



CONTACT THE  
FAMILY GUIDANCE  
CENTER AT  
828-322-1400

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FGCSERVICES.COM



# Spotlight On Domestic Violence

*First Step Newsletter  
A Program of  
The Family Guidance Center*

THE MISSION OF FAMILY GUIDANCE CENTER'S FIRST STEP DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PROGRAM IS TO PROVIDE NEEDED SERVICES TO VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND TO INCREASE THE COMMUNITY'S AWARENESS ABOUT THE PROBLEM.

## THE HOLIDAY SEASON CAN POSE INCREASED RISK

Women in abusive relationships face the holidays with fear and dread. It is a time when they walk around on high alert trying to ensure that he doesn't get upset. But remember, **there doesn't have to be a reason for him to explode. He does it because he can.**



There are factors, however, that contribute to the increased risks during the holidays, such as 1) the financial stress of gift buying, 2) get together with extended family, especially when there are strained relationships, 3) increased alcohol and drug consumption, and 4) the abuser spends more time with the victim if he is on vacation for the holidays.

Researchers have found that while domestic violence increases by about 22% on Thanksgiving, it is really New Year's that is the biggest holiday of concern - domestic violence rates increase by 32%. Christmas ranks third with a 17% increase.

## TIPS FOR STAYING SAFE

1. Keep your cell phone charged and with you at all times. Be sure to put needed numbers on speed dial, i.e., local DV Crisis Line, 911.
2. Create a "Safe" word/phrase. In an emergency, you may not be able to text or say much. Have an agreed safe word or phrase with a family member or friend so you can signal the need for help.
3. Download a safety app. If you have a smart phone, download a safety app for women such as P.F.O. and Circle of 6, which automatically alerts your support people that you are in danger.
4. Decide on a safe place to go in your home if an argument occurs; avoid rooms with no exits (bathroom) or rooms with weapons or upper/lower levels of home.
5. Decide upon a signal of danger, like having your porch light on or a raised shade, and tell your neighbor to call the police if they see the signal.
6. Make a safety plan in advance. Determine your escape options, where you will go, hide your keys outside, have your important papers, have money hidden where you can get it, etc.

**If you or anyone you know is  
being abused  
call us at 828-322-1400  
Crisis Line 828-228-1787**



**YOU MADE A DIFFERENCE  
THANK YOU TO**

- \* Zion Lutheran Church Women for donating all the wonderful items for our Shelter and your financial support. You are a great friend to us.
- \* St. Aloysius Catholic Church for your financial support and for getting our trees trimmed.
- \* Catholic Conference Center for providing food for our Shelter, bedspreads, sheets and other items.
- \* Catawba Valley Quilters Guild for donating beautiful quilts for children in our Shelter.

Special thanks to all our community supporters. We could not meet our Shelter families' needs without your support. **Thank you from the bottom of our heart!**

**OUR CONSUMER CREDIT COUNSELORS WARN  
BEWARE OF ONLINE FRAUDS**

Keep your holiday merry by avoiding online scams. They can range from bogus websites advertising counterfeit goods, e-Christmas cards which contain a virus to collect personal data to selling goods that don't exist via online auction sites or items that are purchased but never delivered.

It is best to shop on sites that you know are safe. Always remember, "If it sounds too good to be true, then it probably isn't."

**FAREWELL**

We were fortunate to have Kimberly Fleming intern with us this past semester. Kim goes to school at Lees McRae, where she will graduate in May with a BA in Criminal Justice. During her internship, she became familiar with all of our First Step services, but spent most of her time in court working with our Court Advocate and working in our Abuser Treatment Program. She was a great help. We will miss her!



**The Purple Ribbon**



**You'll find LOTS of treasures!**



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When you shop on Amazon Smile, they donate 1/2% of your purchase to First Step.  
That's a bargain for everyone!

