Erica found safety and justice, and it’s all because you made a generous donation to CCS. Erica called CCS and asked one of our Staff Attorneys to help her secure a restraining order against a sexual assailant who had assaulted her a few years ago. The perpetrator contacted her recently through social media, and Erica not only feared for her life, she was re-living the assault as a result of being cyber-stalked by the assailant. Erica did not have to face her assailant alone in court. That CCS Staff Attorney represented her at the hearing after thoroughly preparing exhibits and arguments to support Erica’s claims. The Staff Attorney used testimony from a previous court hearing to give the judge all the background and context they needed to support the restraining order request. (This is a strategy virtually no client on their own would have accomplished.) As a result, the restraining order was granted. Erica has a new-found level of comfort and security knowing that she can call law enforcement anytime should the assailant violate the court order.

**Erica has given permission to share this information in our newsletter.**

Leaving an abuser and filing a protective order are two of the most effective ways to stop domestic violence. With the support of donors like you, CCS has provided legal services for victims of domestic violence since 1983, when we opened one of California’s first temporary restraining order clinics for “battered women.” Our legal team of seven attorneys provides victim-centered services to domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking survivors who cannot otherwise afford representation. Services include protection order proceedings, immigration, income maintenance, employment, education, housing matters, and family law.

Survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking who access our services have CCS professional expertise and support they need to make informed legal choices, take specific actions to help protect themselves and their dependents from harm, and protect their personal rights. Access to our legal team is at no cost to survivors.
legal services is especially critical for victims who are immigrants, refugees, or asylum-seekers who may have limited English proficiency. Isolation due to an unfamiliar dominant culture, fear of deportation or loss of resident status, and culturally prescribed roles can all serve as significant obstacles in addressing the abuse they experience.

Working as a team with our Staff Attorneys are CCS Advocates, whose support is also centered on the needs of survivors. Their services include case coordination, comprehensive safety planning, lethality risk assessment, referral to CCS’ trauma-informed counseling services, referral to shelter services, referral to other community resources, and accompaniment to court, detective interviews, or forensic examinations.

Because of our expertise, CCS was selected by the San Diego County District Attorney’s Office to coordinate and facilitate the Central, East, and North Domestic Violence High Risk Teams. High Risk Team (HRT) is a national collaborative model that includes representatives from local law enforcement agencies, prosecutors, probation, parole, and community-based victim service organizations. HRTs meet regularly to identify high lethality risk cases and collaborate to increase victim safety, however possible.

Because of our expertise, CCS was selected by the San Diego County District Attorney’s Office to coordinate and facilitate the Central, East, and North Domestic Violence High Risk Teams. High Risk Team (HRT) is a national collaborative model that includes representatives from local law enforcement agencies, prosecutors, probation, parole, and community-based victim service organizations. HRTs meet regularly to identify high lethality risk cases and collaborate to increase victim safety, however possible.

The 18th Annual Tea & Tonic Event held in April during Sexual Assault Awareness Month was a record-breaking success, with 600 guests in attendance, and over $250,000 raised! Proceeds of this signature event benefits CCS’ full range of domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking intervention and prevention programs. They include emergency response teams, a 24-hour hotline, short-term and long-term emergency shelters, victim advocacy, case management, court accompaniment, counseling, legal services, and prevention education.

Big and heartfelt thanks to our sponsors, our co-chairs Jessica Pride and Samantha Atlas, volunteers, and our many supporters who gave so generously at the event!
“If good men and women do nothing, then evil will prevail. Center for Community Solutions is doing something. The fact that you are here today means you are doing something. Be encouraged, because YOU are that change. I am proud to be here today. Thank you for what you are doing. There are a lot of survivors in this room and a lot of courageous women. YOUR struggle is not in vain - because YOU changed me.”

Terry Crews, Keynote Speaker at Tea & Tonic 2017
HOW CAN YOU HELP SOMEONE WHO IS A SURVIVOR OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE OR SEXUAL ASSAULT?
This article is adapted from NOMORE.org

Knowing what to say to someone who may be experiencing domestic violence or sexual assault can be overwhelming and downright scary. Though it may be tough, you can still be of some help.

The most important thing to remember is that you don’t need to be an expert — you need to be a friend.

Here are ways for you to help:

1. LISTEN WITHOUT JUDGEMENT

Remember, if someone you know discloses that they are currently experiencing abuse or have been abused or sexually assaulted in the past, this could be the first time they’re telling anyone. Listening without judgment or blame and letting them know they’re not alone can make a huge difference.

Tip: Sometimes you don’t even need words (or at least not many words), to be there for someone. Many people share that just being able to tell their story to someone else lessens the weight of isolation, secrecy and self-blame.

2. LET THEM KNOW THAT YOU BELIEVE THEM

By letting a victim/survivor know that you believe them, you can change that person’s life. A victim/survivor may feel like what happened to them is their fault.

Tip: No one deserves abuse or violence. Statements or questions that focus on what a victim did or didn’t do – unintentionally or not – signals that the survivor is responsible. The only person to blame for violence and abuse is the perpetrator.

3. ASK WHAT MORE YOU CAN DO TO HELP

Ask what more you can do to help and know where to point someone to for more help. You can contact us at CCS for free, confidential help.

4. SUPPORT THEIR DECISIONS

Tip: This point can be very difficult. It can be quite tempting to try to “fix” things or solve the problem immediately. By listening, allowing a survivor to make decisions for themself and assuring them that their decisions are supported, you can make a huge impact on that survivor’s life.

5. TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF TOO. MAKE SURE YOU SEEK SUPPORT AND HELP IF YOU ARE FEELING OVERWHELMED.

Domestic violence and sexual assault can be extremely difficult and painful experiences for the families and friends of victims/survivors. Common feelings of those supporting victims/survivors include helplessness, frustration, anger, and guilt. It can be helpful to talk with someone. Confidential support is available.

IF YOU OR SOMEONE YOU KNOW NEED SUPPORT, PLEASE CONTACT OUR CONFIDENTIAL 24-HOUR CRISIS HOTLINE: 1-888-385-4657