

Violence Against Men in New Hampshire

A report from the New Hampshire Coalition Against Domestic & Sexual Violence

Every person deserves to live a life free of sexual and physical violence, but the results of the first ever New Hampshire Violence Against Men Survey reveal that is not the reality for thousands of men in our state. Nearly three of four men have been sexually or physically assaulted, a rate that exceeds the last available national average. The majority of sexual violence reported by men in the survey occurred before the victim's 18th birthday; the majority of physical assaults occurred before age 25.

The survey, based on telephone interviews with 1,012 randomly selected men, found that:

- One in 20 New Hampshire men reported being sexually assaulted; over two thirds (68%) of those assaults occurred before the victim's 18th birthday.
- Nearly three quarters of men (71%) reported experiencing a physical assault.
- Nearly one in four men (24%) reported being physically assaulted by an intimate partner.

These findings are consistent with the 2006 New Hampshire Violence Against Women Survey, which found that more than half of all women in our state have been sexually and/or physically assaulted. As with men, women reported that sexual assaults were primarily perpetrated against them in their youth, with 81% of assaults reported in the survey having occurred before age 24.

The high rate of violence against boys and young men is underscored by the fact that even though Violence Against Men

Survey respondents ranged from 18 years old to older than 96, and were asked to report only on the most recent assault, most reported incidents from their childhood. Additional assaults could have occurred at even younger ages.

The high prevalence of violence against men and boys in New Hampshire has costs and consequences that affect the well-being of our communities. Violence against youth, in particular, has long term consequences for health and well being. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention-funded Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study has shown that adverse childhood experiences, including physical and sexual abuse, increase the victim's risk for physical and mental health difficulties, as well as substance abuse problems. The ACE Study findings suggest that childhood abuse is a major risk factor for the leading causes of illness and death, as well as poor quality of life, in the United States.

Fortunately, New Hampshire has a comprehensive network of local programs that provide services to victims of domestic and sexual violence, and an increasing number of men are using those services in recent years. The New Hampshire Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence also has a strong history of collaboration with the criminal justice system, the courts, state agencies and other non-profits to improve societal and systemic responses to victims. But services, particularly mental health services, for youth are lacking or non-existent in parts of New Hampshire. New Hampshire cannot ignore the high rates of sexual and physical violence against boys and men, nor America's culture of violence. Specific recommendations to address violence against males are included later in this report.

The Survey

A collaborative project of the University of New Hampshire, the New Hampshire Division of Public Health Services, and the New Hampshire Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence (NHCADSV), this survey of violence against men in our state found rates of violence that were higher than the last available national average. Conducted in October and November of 2007, the survey of adult men used questions from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and from the National Institute of Justice 1996 National Violence Against Women Survey, which also included a survey of men. The National Violence Against Women Survey is the most recent national data available on the prevalence of sexual assault and intimate partner violence.

It is important to note that this survey measured lifetime prevalence of assaults and did not ask where the assaults occurred. So while New Hampshire has a higher percentage of men currently living in the state who have been assaulted than were found in the national survey, it cannot be concluded that the assaults occurred in New Hampshire.

SEXUAL ASSAULT:

