



# DV NEWS

*A Newsletter of the Domestic Violence Program*

*of*

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

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## **What is Financial Abuse?**

By Randy Rathka

One of the most common questions people ask when they learn a friend or loved one may be involved in an abusive relationship is “Why don’t they just leave?” The answer may be that they can’t afford to. The number one reason domestic violence survivors stay or return to an abusive relationship is that they don’t have the financial resources to break free.

Financial abuse is a tactic used by abusers to control their victims. It is much like other forms of abuse; it often begins subtly and progresses over time. Like those other forms of abuse it aims to gain power and control. Abusers control victims by preventing access to money or other financial resources. They will control how money is spent, withhold money from their victims or give them an “allowance”. Abusers will also withhold other basic living resources, medication or food to strengthen the victim’s dependence upon them and increase their control. Often abusers will prevent their victim from working, earning money or building their credit rating. In some instances abusers will even use the victim’s identity for their financial gain and ruin the victim’s credit rating in the process.



When a victim has made a decision to leave an abusive relationship, their options and resources may be limited - and if a victim of financial abuse, even less. The abuser knows that their victim has limited or no financial resources or support, strengthening their power and control over their victim. In most cases the thought of starting over with no resources to be able to provide basic necessities for themselves or their children can be overwhelming.

Domestic violence victims frequently cite income, employment and financial stability as the strongest, most immediate deterrents to leaving abusive situations. The devastation of leaving a home, income, benefits and financial security behind are scenarios that all victims of domestic violence must overcome, regardless of their education, job skills and personal earning potential.

Financial abuse is an **Invisible Weapon** that traps victims in abusive relationships.

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## **Tips for Financial Empowerment for Domestic Violence Survivors**

By Ashley Lowe, Herkimer County Community College Student Intern

- ◆ **Knowledge** is key. Knowledge will help overcome fear and help achieve economic security.
- ◆ Gain **information** about personal assets and liabilities.
- ◆ Learn the value **of competence, confidence, and connections**.
- ◆ **Seek help** from trusted professionals, trusted websites. Find sources of support.
- ◆ **Research** private and public resources which may help provide support free or low cost.
- ◆ Immediately **start saving money**. Start seeking financial independence.
- ◆ Financial planning is important. **Build budget** around current spending.
- ◆ **Monitor and adjust budget** regularly. **Set small goals** and begin working toward them.
- ◆ **Confront credit and debt**. Set realistic goals for paying debt while saving.



### Domestic Violence Program

489 West Main Street  
Cobleskill, NY 12043

Phone: 518-234-3581  
Fax: 518-234-8423

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



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## **Coming January 2018!!**

### **Financial Empowerment Classes**

Using the “Moving Ahead Through Financial Management” curriculum through the Allstate Foundation Purple Purse campaign, the Domestic Violence Program of Schoharie County will be offering financial empowerment classes. The curriculum is laid out in 5 modules and covers the basics of financial abuse, budgeting and saving, understanding and improving credit, and long term saving and investments. All participants will receive a binder with the 5-module workbook, and at the completion of the classes they will receive a certificate and incentive gifts from partner businesses. Anyone wanting more information can call 518-234-3581 and ask to speak with someone from the Domestic Violence Program.

# GET EMPOWERED!

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