



Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence

**For Immediate Release  
September 29, 2021**

**Member Organizations**

**The Umbrella Center for  
Domestic Violence Services**  
Ansonia, CT

**The Center for Family Justice**  
Bridgeport, CT

**Women's Center**  
Danbury, CT

**Domestic Violence Program  
United Services**  
Dayville, CT

**The Network**  
Enfield, CT

**Domestic Abuse Services  
Greenwich YWCA**  
Greenwich, CT

**Interval House**  
Hartford, CT

**Chrysalis Domestic Violence  
Services**  
Meriden, CT

**New Horizons**  
Middletown, CT

**Prudence Crandall Center**  
New Britain, CT

**The Umbrella Center for  
Domestic Violence Services**  
New Haven, CT

**Safe Futures**  
New London, CT

**Domestic Violence Crisis Center**  
Norwalk, CT

**Women's Support Services**  
Sharon, CT

**Domestic Violence Crisis Center**  
Stamford, CT

**Susan B. Anthony Project**  
Torrington, CT

**Safe Haven**  
Waterbury, CT

**Domestic Violence Program  
United Services**  
Willimantic, CT

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**New Connecticut Restraining Order Law Goes Into Effect 10/1**  
*-Domestic Violence Awareness Months kicks off with increased options for survivors-*

**Glastonbury, CT** – Each year, advocates, survivors, and supporters recognize October as Domestic Violence Awareness Month. It serves as an important opportunity to have a coordinated community conversation about domestic violence and raise awareness about the availability of confidential, safe and free services to those in need. Here in Connecticut, a new law will also go into effect, providing victims and survivors with increased options to be safer.

Beginning on October 1st, survivors will have the option to apply for a family violence restraining order if they are experiencing coercive control. Signed into law earlier this year by Governor Lamont, this is a critical piece of Public Act 21-78 designed to address the real experiences of survivors with all forms of domestic violence, not just physical abuse. Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence (CCADV) and our 18 member organizations, which led successful passage of the law, will be rolling out training and technical assistance options for advocates, survivors and community partners this fall.

"By expanding the definition of family violence in Connecticut's restraining order statute to address coercive control, we'll be able to ensure court-ordered relief for the many non-physical tactics abusers use to gain and maintain control over their victims," said Meghan Scanlon, President & CEO, Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence (CCADV). "As we come to better understand the trauma and paralyzing fear that emotionally and psychologically abusive actions can have on victims, it is essential that our state shift its response and update legal options to reflect that understanding. That's what we've done with this new law."

Coercive control entails power and control over the victim through actions such as isolation, humiliation, intimidation, and domination. It does not relate to a single incident but is a purposeful pattern of behavior that takes place over a period of time in order to make the victim dependent on the abuser. An abuser may exert coercive control by isolating the victim from family or friends, hiding family assets, restricting access to money or providing an "allowance", damaging the victim's property, or threatening to harm the victim's children or pets. These are all acts of coercive control that leave victims scared and trapped and are the very behaviors from which our laws must be designed to protect.

"The new law provides survivors with enhanced tools and options through Connecticut's family court system intended to increase their safety and that of their children," said Meredith Gold, Director, YWCA Greenwich Domestic Abuse Services. "Survivors and their children often struggle through the family court process, which can be overwhelming and used by their abuser to further control and harass them. While we caution that Public Act 21-78 won't fix every problem within the system, we believe it's a step in the right direction to help survivors be safer."

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Public Act 21-78 also establishes a grant program to provide low-income survivors with access to legal assistance when making an application for a restraining order in five court locations in Connecticut (Bridgeport, Hartford, New Haven, Stamford and Waterbury). This is a critical juncture in the process for victims. Having the support of a lawyer to assist the victim with clearly stating the facts when making the application can have a meaningful impact on the success of their application and overall safety. The legislation also incorporates the new definition of coercive control into the "best interest" factors traditionally considered by the court when determining custody, ensuring that these decisions are grounded in the physical and emotional safety of the child.

Confidential, safe, free and voluntary domestic violence services are available statewide, 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. Certified domestic violence advocates at Safe Connect, Connecticut's domestic violence resource hub, can be reached via call or text at (888) 774-2900 or live chat and email at [www.CTSafeConnect.org](http://www.CTSafeConnect.org). Advocates can assess a victim's risk, guide them through potential safety options and resources, make a safe connection to one of CCADV's 18 member organizations for ongoing, local support, or just listen. To view local Domestic Violence Awareness Month events happening throughout the state, visit <http://www.ctcadv.org/training-events/memberevents/>.

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*Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence, Inc. is the state's leading voice for victims of domestic violence and those organizations that serve them. We are a membership organization of the state's 18 domestic violence organizations. Help is available to victims 24 hours a day, 7 days a week by visiting [www.CTSafeConnect.org](http://www.CTSafeConnect.org) or by texting/calling (888) 774-2900. For more information about CCADV, please visit [www.ctcadv.org](http://www.ctcadv.org).*