



Between Friends

What is your mission? Our objective is to break the cycle of domestic violence & build a community free of abuse.

What is your history? Between Friends was founded, in 1986, by volunteers from the National Council for Jewish Women & the North Shore Junior League of Evanston as a small grant-making body dedicated to raising funds for local domestic violence programs. The disparity between the growing numbers of domestic violence victims needing help & the limited programs available to assist them prompted us to expand our efforts, in 1991, to include direct crisis intervention services for individuals & families.

What type services do you provide? Today, our comprehensive programs & services include a toll-free Crisis Line (800-603-HELP), holistic counseling in English, Spanish, French, & Arabic for survivors & their children, court advocacy in English & Spanish, & prevention/ education efforts (including healthcare education) & the largest/ most comprehensive teen dating violence prevention program in Illinois, Relationship Education: A Choice for Hope (REACH). Between Friends programs are offered at no cost.

How many victims and/ or perpetrators did you serve last year? We served nearly 10,000 survivors & their children, youth & community members.

How has your organization changed over the years? We have significantly expanded our programming & services. Recently, we began monthly legal clinics & offer free or reduced-cost legal representation for some clients. Since 2011, our REACH team has added five new staff & increased dramatically the number of students & parents impacted annually. Recently, we piloted a counseling program for teens experiencing dating violence at Simpson Academy. It is our hope to offer this service to other schools.

If you could give one piece of advice to a victim, what would it be? Know that the abuse is not your fault & you deserve to be safe, healthy, & happy. One of the first steps to leaving a violent relationship is making a safety plan. Call our hotline at 800-603-HELP to find shelter; determine the safest time to leave & practice leaving safely; keep any evidence of abuse; begin saving money & open a savings account in your name; get a PO Box for your personal mail; consider an Order of Protection; pack a bag with emergency supplies & store it in a safe place.

If you could give one piece of advice to a family member or friend who suspects a loved one is being abused, what would it be? Educate yourself about the dynamics of domestic violence & approach her/ him in a sensitive, empathetic way. Listen & believe what they tell you & focus on their thoughts & needs—not the abuser. Be supportive. It is empowering to know that someone believes in their ability to find solutions to a problem. Refer him/ her to Between Friends for free, confidential services.

How does someone reach you? Contact us at 773-274-5232 or info@betweenfriendschicago.org.