, but abusers within the home also prey on others who are least able to defend themselves or to seek outside help — the very young and the very old. The articles that follow discuss varied aspects of this problem, including:

- Child abuse — numbers, types, signs, effects
- Elder abuse — types, most frequent victims and abusers, warning signs, why it’s rarely reported
- Spouse abuse — types, numbers, factors that contribute to abuse, why women stay
- Commentary — characteristics of abusers, why they abuse, how to respond, where to get help

MHB hopes you will find these articles and references informative and useful. And we hope this issue of our e-zine will help readers to be more aware of the signs of abuse and where to get appropriate assistance for both the abused and the abuser.

Chrissie Barfield-Campbell  
MHB Trustee/Career Foster Parent

## Who Abuses and Why . . . And What We Can Do About It

Considering the number of domestic abuse cases that occur every day, it's very likely that you know both victims and abusers, but unless you're familiar with what goes on in their homes, it might be difficult to pick them out in a crowd. Many abusers can appear charming when not behind closed doors — a fact that often causes others to doubt stories about their treatment of family members.

Although domestic abuse occurs in families of all races and socio-economic status, Richard Gelles, head of the Family Violence Program at the University of Rhode Island, says that it is more common:

- Among the poor than among the middle class and wealthy
- In the 18- to 30-year-old age bracket
- Among substance abusers
- Among binge drinkers than among heavy drinkers
- In families where the victims are isolated from friends and family
- In cities than in rural or suburban areas, possibly because a higher percentage live in poverty
- Among the unemployed
- In households where the husbands control the decision making

Research studies tell us that child abusers have some consistent characteristics. They are likely to be high school dropouts in their mid-twenties, living at or near the poverty level. They are apt to be depressed, to have difficulty coping with stress and to have experienced violence first-hand. In nine cases out of ten the abuse occurs in the child's home at the hands of a parent or other regular caregiver.

A KidsHealth report suggests that parents who abuse their children may avoid their neighbors and school activities and be uncomfortable talking about their children's injuries or behavioral problems.

Adults who sexually abuse children often tell them that it's a "secret" and that if they tell someone what's going on, they will get in trouble or someone they care about will be hurt. In many cases they convince the child that he/she is the one at fault.

## Why It Happens

A 1987 study noted that half of all adult children who abuse their elderly parents were themselves abused by the parents when they were young, compared to 1 in 400 children who grew up in nonviolent homes. Abusive caregivers of the elderly are likely to be in particularly stressful situations — for example, being “sandwiched” between incapacitated parents and the demands of their own children. Isolation from other family members who might lend physical and emotional support is also a contributor to elder abuse. As the parent becomes more and more dependent — perhaps causing his/her frustration and anger to be directed at the caregiver — the potential for abuse also increases.

Most cases of child and elder abuse by caregivers stem from resentment at being trapped in an unwanted situation, fatigue, a lack of skills in dealing with stress, problems with drugs or alcohol or the ongoing cycle of long-term abuse within the family.

Spousal abuse may also result from some of these reasons, but in many cases, experts tell us, it is a matter of establishing power in the relationship. Some mental health professionals view batterers as hardened criminals who commit their crimes in a conscious, calculated manner to achieve the dominance they believe men are entitled to. Others believe battering is the result of deep psychological and developmental scars. Batterers are manipulative and controlling. Most grew up in environments where abuse was the norm and truly do not understand how their behavior affects others.

A survey of men in Maryland treatment programs revealed that three-fourths of them had witnessed abuse between their parents and half had themselves been abused as children. The message these men have gotten,” said David Adams, a Boston psychologist who specializes in batterer treatment, “is that they have to keep women down because if they don’t, women will try to control them.” Wife batterers commonly say they are victims because their wives “pushed their buttons,” or they blame their behavior on alcohol or drugs.

### **Ways to Prevent/Decrease Abuse**

The Child Welfare League of America offers these suggestions for parents who are afraid they are close to losing control of their emotions and abusing their child:

- Take time to calm down and think about the situation.
- Work off your frustration by exercising; take a walk or run.
- Find someone to watch the children and get away for a little time alone.
- Convert your frustration to physical energy; clean the house or do yard work.
- Turn on music or TV or read a book until you can focus on the problem more objectively.
- Talk with a friend or a help line about your feelings.
- Write your feelings down on paper and think about what you've written.
- Don't let your anger build up. If your feelings don't go away, get help.

