

# Domestic Violence and the Holiday Season

By Dr. Teresa Albizu,  
CEO of SafeSpace



To many people, the holiday season is the happiest time of year.

Most years, we look forward to spending time with family and friends, and feel enthusiastic about celebrations.

However, even in normal years, the holidays can be a dark and scary time for victims of domestic violence.

Unrealistic expectations combined with financial pressures and increased alcohol consumption can raise stress levels, which often contribute to incidents of intimate partner violence.

Every day, four women in the U.S. die as a result of domestic abuse and the stress and expectations of the holidays often make things worse.

Add the additional impact of COVID-19 this year and you've got a disaster waiting to happen.

Domestic violence rose 15-20 percent on the Treasure Coast during each of the first three months of the pandemic.

Being sequestered at home means those affected by intimate partner violence can't avoid their abusers.

They're not interacting with people who would

see signs of abuse and provide much needed support.

Anyone in a domestic violence situation should have a safety kit should it be necessary to exit a dangerous situation quickly.

This kit should be hidden in a safe place, easily accessible, and include things like emergency phone numbers, clothing for adults and children, cash, extra sets of car keys and house keys, and medication and/or prescriptions.

In addition, store copies of birth certificates, driver's license and other important documents in a safe place.

If you suspect that a loved one is in a domestic abuse situation, remember that violence is never the victim's fault.

Leaving or escaping can be difficult. When speaking to a friend or loved one whom you suspect is a victim, never be accusatory or critical, and instead share your unconditional support and love, offering resources that may be helpful.

These could include local police phone numbers and **SafeSpace's hotline number: 772-288-2399.**

Remember that anyone can become a victim of abuse or violence (physical, emotional, verbal, financial, academic, social, etc.).

SafeSpace is committed to helping victims become survivors and thrivers – at any time, including during the holidays. We are here to help 24/7, every day of the year. *Our work never stops, our work never ends.*

For these reasons and more, SafeSpace needs your support more than ever.

Your contribution will ensure our programs will continue to be in place for victims of domestic violence in the tri-county area.

Your gift of \$500 provides one week of safety for a family in our emergency shelter. A \$1,000 donation buys food for a family's typical eight-week stay.

Depending on a victim's situation, they may need our emergency shelter, our injunction for protection legal services, or our comprehensive outreach programs for both adults and children.

Too often, victims of domestic violence suffer in silence. That's why we provide training for healthcare workers, educators and childcare providers: typically, they are the first people to notice the telltale signs.

Contributions make this important training possible and also support a range of educational programs for school-age children to encourage non-violent living.

Donations to SafeSpace make a significant difference in the lives of those whom we serve. Please consider becoming a monthly donor and supporting our programs year-round.

We hope we can count on your support. *Together, we are saving lives!* Visit [www.safespacefl.org](http://www.safespacefl.org)