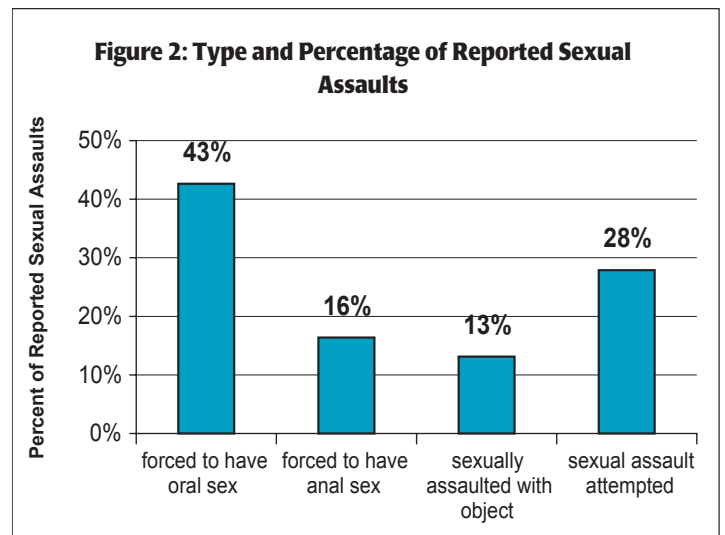
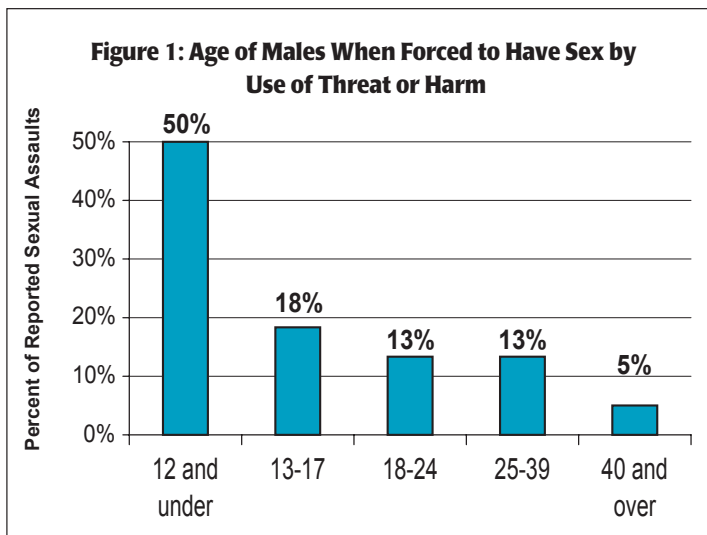
The estimated number of men who have been sexually assaulted could fill the Verizon Wireless Arena more than twice.

The New Hampshire Violence Against Men Survey found that 4.9% of men have been sexually assaulted, including 3.7% of all respondents whose sexual assaults included penetration. This represents approximately 25,000 New Hampshire men who have been sexually assaulted, more than twice as many as it would take to fill the Verizon Wireless Arena in Manchester. These sexual assault rates are higher than those found in the last national survey, in which 3% of men reported having been sexually assaulted with 2.1% reporting being penetrated.

Sexual assault against males is primarily a crime against boys.

Young males are much more likely to be sexually assaulted than are adults. Sixty-eight percent of the most recent sexual assaults committed against men in New Hampshire occurred before the victim was 18. Fifty percent of reported assaults occurred when the victim was age 12 or younger; another 18% occurred between ages 13 and 17. Again, these figures are conservative, since only the most recent assaults were reported (Figure 1).

The sexual assaults reported by survey respondents most frequently involved being forced to engage in oral sex (Figure 2).



PHYSICAL ASSAULT:

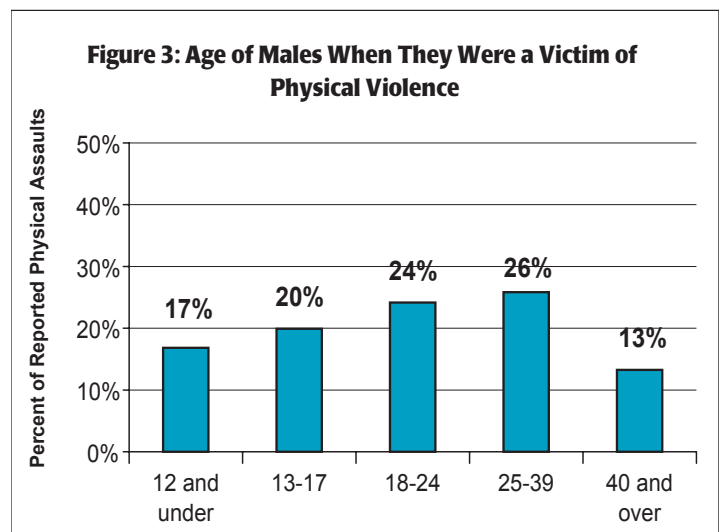
The estimated number of men who have been physically assaulted, standing shoulder to shoulder, would cover the state from Berlin to Manchester.

As with the national survey, the majority of men have experienced some type of physical assault in their lifetime. The New Hampshire survey found that 71% of men reported having been assaulted, which represents an estimated 351,769 men. In the national survey, 66.4% of men reported being physically assaulted.

Physical violence against men affects all age groups, but young men and boys are at greatest risk.