These suggestions would work equally well for caregivers of the elderly, who deal with much of the same frustration and stress as do parents of young children. Caregivers should be aware of agencies in the community that can provide training for them and respite care for those for whom they are responsible.

Since spousal abuse is apt to be rooted in psychological problems, counseling or long-term treatment may be effective. In many cases, however, this does not work — nor do restraining orders or incarceration. There are resources available for batterers, but most only seek help when ordered to do so by the courts, and most states spend no tax dollars on treatment for batterers. Encouraging the wife to leave the abusive situation may be the only effective solution.

### ***Individuals Who Are Required to Report Suspected Abuse***

Medical personnel, teachers, social workers and psychologists are required by law to report cases of suspected abuse. Most calls are directed to the Division of Family Services (DFS), which is then required to provide a detailed description of the report to the appropriate law enforcement agency. In St. Louis, four assistant circuit attorneys and four specially trained investigators handle cases involving physical and sexual abuse of children and sexual abuse of adults.

### ***Individuals Who Are Required to Report Suspected Abuse, cont'd***

State law requires that DFS cause an investigation or family assessment and services approach to be initiated within 24 hours of the report of suspected abuse, except in cases where the sole basis for the report is educational neglect. If the report indicates the child is in danger of serious physical harm or threat to life, an investigation shall include direct observation of the child within 24 hours. Each local DFS office has a chief investigator, and each public school district designates a specific person to serve as its liaison.

When a report has been made by a person required by law to report suspected abuse, DFS must contact that person within 48 hours to ensure that full information has been received and to obtain pertinent medical records. Persons making required reports have the right to be informed of the disposition of the case.

The professionals required to report suspected abuse should be trained to listen when children and elderly persons relate stories that are out of the ordinary. Elder abuse, particularly, may be hard to prove, but injuries speak for themselves. Elderly persons can be encouraged to understand that what is happening is wrong and not their fault and that agencies are available to help them.

### ***What Others Can Do***

While medical and educational personnel are required by law to report suspected abuse, lay persons also have a moral obligation to help those who may be unable to help themselves. If you have contact with someone you suspect may be abused, listen carefully to what he/she says and “read between the lines,” realizing there may be an unspoken call for help. Pay attention to the stories and actions of children and elderly persons, even if they sound illogical. Let them know they are safe with you and that you will try to assist them.

### ***Responding to Child Abuse***

If a child tells you he/she has been abused, let him/her know you believe the story. How he/she recovers from the trauma depends a great deal on your reaction. Remain calm, no matter how upset you are. This is especially true if the abuser is a family member — and this is often the case, since and more than half of sexual abuse occurs within the family. Let the child know you're glad

## Responding to Child Abuse, cont'd

he/she told you and that what happened is not his/her fault. Make sure the child knows you will protect him/her so that it will not happen again.

Professionals advise that parents or others in whom the child confides should not ask specific questions about the incident, since this may confuse the child and make a police investigation more difficult. They also recommend that you don't say anything bad about the abuser, since it may be someone the child loves. If you make threats, the child may feel the need to protect the abuser and not be as forthcoming with details. If the child seems afraid to talk, suggest that he/she tell the story to a favorite stuffed animal. Get medical and psychological help as soon as possible.

Call the police or 9-1-1 immediately if someone you know is in life-threatening danger. If the danger is not immediate, but you suspect that abuse has occurred or is occurring, please tell someone. Relay your concerns to the Department of Family Services, local adult protective services, long-term care ombudsman or police.

If you see a person abusing a child in a public place or know that a child is being abused:

- Contact the Child Abuse Hotline — 1-800-392-3738
- Tell the abuser, "It looks like you're having a rough time. Can I help you with your child?"
- Resist the temptation to scream at the offender. It may make things worse for the child when he/she gets home.
- Take down the abuser's license plate number so that you will be able to give it to police.
- Call 911

Your name and contact information will remain confidential if you call the Child Abuse Hotline. The police report will list you only as a "reporter."

It is important to know that the statute of limitations for sexual offenses committed against children under the age of 18 requires that prosecution must commence within ten years of the child's 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. There is no statute of limitations on such crimes as murder, forcible rape or forcible sodomy.

***If You Know a Victim of Elder Abuse***

If you know a victim of elder abuse, exploitation or neglect, please tell their doctor, a friend, or a family member you trust, or call the Eldercare Locator help line at 1-800-677-1116 immediately. Specially trained operators will refer you to a local agency that can help. The Eldercare Locator is open Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. eastern time.

