

When Is Enough - Enough?

By Caryn M. Suarez

I am an abuse survivor, so are my four brothers and my sister. I wrote a book two years ago, about growing up in an abusive home with abusive parents. My book, "Living Crazy Like Fly" just won a 2002 Clara Award. However, the suffering I endured at the hands of my parents remains with me to this day. The scars both physically and spiritually are still present. When I was little, my brothers and sister and I BEGGED my mother to take us and leave our father. Her family was supportive and offered us help. My mother would have no part of it. She decided to "stick it out" with my father. One by one we got away from them. One of my brothers ran away when he was 17 and it was 20 years before we saw him again. My mother is still with my father. I haven't seen my parents now in over 17 years. I don't even know where they live. She has six kids and 15 grandchildren she never sees. I wonder how she feels spending Mother's Day alone?

A good friend of mine with three young children suffered in an abusive marriage for

over 15 years. JSO was called to her house time and time again. Reports were filed. Court orders for restraint were issued against her husband. Yet she always made up with him.

She always took him back for "one more chance". Her children begged her to leave and take them away. Her family begged her to come home and bring the children to escape. I begged her to leave and get help. I had been there myself and I knew where the kids were coming from. She always wanted to "give it one more try." She's dead now. She was murdered a few years ago.

Do these scenarios sound familiar? Do you know someone in these types of situations? Does it sound like something you personally may know and relate to all to well?

What is domestic violence? It is a behavior. It is emotional, psychological, physical or sexual abuse. It can take many forms and includes behavior such as threats, name-calling, isolation, actual physical or sexual assaults, withholding money, family, friends, and personal freedoms. Most cases

are committed against women by their male partners. In a small number of cases, male partners have been abused by their wives. It is parents abusing their children or teenagers being abused by their boy/girlfriends. It is older adults being abused by their children who they must live with in their later years. In any case, every victim of domestic violence, whether male or female, young or old, has the right to legal relief and help.

Millions of people are abused by someone in their homes each year. Not all acts of domestic violence are violations of the law; but you do not have to face this alone. You deserve help and it is available. If you know someone being abused, or suspect someone is, **you do need** to get involved. **You do need** to offer support, advice, and understanding.

Here in the Northeast Florida area there are several different organizations and locations offering shelter and help. Keep this list handy, or give it to someone you know and tell them to keep it in a safe place. Don't play Russian roulette with your life, or your kid's life! Don't let your pride

get you or your children seriously injured or killed. Don't think because you are older without a lot of money

that you cannot reach out for help - help is available! Really THINK about this - When is enough - enough?

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR LEGAL RIGHTS AND OPTIONS, CONTACT:

BATTERED WOMEN'S SHELTERS

- Hubbard House, Inc.
(for Duval, Nassau and Baker counties) 354-3114
- Quigley House (Clay County) 284-0061
- Betty Griffin House (St. Augustine) 1-904-824-1555
- Statewide 1-800-500-1119

LEGAL ASSISTANCE

- Jacksonville Area Legal Aid 356-8371
- Jacksonville Florida Bar 399-5780
- Self-Help Legal Clinic 269-9969

POLICE

- Jacksonville Sheriff's Office Emergency 911
Information 630-7600
- Jacksonville Beach Police Emergency 911
Dispatch 270-1661
- Neptune Beach Police Emergency 911
Business 270-2413
- Atlantic Beach Police 247-5859
- Clay County Sheriff's Office 264-6512
- Nassau County Sheriff's Office 353-7072
- St. Johns County Sheriff's Office 324-8304

INJUNCTION FOR PROTECTION

- Clerk's Office 630-2400 Ext 6262
- State Attorney's Office
(Domestic Violence Unit) 630-2400 Ext. 2506


- ELDER ABUSE HOTLINE 1-800-962-2873
- VICTIM SERVICES CENTER 630-6300
- CHILD ABUSE HOTLINE 1-800-962-2873

NAVAL FAMILY ADVOCACY PROGRAMS

- Mayport 270-5068
- NSA Jacksonville 542-2766 Ext. 53 or 77
Hotline 772-5555
- Cecil Feild 77-5239

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