
Domestic Violence Clearinghouse and Legal Hotline (DVCLH)

Julian Leigh, Community Educator

Advocates

The Legal Hotline

It was the first call of the day.

"Domestic Violence Legal Hotline. This is Chris. Can I help you?"

She began speaking in a clear, confident voice. "A friend told me you help women who are afraid. Is that right?"

"Yes. Are you safe?"

Silence. Then she sobbed. "No, I'm not safe. I'm very, very scared."

Two attorneys, three paralegals and University of Hawaii pro bono law students staff the Legal Hotline. They express their concern for frightened callers, then tell them about their legal rights and choices and the consequences of those choices. Legal Hotline callers are often facing the most difficult decisions they will ever make.

Last year DVCLH answered 3500 Legal Hotline calls—calls from women and men who needed help and/or information.

Family Court Cases

Terminating a relationship with an abusive partner can be a complex and dangerous process. Batterers typically do not *let go* easily. DVCLH understands the dynamics of domestic violence. Staff knows how the laws and the *system* in our state can protect and support victims. DVCLH attorneys and paralegals provide divorce and post decree legal services.

Within 15 days after a Temporary Restraining Order is issued, a victim must return to court and face her abuser. The duration, terms and conditions of the protective order, as well as temporary child custody and visitation rights may be decided at this hearing. DVCLH attorneys represent victims at this proceeding.

Last year DVCLH represented 493 battered women in Family Court and served 1107 children, helping them and their mothers get free and safe.

Persons in Need (p.i.n.) Grants

She had a master's degree, a good job and made much more money than her abusive husband. From the shelter she called DVCLH to ask for financial assistance. Rather than risk abuse, she had turned over her paycheck to him. Now she needed help with a rental deposit on a new home for her and her children.

Oahu battered persons can call DVCLH for financial help with rent, utilities, medical and other emergency expenses. These grants, intended to help victims get safe and rebuild their lives, are generously provided through The Hawaii Community Foundation by the James and Winifred Robertson Memorial Fund.

In 1995 DVCLH provided 85 battered women with financial assistance.

Domestic Violence Task Force

DVCLH facilitates Oahu's DV Task Force, organized to improve our community's response to partner abuse. Caller I.D., police and judicial response, and batterer psychoeducational program guidelines are some of the topics addressed by the 20+ member Task Force. H.E.L.P., *Handbook of Emergency and Life-Support Programs* - a comprehensive directory of Oahu resources for victims of domestic violence - was produced in 1995.

5,000+ H.E.L.P. Handbooks have been distributed to doctors, attorneys, police, and other city and state service providers.

System Reform

DVCLH's Executive Director continues to be an expert witness for both defense and prosecution in domestic abuse cases. She has also been elected to the boards of Alliance for Health and Human Services and Hawaii Women's Political Caucus. She was appointed by the Governor to serve on the Sexual Orientation and the Law Commission. Each year she helps draft and support the passage of laws to protect women and children.

Educates

Training

DVCLH Community Educator and Executive Director make statewide and national presentations. DVCLH is fully funded to provide free training for service providers.

Last year DVCLH spent 814 hours out in the community - educating police, social service professionals, civic groups, teens, immigrants, and students. DVCLH produced and distributed 13,611 brochures for victims, 3,871 brochures for batterers and 7,815 Advocacy in Action newsletters statewide.

Consulting

DVCLH shares what it has learned about domestic abuse - with government officials, public and private sector service providers and the media.

In 1995 about 1600 phone calls and 516 hours involved consulting.

Public Awareness

Every time partner abuse takes a life in the state of Hawaii, DVCLH, City & County of Honolulu, Catholic Charities and AmeriCorps cosponsor Oahu's silent march: Remember the Dead. Cherish the Living. Part of a national domestic violence public awareness effort, Clothesline Project Hawaii is cosponsored annually by DVCLH and the City and County of Honolulu.

Through collaborative efforts with the City and County of Honolulu, and with funding from First Hawaiian Bank Foundation and the U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services, in 1995 DVCLH

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launched a *Plan for Your Life* public awareness campaign.

Radio and television public service announcements, brochures, posters, bus posters, and over 200 hours of on-site trainings have all emphasized domestic violence doesn't just wound and scar its victims - emotionally, spiritually, physically. Domestic violence kills. Our community must help victims "Plan for Their Lives."

Administrates

Hard work doesn't always feel that focused or seem that important and noble—typing, faxing, meeting, writing, phoning, filing, budgeting, xeroxing—day in and day out. And when budgets get cut and battered women continue to die, sometimes hard work seems to be wasted.

Certainly, the task at hand is formidable. The hard work is about stopping violence and oppression. But the mission is ever clear.

DVCLH, sister agencies, and countless women and men all across the state together are sculpting a new society - where women, children and men are safe and cherished.



**Domestic Violence
Clearinghouse and
Legal Hotline**

is a private non-profit agency providing direct legal services to clients, legal information and consultation to the community, and advocacy for system reform.

DVCLH began offering legal hotline services in 1988. Now, in addition to the Hotline, we have dramatically increased our services to include legal representation, development of training materials, community education, technical consultation and system advocacy.

**Legal Representation
531-3771**

- Divorce actions
- Restraining order actions
- Post-decree relief

**Advocacy
534-0040**

- Leadership in system advocacy and reform
- Work with the courts, legal community, police and legislature to improve system response in our community.

**Education
"The Right to Know"
534-0040**

- Brochures
- Handouts
- Quarterly newsletters
- Free classes and training about domestic violence and system response
- Videos

If you are a victim of
partner abuse
**Call 531-3771
or 1-800-690-6200**

from the Neighbor Islands
Monday - Friday • 8 am to 5 pm
The violence won't go away.



Growing to meet all your healthcare needs

St. Francis Healthcare System of Hawaii

- Obstetrical and Gynecology Services
- Women's Addiction Treatment Center of Hawaii (W.A.T.C.H.)
- The Heart Center, including Heart Surgery, Specialty Cardiac Catheterization and Cardiac Rehabilitation
- Hawaii's only Transplant Center, specializing in heart, kidney, liver, pancreas and bone marrow transplants
- Centers for Diabetes and Liver Disease
- Advanced Diagnostic Imaging, including MRI
- Renal Institute - largest hospital-based dialysis program in the nation
- Cancer Institute - Radiation Oncology, Cancer Screenings, Cell Separator and Tumor Registry

ST. FRANCIS MEDICAL CENTER
HONOLULU 547-6011

ST. FRANCIS MEDICAL CENTER - WEST
EWA BEACH 678-7000

Since the 1927 founding of St. Francis Hospital in Nuuanu Valley, our ohana has been growing to meet the diverse health care needs of Hawaii's people. Now, with two state-of-the-art Medical Centers on Oahu and an array of community services, including Hospice care, St. Francis Home Care, Health Services for Senior Citizens and parish nurses, we really are where you are when you need us.