***Where to Get Help***

Agencies to call are in the section titled, "Agencies You Can Call for Help."

Together, concerned St. Louis residents can work to lessen the cycle of domestic abuse by reporting cases of abuse, urging the abused to seek help, increasing the community's awareness of the agencies that offer assistance and encouraging the expansion of agencies that offer counseling to abusers.

*Missouri Revised Statutes*

*St. Louis Circuit Attorney's Office*

*and other internet sites*

## *Child Abuse/Neglect Kills Five a Day, Harms One Million a Year*



Rochelle, a young woman who lives in St. Louis, videotaped her story of long-term childhood abuse for a recent edition of “How’s YOUR Mental Health?” on City 10 Cable. She was physically, mentally and verbally abused by her father and also saw her mother abused by him. “I lived in fear,” she said. “Mom said I should just keep quiet. I don’t feel I got to do many of the normal things most children do, because we were afraid he would get upset.

“Part of the problem was that he was dealing with substance abuse issues. I never told anyone at school because, even with all the problems, I didn’t want to be taken away from my family. Other family members were aware of what was going on, but couldn’t do much to help us.”

Greg Echele, executive director of the Family Resource Center in St. Louis, says that Rochelle’s desire to stay in an abusive situation is not unusual, because despite the bad things that happen there, home also symbolizes security for a child. “It’s what they’ve become accustomed to,” he says, “but often the psychological damage leads to a cycle of abuse when they become adults.”

Children’s age, size and dependence on others make them tremendously vulnerable to abuse. The National Clearinghouse on Child Abuse and Neglect notes that, while the deaths of children due to illness and accidents have been closely monitored, this is not the case with deaths resulting from physical abuse or severe neglect.

Child Protective Services confirms that there has been a steady increase in such deaths in recent years. Based on reports from 41 states in 1997, the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System estimated 1,196 child fatalities from these causes — about 1.7 children per 100,000 in the general population. The U.S. Advisory Board on Child Abuse and Neglect suggests that 2,000 deaths annually — about five children per day — is a more realistic figure. And the National Center for Prosecution of Child Abuse believes the number of child deaths from abuse may be as high as 5,000 annually. Many of these are labeled accidents, homicides or Sudden Infant Death Syndrome — a fact that may actually double the number of deaths due to abuse and neglect.

Research indicates that children age five and younger are the most frequent victims of fatalities caused by abuse and neglect, with those three and under accounting for 77 percent of the deaths. Most of these cases result either from abuse or neglect over a period of time, such as battered child syndrome, or from a single violent incident, such as drowning, suffocating or shaking a baby.

### *Kinds of Child Abuse*

And what of the little ones whose maltreatment stops short of death? About one million cases of abuse are reported each year. As with the number of deaths attributed to abuse and neglect, it is likely that the actual number is many times this high, because children are afraid to tell what is being done to them.

- **Physical abuse** — hitting, throwing, kicking, choking, shaking, burning, holding a child under water, tying him/her up or failing to provide food when these actions are done intentionally to harm the child
  - Shaking a baby for as little as five to 20 seconds can cause sufficient brain damage to kill the infant. This is the leading cause of death in child abuse cases in the United States.
  
- **Physical neglect** — failure to provide adequate housing, warm clothing and medical care, locking a child in a closet or room, leaving a child alone for an extended time or placing him/her in a dangerous situation if it interferes with a child's growth and development
  
- **Emotional abuse** — belittling, terrorizing, blaming or ignoring a child or otherwise making him/her feel worthless or incompetent
  - Even though the abuser may never physically touch the child, the effects can last a lifetime, destroying a child's self-esteem and preventing him/her from achieving happiness and success in personal and professional relationships.
  
- **Sexual abuse** — inappropriate touching, making a child pose for pornographic pictures or showing him/her such pictures, telling a child dirty stories, forcing a child to undress or having sex with a child.
  - Studies indicate that one in every three girls and one in every eight boys is sexually abused before the age of 18. In 90 percent of these cases, the abuse occurs in the home, and the abuser is someone the child knows, most often a trusted caregiver.

