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Social Workers and Domestic Violence Victims by [Cathy Dionisio](#)

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The work of a social worker is not limited to domestic violence issues, but some social workers are trained to have an eye for domestic violence and work to provide refuge, relief and empowerment for victims of domestic violence. Working with domestic violence victims is a special calling, and it takes someone who is not only a trained professional, but someone who has a big heart, can exercise tough love, and be courageous in such a chaotic situation.

Social workers often work with both parties in a domestic violence situation – the victim and the abuser – because the ultimate goal is to find a solution that will provide help and healing for everyone involved. The abuser usually has some major underlying mental and psychological issues that need to be dealt with that are causing him to act out in this way. The victim, too, has either developed some psychological scars as a result of the abuse or because of past abuse and trauma – which may or may not be related to the current relationship – has lost the will to fight or remove herself from the situation.

Because domestic violence carries with it a stigma that victims are weak since they tend to stay in the abusive relationship, victims are often afraid to tell anyone what's going on behind closed doors. Often, the victim is battling anxiety and fears of being killed if she leaves or of how she and her children, when applicable, will survive on their own. These are very real concerns that, without the proper help, can turn into a tragedy. It's the job, then, of the social worker to assess the situation and devise the best and safest plan to stop the abuse and facilitate recovery.

How Do Social Workers Help?

Social workers provide counseling themselves, as well as provide referrals to private practice therapists and psychologists. They also connect women with shelters and centers for victims of domestic violence with continual support and monitoring; act as court liaisons and advocates in ensuing cases; serve as proxies in filing police reports against perpetrators; offer sound advice on how to work through the tangled web of judicial and state matters related to her case; and provide resources for employment and financial education which will help her to get on her feet.

Social workers work within the community and in social justice organizations to create awareness and rally against domestic violence. They inform and train staff and victims within domestic violence organizations and shelters. There is no real end to the services social workers provide for abuse victims. Their methods are used to help women cope with the aftereffects of abuse, and to empower and make them self-sufficient so that they don't find themselves in that situation again.

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