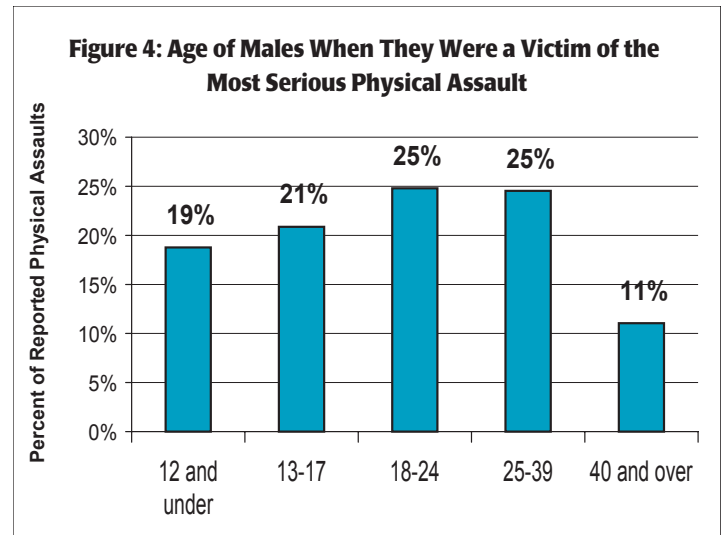
As with sexual violence, there is a higher prevalence of physical assault against boys and young men in New Hampshire than was found in the national survey. Figure 3 shows:

- 17% of reported physical assaults occurred before the respondent was age 13.
- 37% of reported physical assaults occurred before the respondent was age 18.
- 61% of reported physical assaults occurred before the respondent was age 25.



Again, these numbers represent only the most recent physical assault; young men who experienced assault could have also been assaulted as children.

The New Hampshire survey also asked men at what age the most serious physical assault occurred. A serious assault is defined as being kicked, attempted choking or drowning, hit with an object, beat up, threatened with a knife or weapon other than a gun, threatened with a gun, use of a knife or weapon other than a gun, and use of a gun. Responses followed the same pattern with 65% of assaults occurring before the victims' 25th birthdays (Figure 4).

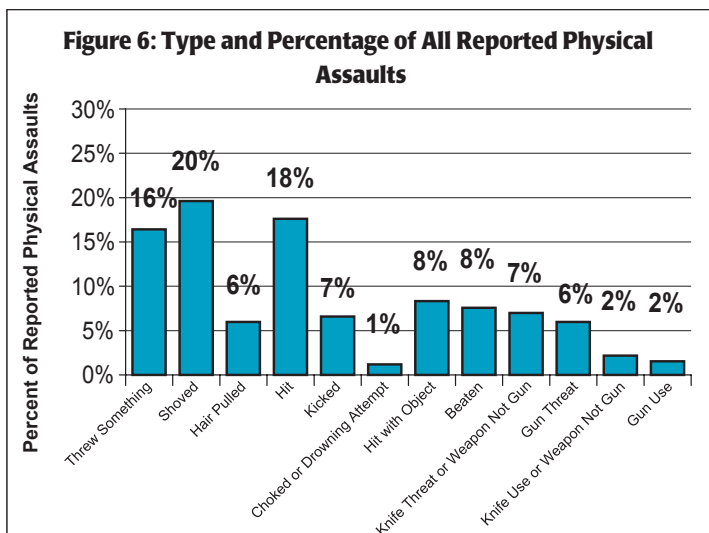
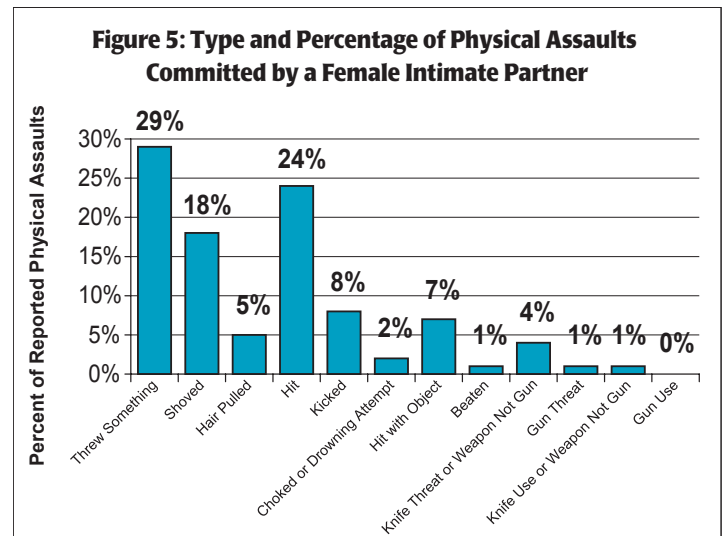


INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE:

The estimated number of men who have been physically assaulted by an intimate partner is greater than the population of Manchester, New Hampshire's largest city.

