



DV NEWS

*A Newsletter of the Domestic Violence Program
of*

**Catholic Charities
of Delaware, Otsego and Schoharie Counties**

Why would a victim of domestic violence not press charges or recant their story?

There is no one universal answer to this question. Each person and situation is different but we can explore some of the more common reasons.

In many of these situations the reason may be financial. In many abusive relationships victims not only experience physical and mental abuse but also financial. A victim may not follow through with pressing charges or recant their story because they feel it would be more harmful to themselves and their children to be without financial support than to continue to live with an abusive partner. In most cases of financial abuse the victim has no knowledge of the family's financial resources and no access to them; leaving them dependent on their abuser.

Another reason a victim may recant is fear. The wheels of justice move slowly. An abuser may have committed, and have been arrested for, a violent crime, but could be eligible for bail or even released on their own recognizance. When an arrest is made, or a victim is trying to leave the relationship, this is one of the most dangerous times for them. Although they may have received an order of protection it is not a guarantee of their safety. Many abusers will exploit this fear telling their victims that they do not care about any order of protection and threaten increased physical violence or even death.

Guilt can be another reason. Victims have been emotionally manipulated throughout the relationship and this continues even after leaving or an arrest. Their abusers will often make them feel guilty about their decision to have them arrested or to press charges. Their abuser will often portray themselves as a victim of the criminal justice system, minimizing the situation, appealing for sympathy and ultimately getting them to recant.

That emotional manipulation will also involve the victim's children. Abusers will often use this tactic, not only accusing them of trying to keep them from their children, but using the kids as proxies. Often a victim may be asked manipulative questions by their children that have been given to them by their abusive parent.

These factors, along with a tremendous uncertainty that victims and their children face in considering all the changes that lay before them if they follow through, contribute to making this type of decision. That uncertainty may include having to enter a shelter, sometimes in a different area due to limited shelter availability or safety concerns; which then could include having to enroll their children in a different school. The uncertainty continues, possibly forcing a victim to have to consider leaving a job, being separated from their support system and their regular medical providers.

It can be very easy to ask the question why a victim would not follow through with charges or recant them, but the answer to the question is much more complex and difficult to define.



Domestic Violence Program

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Phone: 518-234-3581
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24 Hour Crisis Hotline:
(518) 234-2231
Collect Calls Accepted



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NEWS! Governor Signs Domestic Violence and Firearm Bill Into Law

In May 2018 New York Governor Andrew Cuomo will sign a domestic violence and firearms bill into law. According to Cuomo, "New York is once again leading the way to prevent gun violence, and with this common sense reform, break the inextricable link between gun violence and domestic violence. This legislation builds on our gun laws -- already the strongest in the nation-- to make New York safer and stronger." The bill will require immediate removal of all firearms when a person is convicted of a misdemeanor or felony domestic violence charge. Under the current law a person convicted of a felony must surrender their guns, but misdemeanors are not covered. The full bill, including which misdemeanors will now be covered can be found at: <http://legislation.nysenate.gov/pdf/bills/2017/A10272>



Thank you to Christine Nicoella, Esq. for providing our program advocates with 3 hours of training on writing effective Family Court petitions. Her continued support of and collaboration with our program is one of the many reasons she received the "Shine the Light" award in 2017.

Schoharie County to add a Case Manager to our Crime Victim Program. The Case Manager will assist victims of all crime file for compensation benefits they are eligible for, assist with documentation, and provide accompaniment, advocacy, information and referrals.

