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December 2015

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***The mission of Safehouse Services, Inc. is to promote the safety and well being of victims of domestic violence, sexual assault and/or stalking by providing support services and/or shelter. In furtherance of the mission, Safehouse will provide services, which will encourage positive self-concept and personal growth, and community education on domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking.***

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## The Holiday Season and Domestic Violence

Provided By: Jacob Martinez



The roads are congested, shopping malls are packed, and the in-laws are visiting-it's natural to feel a little extra stress around the holiday season.

But when feelings of stress escalate into angry and abusive behavior, that's when domestic violence crimes occur. Studies show that domestic violence increases during the holidays, when cooking, shopping, hectic schedules, and a myriad of other factors can evoke feelings of frustration and irritation.

When discussing the prevalence of holiday domestic violence in a CBS News article, executive director of the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence Rita Smith explained, "During the holidays, people are home together more. In families where there is violence present that means more opportunity for violence."

A report published by the NCADV found that an estimated 1.3 million women are victims of physical assault by an intimate partner each year. The reasons behind these types of violence attacks are complex, ranging from financial frustration to intoxication.

To help you keep domestic violence out of your household this season, here's a guide to common causes of violent behavior during the holiday and how you can avoid them.

**Emotional stress:** The holidays can be an emotionally trying time, since people are off work and spending lots of time in close proximity with their families. Under such close quarters, it's easy for arguments to arise. Keep arguments tame by taking time to cool down. If you feel stressed, angry, or frustrated, leave the situation and go outside before acting. It is almost impossible to feel compassion and rage at the same time, so in the passion of the moment, you are more likely to speak and act in a way that you may regret afterwards.

Take a walk or do a few jumping-jacks-it may sound silly, but physical activity can do wonders for combating stress and negative feelings. And while you focus on another task, rage, anxiety, and frustration will often abate. Once you do feel calm, you can return inside to try and express your feelings in a calm, non-confrontational way.

**Financial stress:** During these hard economic times, many families are trying to adjust to having a tighter budget. Financial problems can feel especially frustrating over the holidays, when there's a lot of pressure to buy presents, go on trips, and host parties.

To keep financial stress from growing into rage and abusive inclinations, work with your partner to come up with a holiday budget, prioritizing gifts for loved ones over personal luxuries. Remember that shouting or getting angry about your financial problems won't fix them-only smart planning and effective budgeting can.

**Alcohol:** While it might be tempting to unwind with a few glasses of wine

at a holiday party, using alcohol to cope with stress is a dangerous strategy. The more alcohol you consume, the less you will be able to control your anger and actions

Avoid drinking alcohol in response to feelings of anger, frustration, or sadness. Rather than trying to drink away these feelings, seek help from therapy or AA groups. Don't feel pressured to drink at holiday parties and gatherings-remember, you don't need alcohol to have a good time.

**Road Rage:** When traveling down roads filled with the honking cars of holiday shoppers, many drivers experience feelings of irritation of anger. The tension caused by stressful commutes can result in domestic violence behaviors.

You don't have to let other drivers' actions and errors affect you. If you notice yourself getting angry, roll down the window and breathe deeply.

**Hectic schedules:** It can be tough trying to adjust to holiday schedules, as people try to squeeze in time for family, parties, and shopping. When combined with a lack of sleep, a chaotic schedule can result in heightened levels of anxiety and anger.

Try your best to get as much sleep as you can-lack of sleep induces feelings of annoyance, anger, and resentment. You may feel as though you have a lot to get done, but don't forget to allot time for yourself, your loved ones, and activities you enjoy.

Hundreds of families will suffer domestic violence this holiday season-don't let your family become one of them. Colorado law takes domestic violence very seriously, and even angry words, threats, and loud arguments can sometimes be interpreted as domestic violence crimes.

And if you have been arrested and charged with domestic violence, contact an experienced criminal lawyer as soon as possible. The consequences of a conviction can be severe, and may include a prison sentence, treatment program, or deportation for non-citizens. To defend yourself against a conviction, your best bet is to hire a lawyer with experience handling domestic violence cases. A knowledgeable lawyer can assist you in creating the best possible defense, increasing your chances of getting the charges reduced or dropped.

## **PURCHASE YOUR TABLE TODAY !**

Join us for the most "fun" fundraiser you've ever attended! Celebrity Waiters are really fun people who graciously offer to dress as celebrities and to entice the guest at their tables to "tip" them for their services--- which really means "give generously to the Safehouse cause."



**Friday, February 5, 2016**

**6 - 10 p.m.**

**Little America**

**Tables of 8~~\$600**

**Live and Silent Auction**

**Please call Nicole or Carla with any questions or to  
reserve your table. 307-634-8655**

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## Volunteer

Volunteers are an integral part of our operation. They work closely with staff members to assist clients and the community providing services which benefit domestic violence victims & their families.

Safehouse Services volunteers perform a variety of functions, including:

Listener, Educator, Advocate, Crisis Line Duty, Clerical, Fundraising, Health Fairs, Donations and more.

Volunteers are given specific training which helps to develop the skills needed to be effective members of our organization.

Volunteer application can be found on our web site:

[www.wyomingsafehouse.org](http://www.wyomingsafehouse.org)

## December Shelter Wish List

Gas Cards

Grocery Cards

Can openers

Baby Wipes

Clorox Wipes

Bath Towels

Wash Cloths

Alarm Clocks

Fresh Fruits

Fresh Vegetables

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*All of our services are free and confidential. Safehouse Services does not discriminate on the basis of real or perceived race/ethnicity, language, sex, gender identity, age, sexual orientation, (dis)ability, social class, economic status, education, marital status, religious affiliation, residency, HIV status, sexual preference or national origin.*

**Safehouse Services is sponsored by the Office of the Attorney General, Division of Victim Services**

Safehouse Services | [help@wyomingsafehouse.org](mailto:help@wyomingsafehouse.org) | <http://www.wyomingsafehouse.org/>



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