Twenty-four percent of men in the survey reported having been physically assaulted by an intimate partner, defined as a current spouse, ex-spouse, live-in partner or someone the victim was dating. Based on the survey it is estimated that at least 118,908 men in New Hampshire have been physically assaulted by an intimate partner. This number is greater than the population of Manchester by 9,500. Because most survey respondents were heterosexuals, the primary perpetrators of intimate partner violence against men were women. In the New Hampshire Violence Against Women Survey, 33.4% of women reported they had been the victim of an assault by an intimate partner.

The types of assaults by intimate partners reported by men in the survey show that intimate partner assaults are more likely to be less serious types of assault. However, it is important to acknowledge that some men do experience severe forms of violence from intimate partners (Figure 5).



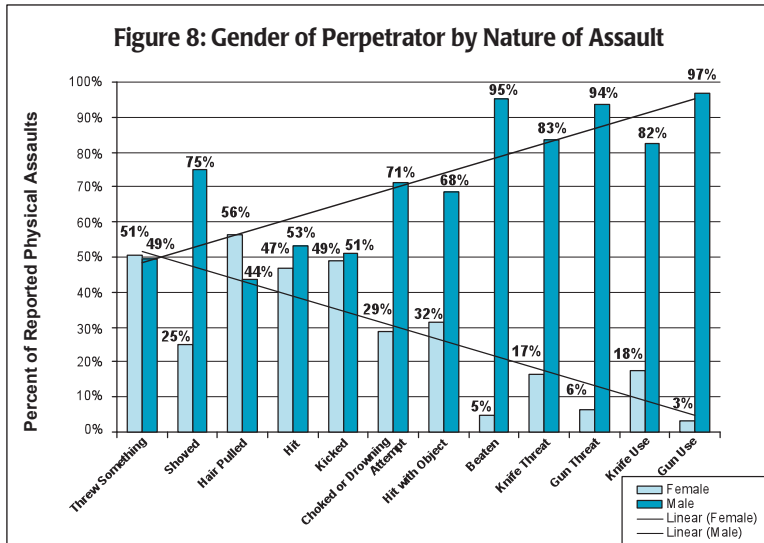
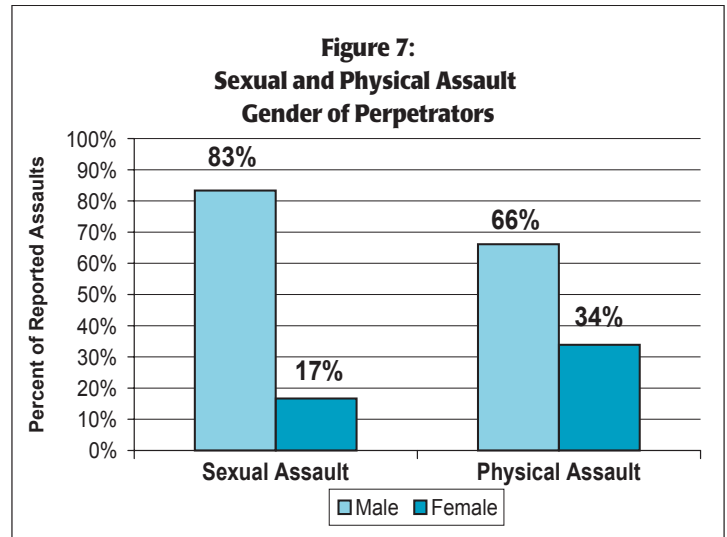
Type and Percentage of All Reported Physical Assaults:

In order to fully understand violence against men and boys in New Hampshire, it is important to know the types of assaults that men report having experienced. Based on the previously reported age of males, the majority of the assaults occurred before the victim was 25 (Figure 6).