## Signs of Abuse

Because every child gets scratches, bruises and cuts, it is often difficult to identify signs of abuse, although frequent, unexplained bruises and broken bones are a strong clue. Children who have been abused may have nightmares or trouble sleeping, or their schoolwork may suffer. This is also true of youngsters who witness abuse, even if they are not victims. Other possible signs of abuse include:

- A poor self-image
- Lack of trust in others
- Aggressive behavior
- Displaying anger or rage
- Acting out in school
- Acting out sexually
- Becoming self-abusive or suicidal
- Feeling sad, passive or withdrawn
- Having difficulty forming new relationships
- Using drugs or alcohol
- Avoiding home
- Showing fear of certain adults

“2001 Prevent Child Abuse America,” a project supported by Target stores, notes that abused and neglected children are more likely to suffer from depression, alcoholism, drug abuse and severe obesity, to require special education services in school and to become juvenile delinquents and adult criminals. In many cases, child abuse becomes an ongoing cycle, with the victim growing up to abuse his/her own children.

“2001 Prevent Child Abuse America” conservatively estimates the cost of child abuse at \$94 billion per year. Money is necessary, of course, to meet the current and long-term needs of abused and neglected children, but it seems almost blasphemous to consider abuse in financial terms when we’re looking at five deaths a day and a million or more children each year physically and/or emotionally scarred for life.

*Data from KidsHealth.org/kid,  
2001 Prevent Child Abuse America  
and other internet sources*

## *The Elderly Are Often Victims*

In many of the world's cultures — the Chinese especially come to mind — the elderly are venerated and treated with special consideration precisely because they are old. Children grow up, often in the same household, understanding that their elders are precious and that kindness and respect for them is unquestioned.

This is also true, of course, in many families in the United States. But there are hundreds of thousands of senior citizens who, far from being treated with love and dignity, are subjected to physical or mental/psychological abuse, financial exploitation or neglect.

Natalie, a resident of St. Louis County, is the middle-aged daughter of an elderly woman who lived alone in St. Louis. Several years ago, as her mother's ability to cope with everyday life diminished, Natalie found herself running back and forth between county and city, to the detriment of her own family and her job. Finally, she and her siblings decided it was time for their mother to give up her home and come to live with Natalie, as she had indicated she would like to do.

Arrangements were made for her to live in a nursing home for 30 days while her belongings were being prepared for the move to Natalie's home. The night before she was to enter the nursing home, Natalie's sister took her mother to an undisclosed location. No one else in the family knew where she was.

Twenty-six months later, Natalie's daughter received a call from her cousin, saying that her mother had suffered a heart attack and that their grandmother, who had been living in an undisclosed assisted living center, was in desperate need of being placed to a full care nursing home. Natalie went at once and found a deplorable situation. She also found that many thousands of dollars had disappeared from her mother's bank account during the time she was isolated from her family.

While all of what happened to this elderly woman may never be known, she experienced, at the least, isolation, financial abuse and placement in a facility that did not care for her properly. Her story is very familiar to agencies that deal in abuse of the elderly.

The National Panel on Elder Abuse has reported that as many as two million elderly persons living at home may be victims of abuse each year, while the Senate Special Committee on Aging estimates that there may be as many as five million victims every year. It is by far the least reported form of abuse. The panel's report estimates that for each reported incident, at least 13 remain "deep, dark secrets." And, as the percentage of elderly in our country's population continues to grow, incidents will multiply.

While cases of abuse also occur in nursing homes and other health-care facilities, they are rare. The data in this article deals strictly with the majority of victims, those who reside at home. The most frequent victims of elder abuse are poor Caucasian females who are isolated from society, often because of temporary or permanent physical, mental or emotional problems. Persons over 80 are more frequently abused than are younger senior citizens. Seventy-five percent of the abused are considered too frail to care for themselves or to protect themselves from those who mistreat them. Sadly, the most frequent abusers are family members — spouses and adult children — who should be most concerned about the welfare of their elderly relative.

### Types of Abuse and Warning Signs

Types of abuse and warning signs to watch for include:

- **Financial abuse** — deceiving or misleading an elderly person about his/her finances, selling property without the senior's consent, misusing or actually stealing assets, or coercing an elderly person to change the beneficiary of his/her will — is believed to be the most common form of elder abuse. While in some cases such actions may not be illegal, especially if the abuser holds the power of attorney for his/her relative, they are certainly unethical.
  - Warning signs: style of living that doesn't match known assets; large withdrawals from bank accounts; signatures for withdrawals that don't match the elder person's
- **Physical abuse** — the intentional use of force against another person, may involve pushing, slapping, punching, kicking, biting, physical restraint or confinement. These are all forms of assault and are against the law.
  - Warning signs: bruises, especially on the arms or neck; rope marks or welts on wrists or ankles; frequent unexplained injuries; reluctance to discuss injuries or to go to a doctor or an emergency room for treatment; constant switching of doctors; stories from elder person and caregiver that don't match
- **Mental/psychological abuse** — may take the form of verbal mistreatment, such as threats, ridicule or continual criticism, forced social isolation or the destruction of personal property.
  - Warning signs: loss of self-confidence; anxiety; depression
- **Sexual abuse** — is sexual activity forced upon an unwilling partner.

