

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE DOESN'T TAKE A HOLIDAY

We are all aware that the holidays are fast approaching us. Each one of our five senses, experiences overload. Society wants us all to believe that everyone experiences a pleasurable time with family and friends. These images we receive, regardless of how we receive them, are telling our subconscious that during the Holidays, everyone is jubilant.

The holidays can be a dark, scary time for some people. Victims of domestic violence are not focused on what gifts to buy; rather how they can survive.

The stressors during the holidays include financial, social, and relational, to mention only a few. Red flags for impending danger to the domestic violence victim are hidden in the chaos of the holidays and stressors increase exponentially. These red flags may be unemployed, fear that the children may be taken away by authorities, lack of family supports, isolating, increased drug and alcohol abuse, possession of firearms, inability to resource law enforcement and court system to enforce or renew restraining orders...all combine to make the victims of domestic violence feel more unsafe and distressed. Combined with inherent feelings of low self-esteem their lives may appear hopeless. Keep in mind, during COVID-19 an increase is in upwards of 20%.

It is vital to have a safety kit in the home in case a situation arises, and may need to leave. This kit should include, clothing, emergency phone numbers, essential documentation, food, money, and a preplanned destination with transportation. This should be kept in a safe location.

If you, or someone you know is experiencing any of the red flags, please do not hesitate to call **508-755-9030**

RESTRAINING ORDERS call Gardner/Winchendon Safeplan Advocate **508-835-8664**

messenger <https://www.facebook.com/GardnerDomesticViolenceTaskForce>

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