PERPETRATORS OF PHYSICAL AND SEXUAL ASSAULT:

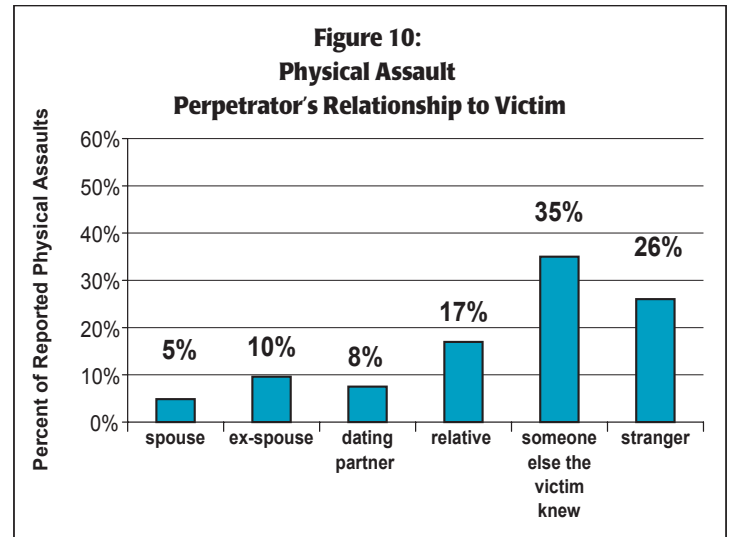
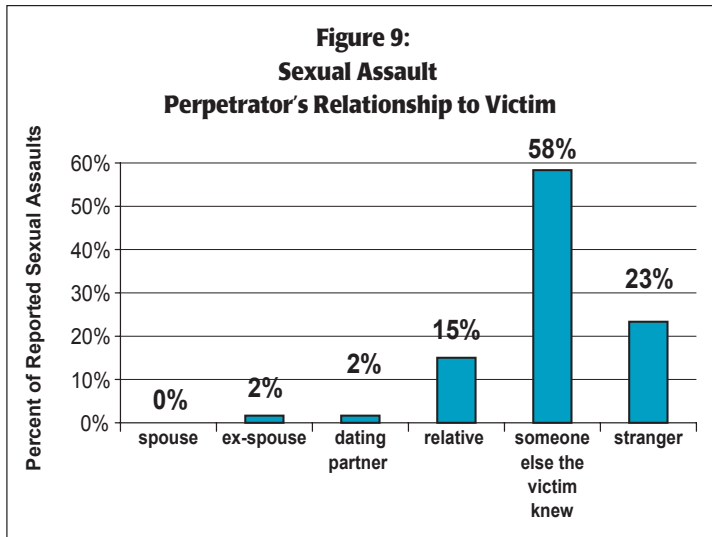
Two thirds of the perpetrators of physical assaults against men were other men; women perpetrated one third of the physical assaults.

Although women comprise most of the perpetrators of intimate partner assaults, overall, men are much more likely to be sexually or physically assaulted by another man (Figure 7).



As assaults against men become more serious and involve weapons, the percentage of male perpetrators increases (Figure 8). Survey respondents reported that men perpetrated 79% of the most serious physical assaults, with women perpetrating 21%.

The perpetrator is almost always someone the victim knows:



Consistent with previous research, including the NH Violence Against Women Survey, the vast majority of perpetrators of either sexual or physical violence was someone the victim knew (Figures 9, 10).

Conclusion:

The alarming number of men in New Hampshire who have experienced sexual and physical assault underscores the need for effective violence prevention, for information and support for victims, including treatment specifically for young victims, and to raise awareness of the prevalence and consequences of sexual and physical assault.

Recommendations:

Fund Primary Prevention Programs: Violence prevention, especially targeting youth, is a priority for the NHCADSV and its member programs, yet there is extremely limited financial support for these efforts. The member programs of NHCADSV are engaged in a process to develop evidence based, primary prevention programs for sexual assault through our Prevention Education Task Force and through the development of a state sexual violence prevention plan. Prevention Innovations at the University of New Hampshire has developed a bystander education program and social marketing campaign that has been shown to increase the likelihood that bystanders will intervene in situations of sexual assault and intimate partner violence on campus. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) fund primary prevention programs in all states and territories. While these efforts are important, they are focused on prevention of domestic violence and sexual assault. The results of the NH Violence Against Men Survey make it clear that most violence against men and boys is not intimate partner violence or sexual assault. The CDC's National Center for Injury Prevention and Control has outlined five categories for successful development of youth violence prevention: monitoring and researching the problem, developing and evaluating prevention strategies, supporting and enhancing prevention programs, providing prevention resources, and encouraging research and development. New Hampshire communities could contribute to this effort by committing to the development of the resources necessary to test youth violence prevention programs.