- Warning signs: vaginal or anal bleeding; torn or bloody underwear; bruised breasts; sexually-transmitted diseases or infections
- **Physical or emotional neglect** — includes withholding food, medical care, financial help or emotional support. Actual abandonment may also be involved. It is also possible for an elderly person, intentionally or unintentionally, to neglect himself/herself, and it is believed that this may account for as many as half of all neglect cases. Elderly persons, like all competent adults, do have the right to refuse food and medical treatment. But if they endanger their physical or mental well-being or are suspected of becoming irrational, a caregiver who does not act to correct the situation becomes an abuser. In such cases, medical advice should be obtained.
  - Warning signs: evasiveness and lack of interest in contact with other people; unreasonable fears and suspicions; lack of communication; chronic physical or mental health problems

As noted earlier, elder abuse frequently goes unreported and unpunished. Elderly victims of abuse in the home are usually embarrassed and ashamed of how their relatives are treating them. They may pretend it isn't happening or fear that if they tell someone outside the family, the situation will get worse or they will be put in a nursing home. Sometimes they feel the mistreatment is somehow their own fault. Memory or language problems may make it impossible for them to give a clear account of what is going on.

*Data from the National Center on Elder Abuse,  
The National Panel on Elder Abuse  
and other internet sources*

## *The Ugly Truths About Spouse Abuse*



According to figures from national studies:

- Domestic violence accounts for more injuries to women each year than car accidents, muggings and rapes combined.
- Among all female murder victims in 1992, 28 percent were slain by boyfriends, husbands or ex-husbands.
- Nearly two-thirds of domestic homicide victims were physically separated from the perpetrator prior to their deaths.
- Nearly 90 percent of domestic homicide victims had a documented history of physical abuse.
- Nearly 1 in 3 adult women is a victim of at least one physical assault by her partner during adulthood.
- Only about 14% of all domestic assaults come to the attention of police.
- Children from violent families can provide clinicians with detailed accounts of abusive incidents their parents never realized they had witnessed. Rochelle, for example, remembered many years later not only the abuse she experienced from her father, but also his abuse of her mother.

Bonnie, a former director of a women's center, tells the story of a woman who sought refuge in a shelter after being repeatedly abused by her husband. While he was in jail for his crime, he sent her a series of blood-stained letters, describing in detail what he was going to do to her when he got out. He also reminded her that he had plenty of friends, implying that she should be afraid of them, too.

It's a story that's very familiar to those who work with battered women. Even if they are courageous enough to leave their husbands, obtain restraining orders and press charges, the men who are convicted are apt to serve just a few months in jail and come out even madder than before. Involvement of the police often triggers escalating violence.

A few prisons offer programs to help inmates serving time for domestic abuse, but in most cases those ordered by the court to participate in treatment programs must pay for them themselves.

## Predictors for Spousal Abuse

Research indicates that strong predictors for spousal abuse include the male's unemployment and a low level of education. The likelihood of domestic homicide is five times greater if there is access to firearms. Surprisingly, drug use is a significant predictor of domestic abuse, but the abuser's use of alcohol is not, although professionals believe binge drinking may be a contributor.

According to *Risk Factors for Femicide*, separating from an abusive partner, leaving the home or asking the abuser to leave puts a woman in greater danger of being killed. The risk of homicide was found to be nine times higher in cases where a woman leaves a highly-controlling abuser, and having a child living in the home who is not the abuser's biological child more than doubles the risk of abuse.

Even though leaving an abuser will likely increase the danger to his wife and children, escape may be the only way to end the abuse. For this reason, counselors who work with battered women tell them to plan their move well in advance and not to tell their husband or boyfriend that they are getting ready to leave.

