

HYDE COUNTY HOTLINE, INC.

We are committed to promoting dignity, respect and safety at home resulting in safer community.

Visit us at: Website: HydeCounty-Hotline.org Facebook: [Hyde County Hotline](https://www.facebook.com/HydeCountyHotline)

December 2018 Newsletter

Domestic Violence and the Holidays: A Survivor's Guide

by [Nancy Vega, MA, LPC](#)

The holidays are often thought of as the best time of the year. It is a time for loved ones, celebration, and joy. However, for victims of domestic violence, the holidays can be a very dark and scary time. Unrealistic expectations, financial pressures, and the increased consumption of alcohol can raise stress levels, which can contribute to incidents of domestic violence.

Since the holiday season is supposed to be the best time of the year, many people have high expectations.

These can include giving the best gifts, balancing time effectively, getting along with family, and having an abundance of holiday spirit. Many people can become stressed while trying to live up to these heightened expectations, and feel devastated if they fail. Before the holidays, it is important to set realistic expectations and realize that things may not go as planned.

Financial pressures and the stress of having a tight budget can feel more overwhelming during the holidays. The expectations of buying the best gifts can increase anxiety about how to handle the many added expenses. Some simple steps can help with stress management during the holidays. One way to help with financial strain is to develop a holiday budget and plan of action. Be realistic about gift giving; give gifts that your budget allows, whether that includes store-bought or homemade items. By prioritizing gift giving and resisting external pressure and the internal urge to overspend, holiday stress can be decreased.

Another component of the holidays is the serving and drinking of alcohol. Sometimes, individuals will use alcohol and other substances to cope with holiday stress. However, drinking as a coping strategy often doesn't help because the ability to cope decreases as the amount of alcohol consumed increases. While hosting holiday parties, offer a selection of non-alcoholic beverages and stop serving alcohol at least one hour before the party ends. Consider attending Alcoholic Anonymous or Al-Anon if you or a family member have struggled with alcohol dependency. The meetings can be one of the most important steps to reduce the level of stress during the holidays. Seeking out further assistance, such as addiction counseling, can also help you handle the stress of the holidays.

Domestic violence is more likely to occur when stress levels are high. During the holidays, unrealistic expectations, financial strain, and alcohol can increase stress, and therefore, incidents of domestic violence. If you find that you are in a domestic violence situation, it is important to have a safety kit in case you have to exit a dangerous situation quickly. This kit should be hidden in a safe place and should include emergency numbers, a bag of clothing and toiletries, important documents such as birth certificates and a driver's license, medication, prescriptions, car keys, house keys, and cash.

iPhone Tips to Help Teens Stay Safe

Raising five children is not always easy, especially when it comes to their safety. We can't keep our kids locked up at home 24/7, and we can't discourage them from forming relationships outside of the home. Yet, we can teach them skills so that they are cautious and remain safe when encountering other people, especially when they start dating.

1 in 4 women and 1 in 7 men experience severe physical violence during their lives, and 1 in 3 teens will experience dating abuse. These statistics are not comforting.

Tech & a Go Bag

It's important for teens to recognize the signs of potential danger when it comes to relationships. They also need to know what to do should they find themselves in an unsafe situation. One thing that can be helpful is to equip our teens, and even our adult children, with a Go Bag.

A **Go Bag** is a term used to describe a bag that is ready with things one should always have available in case of an emergency. I am not talking about weapons. I am talking about basic tools and survival items to help you get out of a bad situation, and stay safe until you can get help. Things like a change of clothing, a first aid kit, some cash, maybe something to eat, and of course a phone and charger. It also isn't a bad idea for young people to learn some basic self-defense skills in the event of physical threats.

An iPhone, or other smartphone, can be a great tool to include in a Go Bag, especially with the Emergency SOS feature activated. This is an app that can be used to alert trusted contacts via text message that an emergency call was placed, and to send those contacts updates on the user's current location. It is very important that the potentially dangerous party not be included in the trusted contacts. Make sure your teens block certain people who may put them in danger.

Another great phone app is the screen record feature. Many phones have the ability to record what's happening on the screen without the other person knowing. While screen recording isn't a new concept, Apple has simplified the process for iPhones. One can now more easily record videos of abusive behavior, like harassing text messages or threats made over video calls. Encourage your children to think about their own safety when deciding whether to record an abuser. They should never do anything that will put them in more danger.

While a cell phone is a really great tool, make sure your loved ones also keep contacts and hotline numbers written down somewhere other than on their phone as a backup. It is also a good idea to have 911 at the top of the contacts list on both the phone and the paper list.

When it comes to phone safety, encourage your children to change passwords often, and to update privacy settings on social media. Make sure they block unwanted callers, especially anyone who is harassing via calls or text messages. Enable internet security features, including spyware checkers. If the phone has a GPS tracker app, suggest your teen enable that for when they are going out on date with someone you don't know.

Final Thoughts

I always like to keep an open and honest dialogue with my children about their relationships, and to teach them what is healthy and what is not okay. They understand that "no" does not mean "maybe," and they should be empowered to use their voices if something does not feel acceptable. They also know how to use their phones to get help if needed. Support of loved ones is essential when it comes to safety and the emotional component that accompanies any type of domestic abuse. [LoveisRespect](#)

*May your Christmas be
Filled with love,
Overflowing with blessings
And rich in precious memories.*

Merry Christmas !

From

Hyde County Hotline

Hyde County Hotline

Crisis Intervention, Advocacy and Prevention

Confidentiality Emergency Shelter

24 Hour Crisis Line 252-925-2500

PO Box 335

Engelhard, NC 27824

Tel: (252)925-2502

Fax: (252)925-2501

From August 2017- July 2018

Hyde County Hotline has served 106 victims of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault consisting of 501 crisis calls.

WHAT WE DO

- **Crisis Intervention**
- **Domestic and Sexual Violence Advocacy**
- **Human Trafficking Advocacy**
- **Survivor Services**
- **Safe Shelter**
- **Support Groups**
- **Referrals**
- **Programs Presentations**
- **Participates with DSS Work First Program**

We serve victims of sexual victimization, domestic violence and human trafficking do not discriminate regardless of race, color, sex or sexual orientation.

OUR MISSION

The purpose of Hyde County Hotline, Inc. is to work to eliminate domestic abuse and sexual victimization and provide safe shelter in Hyde County, North Carolina through the collaborative efforts of a compassionate community. We promote dignity, respect and safety at home resulting in safer communities.



We love volunteers!

Please help and call
Hyde County Hotline



Nothing Compares



**Thank you to the family Violence Prevention Services Program
US DHHS, and NC Council for Women for financial support.**