Restore Funding for Victim Services in NH: Given the findings in both the NH violence surveys that most victims were assaulted in their youth, support for programs that address victimization of children is needed to prevent the health, mental health and substance abuse problems that arise from trauma experienced during youth. The New Hampshire Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence is a comprehensive network of 14 programs that provide services to victims of sexual and domestic violence. Free, confidential services for victims include 24 hours a day, seven days a week hotlines, emergency shelter, crisis intervention, assistance with obtaining domestic violence restraining orders, accompaniment for rape victims during forensic sexual assault exams, and support groups. Recent federal funding cuts have threatened the stability of many of these programs at a time when they are serving more victims who have more and more complex needs. In 2007, more male victims of physical and sexual violence and stalking received services from NHCADSV member programs than in any previous year. Expanding current state funding levels and restoring and increasing federal funding are critical to maintaining basic services.

Support Outreach and Awareness Activities: In order to be served by the NHCADSV's 14 member programs, victims need to know about the services. The NH Violence Against Men Survey found that only half of survey respondents knew how to contact their local crisis center for help regarding sexual assault or intimate partner violence. While it is encouraging that half of men know where to get assistance, or where to refer victims, it is important that everyone know about local services for victims. It remains critical that outreach and awareness programs be continued so that victims know where to get help. Also, when asked how much of a problem physical violence by an intimate partner is in their communities, more than 84% of men in the survey thought it was somewhat or very much a problem. Only 73% thought sexual violence was somewhat or very much a problem. These responses indicate a need to continue social marketing messages about the prevalence of violence, with a particular emphasis on sexual violence.

Promote Cultural Attitudes That Support Non-Violent Conflict Resolution: The combined results of the NH violence surveys confirm that more than half of women and men experience sexual or physical violence in their lifetime. Only 31% of men and 42% of women reported no history of abuse. A strong body of research confirms that child abuse leads to numerous negative effects in adulthood. Trauma victims are more likely to have poor health or chronic health conditions, more likely to have mental health problems, and far more likely to be addicted to alcohol or other drugs. As a society, we need to promote cultural attitudes from the government in all its actions to individuals relating to each other one-on-one that condemn the use of violence and that provide support and justice for anyone suffering as the result of victimization.

Research Design

The NH Violence Against Men Survey was a survey of randomly selected adult males in the state of New Hampshire, using Random Digit Dialing. The random sample used in the NH Violence Against Men Survey was purchased from Scientific Telephones Samples. Interviews were conducted with 1,012 randomly selected adult males in the state. The interviews were conducted by professional interviewers between October 26 and November 20, 2007. The study was funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the NH Division of Public Health Services, NHCADSV and the University of New Hampshire Colleges of Liberal Arts and Health and Human Services. Further information regarding the research design can be obtained by contacting NHCADSV.

NH Violence Against Men Survey Committee:

For further information about the NH Violence Against Men Survey or this report contact NHCADSV at 224-8893.

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NHCADSV Crisis Centers and Contact Information:

Response to Sexual and Domestic Violence

(Berlin, Colebrook, Lancaster)
*office number (603) 752-5679

Turning Points Network

(Claremont, Newport)
*office number (603) 543-0155

Rape and Domestic Violence Crisis Center

(Concord)
*office number (603) 225-7376

Starting Point

(Conway, Ossipee)
*office number (603) 356-7993

Sexual Harassment and Rape Prevention Program

(SHARPP)
(UNH, Durham)
*office number (603) 862-3494

Monadnock Center for Violence Prevention

(Keene, Jaffrey, Peterborough)
*office number (603) 352-3782

New Beginnings

(Laconia and all of Belknap County)
*office number (603) 528-6511

WISE (Lebanon)

*office number (603) 448-5922

The Support Center at Burch House

(Littleton, Woodsville)
*office number (603) 444-0624

YWCA Crisis Service

(Manchester, Derry)
*office number (603) 625-5785

Bridges: Domestic and Sexual Violence Support

(Nashua, Milford)
*office number (603) 889-0858

Voices Against Violence

(Plymouth)
*office number (603) 536-5999

A Safe Place

(Portsmouth, Rochester, Salem)
*office number (603) 436-4619

Sexual Assault Support Services

(Portsmouth, Rochester)
*office number (603) 436-4107

Statewide Hotlines:

Sexual Assault: 1-800-277-5570

Domestic Violence: 1-866-644-3574