## Why Do Abused Women Stay

Despite all the advice to the contrary, thousands of women remain in abusive situations that not only threaten their lives, but subject their children to experiences that are apt to cause them to become abusers themselves. Why do they stay?

- The abuser threatens to kill her, hurt her or get even with her if she leaves. Statistics show that most domestic homicides happen when a woman is in the process of leaving or has just left her abusive partner.
- He threatens to take the children and says she will never see them again. Batterers are 50 percent more likely to seek sole custody of their children. Amazingly, they win 70 percent of the time!
- A woman will often stay in the relationship to protect her children. Even if the abuser does not gain sole custody, he will probably get 50/50 placement or unsupervised visitation, and she fears for their safety while they are alone with him.

### **Why Do Abused Women Stay, cont'd**

- When a woman leaves an abusive relationship, her standard of living is reduced by fifty percent or more. She may not have been in the workforce for years and may not have access to checking or savings accounts or a car. Many women end up going back to an abusive relationship when they find they can't support themselves and their children.
- They have nowhere to go, since the abuser has likely isolated them from their family and friends.
- She may hesitate leaving her marriage for religious reasons.
- She loves him and thinks things will get better because "he's promised to change."

### **Help for Battered Women in St. Louis**

But when a woman in St. Louis makes the decision to leave, where can she turn for help? There are many community resources for abused women and children, including emergency shelters. Most of the shelters have these features:

- Free food and a place to sleep
- 24-hour security.
- Crisis shelters can help with the immediate problems caused by leaving the abusive relationship and being separated from friends and family. Shelter workers can help women begin the process of learning to live independently.
- Some shelters are transition houses, places with self-contained units where women and their children can live in a safe community. These shelters are usually for women who are leaving the crisis shelters.
- Shelters may provide programming for children and women, if they choose to participate.

A list of shelters and other resources is included in the section, "Agencies You Can Call for Help."

## *Agencies You Can Call for Help*



Aging Information and Referral	1-800-235-5503
Aid for Victims of Crime – 24-hour hotline	314-652-3623
ALIVE – 24-hour hotline	314-993-2777
Catholic Services for Children and Youth	314-371-0032
Child Abuse Hotline	1-800-392-3738
Children's Advocacy Services	314-535-3003
Division of Family Services - Child Abuse Hotline	1-800-392-3738
Domestic Violence Resources	314-533-1313
Elder Abuse/Neglect Hotline	1-800-392-0210
Eldercare Locator Help Line	1-800-677-1116
Family Resource Center	314-534-9350
Legal Advocates for Abused Women	1-800-527-1460
Life Source Consultants	314-385-8588
Mental Health Association	314-776-3969
Mid-East Area Agency on Aging	636-207-1323
Missouri Child Abuse/Neglect Hotline	1-800-392-3738
Missouri Coalition Against Domestic Violence	1-573-634-4161
Missouri Coalition Against Sexual Assault	1-573-636-8776
National Child Abuse Hotline	1-800-422-4453
National Children's Advocacy Center	1-256-533-5437

## **Agencies You Can Call for Help**

Missouri Division of Senior Services	314-340-7300
National Domestic Violence Hotline	1-800-799-7233
New Life Style Program	314-531-5391
Parental Stress Hotline	1-800-367-9350
Prosecutor-Based Victim Services	314-622-4373
Rape and Violence End Now – Crisis Hotline	314-645-2075
St. Louis Area Agency on Aging	314-612-5900
St. Louis Children's Hospital	314-454-6000
St. Louis Circuit Attorney's Service	314-622-4373
St. Louis City Court-Appointed Special Advocates for Abused/Neglected Children	314-552-2121
St. Louis Police Department's Child Abuse Unit	314-444-5385
St. Louis Police Department's Domestic Violence Unit	314-444-5812
St. Louis Police Department's Sex Crimes Unit	314-444-5385
St. Martha's Hall – Crisis Hotline	314-533-1313
Social Services TTD	1-800-735-2966
Social Services TTD/Voice Access	1-800-735-2466
United States Attorney's Office – Crisis Line	314-539-2200
Victim Service Council	314-889-3075
Victims' Advocates for Abused Women	314-444-5833

## Agencies You Can Call for Help

Weinman Shelter for Battered Women and Their Children – Crisis Hotline	314-423-1117
Women's Safe House – Crisis Hotline	314-772-4535
Women's Self Help Center – Crisis Hotline	314-531-2003
YWCA Transitional Housing Program – Crisis Hotline	314-533-9400