

# The Women's Center, A Valuable New Bedford Resource



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In light of the recent homicide of nine-month-old Ariel Eluziaro, we have to ask ourselves, what can be done to prevent such tragedies? Abuse against children is senseless and unimaginable, but so is any form of domestic abuse. Domestic violence occurs in homes across all cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds. It occurs in every neighborhood, next door, or in the apartment below us. Among law enforcement, the bulk of all police work is in response to reports of domestic disturbances. Right now, women, men, and children everywhere live in unstable and unsafe environments.

Unfortunately, domestic violence doesn't occur in a vacuum. It is learned, developed, and sustained in a vicious never-ending cycle. That being said, what really can we do?? The only choice we have is to be proactive. We can recognize and report concerns early, and react when someone is in need. We can utilize community resources and familiarize ourselves with available services. Many people don't realize that free services exist in every community to serve these issues. In New Bedford, that place is The Women's Center and they have been providing life-changing and life-saving services for nearly 40 years. Offering a range of assistance, The Women's Center provides entirely FREE services from counseling to legal advocacy and even transportation to and from

appointments for those in need. Regardless of income, employment, or socioeconomic status, anyone can receive help and support.

A quick '101' on The Women's Center so YOU can make a difference...

The Women's Center is the primary service provider in the region for victims and survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, and/or child trauma. Their mission is, "To empower and support positive choices for all and to educate and take action in the community for the prevention of oppression and violence." All services are FREE and CONFIDENTIAL. Multilingual services are also available.

### **SERVICES:**



24-Hour Hotline: (508)  
999-6636.

**Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Services:** Individual and/or group counseling for victims and survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault, crisis intervention and safety planning, immediate and confidential housing, medical advocacy, legal advocacy, and support for all related needs such as housing, employment, and victim compensation.

**Child Trauma:** Comprehensive services to youth affected by physical and/or sexual abuse and violence, provided by licensed child therapists from counseling to complete clinical assessments, diagnosis, and treatment and wellness plans.

**Residential Services:** Emergency short-term shelter, as well as confidential and temporary 90-day shelter for women and children affected by domestic violence and/or sexual assault. An additional site offers temporary shelter for women affected by domestic violence/sexual assault with mental health and substance abuse issues. TWC is also affiliated with Our Sisters Place and the L.O.F.T. Transitional Housing Program to assist individuals in securing long-term housing.

**Legal Advocacy:** In-court victims' assistance at the District and Probate Courts, assistance obtaining a Restraining Order, with on-call support available daily. Additional referrals are also provided by TWC advocates.

**Medical Advocacy:** Medical advocacy and immediate emergency room support for incidents of sexual assault and/or domestic violence. Trained staff and volunteers are available on-call to respond within one hour. Support is confidential and advocates provide referrals for counseling, health, and related services.

**Counseling:** Individual crisis and on-going group counseling for all victims and survivors, including men, women, children, and teens. Workshops and group counseling focus on a range of topics including but not limited to Self Esteem, Empowerment, Healthy Relationships, Development Disabilities, and Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault.

**Education and Community Outreach:** Providing workshops, guest speakers, and educational programs to community organizations, schools (K-college), and service providers on the topics of domestic violence, sexual assault, teen dating violence, healthy relationships, and other related topics. Community outreach particularly focuses on increasing awareness and identifying and aiding victims.

**\*\*\*Remember, all services are FREE. If you see someone who needs help, make a call or refer them to The Women's Center, at 405 County Street, New Bedford, MA 02740 and by phone at 508-996-3343. They also have a 24-Hour Hotline: (508) 999-6636**

and is multilingual.You can also donate to the Women's Center on their website.