

How to Stay Safe in Lincoln County, New Mexico

In New Mexico, pursuant to "The Family Violence Protection Act", domestic abuse can only be committed by a household member. The following actions constitute domestic violence under the state statutes:

- Physical harm
- Severe emotional distress
- Bodily injury or assault
- Threats causing imminent fear of injury
- Criminal trespassing
- Criminal damage
- Telephone harassment
- Stalking
- Harassment
- Harm or threatened harm to children
- Repeatedly driving by the individual's home

These acts of violence by the perpetrator must be done to a household member. [Click here to learn more about domestic violence laws in New Mexico.](#)

What can you do to get help and stay safe?

If you are in a situation where danger is imminent call "911", give them your name, location, what is happening to you, name of the offender, if weapons are involved and if children are present. Let them know if your injuries require an ambulance and whether the offender is still present in the home. Once Law Enforcement arrives they will secure the scene to maintain everyone's safety and separate both individuals so their statements can be obtained. Pictures of injuries or damage to personal property will be obtained. An ambulance may be called to the home if injuries need further treatment.

Information will be provided on local shelters and domestic violence agencies. You may be referred to the local Law Enforcement Victim Advocate for assistance in petitioning the court for a Protection Order. **Call (575)258-7365 to make an appointment with Dawna Reyes, Victim Advocate for the Ruidoso Police Department. Dawna is also available after hours from 2:00 P.M. to 10:00 P.M. - Monday thru Thursday. This is your first line of defense in "stopping the violence".**

Should you stay in your home?

What other options do you have to maintain the safety of your family? The NEST is a local shelter for victims of domestic violence and their families. Law Enforcement can provide transport from your home to the shelter at the time of the incident to ensure your safety. **To contact the NEST for admission, call [\(575\)378-6378](tel:5753786378).** Another option is "COPE, Inc", a shelter located in Alamogordo which can be reached by calling the 24-hour hotline number 1-866-350-2673. Shelter stays are available up to 3 months. Victims and their families are safe and the services provided are confidential. **Donna Bonds, RN Victim Advocate at COPE Inc, [\(575\)258-4946](tel:5752584946),** provides services that link people experiencing domestic violence with legal, housing and employment resources. Advocates can provide support to victims throughout criminal proceedings of the offender. If your abuser has been arrested and is scheduled to appear in court, the advocate can refer you to the DA's office so you can visit with **Rosemary Woods, Victim Advocate [\(575\)648-2383](tel:5756482383), who will guide you through the judicial process.**

What is the next step to consider once the perpetrator is incarcerated and a protection order is in place?

Your advocate can assist you to locate affordable housing in Lincoln County. There are several local **Income Support Divisions [\(575\)378-1762](tel:5753781762),** on Hwy 70 in Ruidoso Downs to apply for food stamps, TANF cash assist, Medicaid for your family and assistance through the LI-HEAP program for past due utility bills. Your advocate will be able to guide you to local food banks, and food distribution centers where you can supplement your grocery budget to fit the needs of your family. If you have children 5 years or younger you may take advantage of the WIC program which you can access at the Health Department on Kansas St. (575)258-3252.

Now that you have successfully reclaimed your place in the community, what are your employment possibilities?

Your advocate can refer you to **New Mexico Works [\(575\)630-8181](tel:5756308181)** on Sudderth Drive for career counseling, job registration and assistance in finding employment opportunities. Being a victim of domestic violence, New Mexico Works may send you to a domestic violence agency where you can be assessed for safety issues. The domestic violence agency, such as COPE Inc, may recommend that you be considered for the FVO program. This program allows a six-month grace period where work requirements for the individual will be waived due to safety reasons and their TANF cash assist will be maintained. After six months, the person's situation may be re-evaluated and if safety issues have been resolved, work requirements will be reinstated. New Mexico Works also has several programs such as the displaced homemaker or vocational rehab that can prepare individuals to re-enter the workforce. There may be financial assistance available to further your education.

Who will help me with child care?

You can apply for cash assistance through the CYFD child care program. Your advocate can refer you to a list of certified child care providers in our community. If transportation is not readily

available, you can opt to ride the transit system for \$1.00 per destination with a 24-hour advance notice. Their phone number is (575)378-1188.

What else can be done to ensure that you have every opportunity to maintain independence from your abuser and stay safe?

Take advantage of COPE Inc. counseling services. Both individual and group counseling is offered for victims of domestic violence by Luisa Rodriguez BS domestic violence specialist. Victims of domestic violence often would benefit from counseling to resolve trauma issues they have been exposed to as a part of their daily lives. Mark OvRick LISW offers counseling for children who have witnessed domestic violence between their parents. COPE Inc. also has an Offender Treatment Program designed to assist individuals to learn non-violent methods to avoid further abuse and family violence. If you are interested in counseling opportunities, please contact COPE at (575)258-4946.

Our community as a whole can "Stop the Violence" by participating in outreach and educational services. Trained professionals such as Perry Lawson, COPE Educator, are available for presentations to schools, churches, Law Enforcement, medical and legal professionals, civic organizations and businesses. Presentations are free of charge and many may be used for continuing education units. These presentations convey valuable information about preventing and dealing with family and relationship violence. As a resident of Lincoln County, we can work together to "Stop the Violence" and make our community a safe haven for all that live here.

Dawna Reyes - Victims Advocate #609
<mailto:dawnareyes@ruidoso-nm.gov>