

Have you ever felt afraid for yourself or your children because your partner or ex-partner:

- Is jealous and critical?
- Does things to scare you like throwing objects, standing over you during arguments, threatening you, giving you warning looks or gestures?
- Blames you or your children for their feelings and behavior?
- Physically hurts you (pushing, shoving, grabbing, slapping, hitting, strangling or kicking)?
- Doesn't respect your wishes about sex and physical contact?
- Threatens to hurt you or someone close to you?
- Calls you names, makes fun of you, yells, swears, or insults you?
- Calls you repeatedly, constantly checks up on you, or follows you around?
- Threatens to take your children from you?

Does your partner or ex-partner:

- Undercut your efforts to get a job, go to work or school, or better your financial situation?
- Prevent you from traveling freely?
- Control decisions surrounding childcare in an effort to "keep you in your place"?

If you get Financial Assistance to Needy Families and an abusive relationship is making it difficult for you to be financially independent, we may be able to help.

How Can You Help Me?

The Financial Assistance to Needy Families (FANF) program helps families with dependent children become self-sufficient. FANF has a work program and offers support services, while providing financial and medical assistance.

If you get FANF, you must participate in the FANF work program called New Hampshire Employment Program (NHEP). You will be expected to find and keep a job.

However, if you are – or have been – in an abusive relationship, certain program requirements may be temporarily relaxed if they:

- Place you or your children at risk of physical or emotional harm, **or**
- Make it more difficult for you to protect yourself or your children from harm or threat of harm, **or**
- Unfairly penalize you or your children.

You may be allowed to be:

- Temporarily excused from participating in NHEP for up to 6 months.
- Excused from mandatory cooperation with the Division of Child Support Services.
- Eligible for an extension to the 60-month lifetime limit on receipt of FANF financial assistance.

These "relaxed program requirements" are what we call the "Family Violence Option" (FVO).

Should I Ask For The FVO?

It is your choice whether you would like to ask for the FVO. We understand the needs of people who have been hurt by domestic violence. Many times, trying to reach

financial independence and freedom from abuse is made more difficult by an abusive partner or ex-partner. Other times the healing process itself may get in the way of your trying to successfully take part in NHEP. Contact your Family Services Specialist (FSS) or your Employment Counselor Specialist (ECS) to talk about it more. They can help you decide whether any of these options are right for you.

Being temporarily excused from NHEP participation is one way to get help, but may not be what is best for you. NHEP can offer you many services that will help you reach your goals. Please think about your personal needs and know that you can change your mind about any choice you make at any time.

How Do I Ask For The FVO?

If you want to ask for special program considerations through the FVO, you must show that you have been in an abusive relationship. Your FSS or ECS can explain what you need to provide. If you do not have proof that you have been or are in an abusive relationship, talk to your FSS or ECS. It is possible to receive the FVO by signing a sworn affidavit in place of other proof.

If you ask for the FVO, you must meet with an Assessment Counselor. This person is trained to review your situation with you in private and will talk with your case workers about your getting the FVO. Generally this meeting takes about an hour and happens within a week after you ask for the FVO. You can ask for the FVO at any time, either at your initial application for FANF financial assistance or when you meet with your ECS.

No one deserves to be abused. You have a right to feel safe and respected.

Remember: The most dangerous time for a person who's been subjected to domestic violence is when leaving that relationship. This includes when the person is preparing to leave, actually leaving, and right after they are in a new place. Make sure you have a safety plan in place. This will help protect yourself and your children.

A crisis center can help you come up with a safety plan. They also have the following services:

- **Support Groups** – where you can talk to other people going through some of the same things as you.
- **Safety Planning** –helps you figure out what your needs and options are for personal and family safety.
- **Legal Advocacy** – learn how the court system and police can help.
- **Social Services Advocacy** –helps you find your way through the different services available to you and your family.
- **24 Hour Phone Line** – you can call anytime. If you don't immediately reach someone who can help you, you can expect a call back within 7 minutes.
- **Shelter** – is available when safe housing is needed.

FREE CONFIDENTIAL SUPPORT IS AVAILABLE

NH Crisis Centers:
<u>Berlin, Colebrook, Lancaster</u> RESPONSE to Sexual & Domestic Violence: Statewide Hotline* (see below)
<u>Claremont, Newport</u> Turning Points Network: 1-800-639-3130
<u>Concord</u> Merrimack County Rape and Domestic Violence Crisis Center: Statewide Hotline* (see below)
<u>Conway, Ossipee</u> Starting Point: Services for Victims of Domestic & Sexual Violence: 1-800-336-3795
<u>Durham</u> Sexual Harassment & Rape Prevention Program (SHARPP): 1-888-271-SAFE (7233)
<u>Keene</u> Monadnock Center for Violence Prevention: 1-888-511-6287
<u>Laconia</u> New Beginnings: Statewide Hotline* (see below)
<u>Lebanon</u> WISE: 1-866-348-WISE (9437)
<u>Littleton, Woodsville</u> Support Center at Burch House: 1-800-774-0544
<u>Manchester, Derry</u> YWCA Crisis Center: 603-668-2299
<u>Nashua, Milford</u> Bridges: 603-883-3044
<u>Plymouth:</u> Voices Against Violence: 603-536-1659
<u>Portsmouth, Rochester, Salem</u> A Safe Place (domestic violence): 1-800-854-3552
<u>Portsmouth, Rochester:</u> Sexual Assault Support Services (sexual assault): 1-888-747-7070

***Statewide 24-Hour Hotline:
1-866-644-3574**

DFA Form 243
8/09
09-04

MAYBE THERE IS HELP! THE FAMILY VIOLENCE OPTION (FVO)

Does this look or feel familiar?



Provided in cooperation with the New Hampshire Department of Health & Human Services Division of Family Assistance and the NH Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence

www.aardvarc.org/dv/states/nhdv.shtml

The NHCADSV and its 14 member programs do not discriminate based on gender, age, health status (including HIV-positive), physical, mental, or emotional ability, sexual orientation, gender identity/ expression, socio-economic status, race, national origin, immigration status, or religious or political affiliation.