



National Domestic Violence Awareness Month

October is National Domestic Violence Awareness Month, and as lawyers, we have special responsibility to help prevent domestic violence. A recent study found that legal services are an important factor in preventing domestic violence. Legal services included not only domestic violence protective orders, but also divorce, custody, spousal and child support.

(See, Amy Farmer and Jill Tiefenthaler, "Explaining the Recent Decline in Domestic Violence," 21 Contemporary Economic Policy 158-172 (April 2003).)

The ABA Section of Family Law works to help you help prevent family violence. We actively support ABA policies to help victims of domestic violence. At the August 2003 ABA Annual Meeting, the House of Delegates approved a policy resolution encouraging "law schools and law students to promote awareness of domestic violence through law school activities and programs." The Family Law Section was pleased to be a co-sponsor of this policy proposal. The Section also has an active Domestic Violence Committee that produces committee CLE and maintains an e-mail discussion group to help lawyers effectively represent victims of domestic violence. Interested section members are encouraged to participate and can contact the Committee Chair, Lisae C. Jordan, LLCCJJ@netzero.net for more information.

During Domestic Violence Month, please consider doing something extra to help:

- ❖ Take a pro bono or low bono case (custody, divorce, immigration, protective order are common needs)
- ❖ Offer technical assistance, such as preparing deeds or QDROs, for a domestic violence legal clinic
- ❖ Provide training to new attorneys or a law school clinic
- ❖ Be a mentor to a less experienced attorney handling a domestic violence case
- ❖ Help a domestic violence shelter or clinic with corporate issues, such as negotiating leases
- ❖ Protect a victim's privacy by helping to quash a subpoena for counseling or other records
- ❖ Produce a CLE on domestic violence for your local bar association

Together, we can help end domestic violence.