

## Dealing with domestic violence Program discusses legal issues faced by victims

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COEUR d'ALENE – The terror of **domestic violence** is often multiplied by confusion and fear of the very system designed to protect crime victims – the legal system. But, it doesn't have to be that way, according to a panel of experts, professionals and advocates, who presented "**DomesticViolence**: Successfully navigating the legal system." The seminar, held Wednesday, was the second in a series of presentations being hosted by the Human Rights Education Institute to educate and create awareness of **domestic violence** issues. Karin von Krenner, one of the keynote speakers, is a legal advocate for the rights of women and children victimized by **domestic** abuse. "Imagine it's the worst moment of your life and you have to go running out into the night and you have nothing but the clothes on your back and your children," von Krenner said.

"These women have basically lost control of their lives, not because they consciously chose to, but because it was forcibly taken from them." Krenner said women in that situation are faced **with** the issues of preparing a legal defense to protect themselves from more abuse and to convince the legal system that their children are best protected if they are able to retain custody of them.

"We have to teach women how to collect documentation of everything that's happened to them so they can win that case, based on fact, not terror." Krenner and other panel members, including Camie Wereley, Women's Center advocate and volunteer coordinator, and Bridget Eisman, Crime Victim Advocate for the Post Falls Police Department, discussed some of the confusion and frustration faced by crime victims seeking help for **domestic violence**.

"Sometimes there is a lot of confusion about the different kinds of stay-away orders," Wereley said. She said victims aren't sure whether to file a civil protection order, a no contact order or a restraining order. Krenner also talked about the impact **domestic violence** has on children and how it always translates into child abuse, often emotional and mental abuse.

"A child watching their mother get beaten up is emotionally abused," von Krenner said. She also said women victims of **domestic** abuse are faced **with** both social and legal prejudice because often people wonder how a woman could stay in an abusive, violent situation. They do it to survive, according to von Krenner. She said the public needs to be educated to understand that. Information: [www.hrei.org](http://www.hrei.org) For help: Women's Center Crisis Line 664-9303

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