



## **COMMUNITY RESPONSIBILITY 11 -- GETTING HELP WITH PERSONAL AND FAMILY PROBLEMS**

SDPD Crime Prevention  
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### **PREFACE**

The SDPD is committed to working in a problem-solving partnership with individuals, community groups, and businesses, as well as with schools, hospitals, religious groups, private organizations, and other government agencies to fight crime and improve the quality of life for the people of San Diego. Problem solving is a key component in the Department's philosophy of Neighborhood Policing, which focuses on community crime and disorder problems and recognizes the need for close relationships between the police and other elements in the City to identify and solve problems. However, Neighborhood Policing cannot succeed on the efforts of the police alone. All elements of the City have responsibilities to fulfill.

The SDPD has defined 12 community responsibilities for making Neighborhood Policing work in San Diego. They are:

1. Voicing concerns about disorder problems
2. Employing crime prevention measures
3. Knowing about crime and disorder in your community
4. Addressing and solving certain community problems
5. Volunteering services to police and other community groups
6. Commenting on SDPD personnel performance in Neighborhood Policing
7. Reporting crimes and suspicious activities
8. Reporting suspicious person, activities, vehicles, etc. to prevent terrorism
9. Reporting other problems and incidents
10. Helping to convict and punish criminals
11. Getting help with personal and family problems
12. Exercising parental authority

The first six are discussed in one paper. The last six, including this one, are discussed in separate papers. They are published as part of the SDPD's continuing efforts to promote Neighborhood Policing. They provide information to help individuals, community groups, businesses, property owners, and others fulfill their responsibilities. All can be opened on the Community Resources and Responsibilities page of the SDPD website at [www.sandiego.gov/police/services/prevention/community](http://www.sandiego.gov/police/services/prevention/community).

Individuals with personal or family problems need to get help before problems get out of hand and cause further difficulties. Three problems that are most prevalent in society are substance abuse, domestic violence, and mental health. Some resources that provide referrals and help with these and other problems are suggested below. Also suggested are ways to get help if you are involved in a conflict or have been a victim or witness to a crime.

## **ALCOHOL AND DRUG ABUSE**

Individuals needing help with alcohol and drug abuse problems should call the County Health and Human Services Agency's Behavioral Health Services toll-free hotline at **(888) 724-7240** to get a list of organizations in their area that have treatment programs. Free material on the effects, prevention, and treatment of alcohol and drug abuse can be obtained by calling the National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information at **(800) 729-6686** or searching the Internet website of the Office of National Drug Control Policy at **www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov**.

## **DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

San Diego County, in partnership with the Center for Community Solutions, now has a 24/7 Domestic Violence Hotline that provides crisis counseling, safety planning, referrals to various service agencies, and information on shelter bed availability, restraining orders and other legal aid, etc. The toll-free number is **(888) 385-4657**. Persons with existing domestic violence problems or cases should call the San Diego Family Justice Center's Domestic Violence Info Line at **(619) 533-6000** for assistance. That line is staffed Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

You should call for help if your partner exhibits any of the following behaviors.

- Tells you that you can never do anything right
- Shows jealousy of your friends and time spent away
- Keeps or discourages you from seeing friends or family members
- Embarrasses or shames you with put-downs
- Controls every penny spent in the household
- Takes your money or refuses to give you money for expenses
- Looks at you or acts in ways that scare you
- Controls who you see, where you go, or what you do
- Prevents you from making your own decisions
- Tells you that you are a bad parent or threatens to harm or take away your children
- Prevents you from working or attending school
- Destroys your property or threatens to hurt or kill your pets
- Intimidates you with guns, knives, or other weapons
- Pressures you to have sex when you don't want to or do things sexually you're not comfortable with
- Pressures you to use drugs or alcohol

These are listed on the National Domestic Violence Hotline's website at **www.thehotline.org/is-this-abuse/abuse-defined**, which also defines various kinds of physical, emotional, sexual, financial, and digital abuse, and sexual and reproductive coercion. More information on restraining orders and links to other resources can be found on the Domestic Violence page of the California Courts' website at **www.courts.ca.gov/selfhelp-domesticviolence.htm**.

## **MENTAL HEALTH**

For immediate assistance on mental health problems you can also call the San Diego County Health and Human Services Agency's Behavioral Health Services' toll-free Access and Crisis Line at **(888) 724-7240**. Professional counselors are available 24/7 to help callers through their crises and refer them to appropriate services. Counseling is available in Spanish and other languages.

Here are some other resources for persons dealing with mental health problems in their family.

- National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) San Diego has a help line, support groups, educational meetings, newsletters, a lending library, and classes on mental illness throughout San Diego County. Its mission is to share information and end the stigma associated with mental illness. Call **(800) 523-5933** or go to **<https://namisandiego.org>** for the details of its activities.
- San Diego Psychiatric Society is a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting high quality care for people with mental health disorders. Its website at **[www.sandiegopsychiatricsociety.org](http://www.sandiegopsychiatricsociety.org)** has a database of physicians that specialize in the diagnosis and treatment of mental, emotional, and substance abuse disorders. Call **(858) 279-4586** for more information.
- San Diego Psychological Association has a website at **[www.sdpsych.org](http://www.sdpsych.org)** with a comprehensive listing of mental health providers and resources in San Diego County. It also has a project called Psychology 2000 that offers free, short-term psychological services to people who can't afford them and meet certain criteria. Call **(858) 277-1463** for more information.
- Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance San Diego is a peer-facilitated group of people who support one another on the road to wellness. It includes patients diagnosed with mood disorders, their families and friends, and anyone else who seeks to learn more about depressive and bipolar mood disorders. For more information go to its website at **<http://dbsasandiego.org>** or call **(858) 444-6776**.

## OTHER PROBLEMS

You can now call **211**, the new 24/7 national dialing code for information and referrals about community, health, and disaster services. Information is available on addictions, child care, clothing, counseling, domestic violence, employment, food, housing, legal assistance, parenting, senior services, sexual assault, shelters, youth and teen services, and many other topics. This information is also online at **[www.211SanDiego.org](http://www.211SanDiego.org)**.

## LEGAL INFORMATION

A good source of information for the public is the set of 12 single-issue legal guides published by the State Bar. They can be read on its website in several languages at **[www.calbar.ca.gov/Public/Free-Legal-Information/Legal-Guides](http://www.calbar.ca.gov/Public/Free-Legal-Information/Legal-Guides)** by clicking on the name of the guide in the left-hand menu and selecting a language. The eight pamphlets can be printed from PDFs by right-clicking on the title of the guide and selecting Print on the drop-down menu. PDFs for the three legal guides for all ages can be downloaded in English or Spanish. These guides deal with the following topics:

- Finding the Right Lawyer
- Problem with a Lawyer
- Lawyer Referral Service
- Lawyer Fee Dispute
- Client Security Fund
- Kids & the Law
- When You Turn 18
- Seniors and the Law
- Do I Need a Will?
- Estate Planning
- Living Trust
- Veteran Resources

Another pamphlet entitled *Tenga Pecaucion con los Notarios* is available in Spanish by clicking on its title even though it is not listed as a legal guide. Other free legal information available deals with unauthorized practice of law, immigration resources, and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs).

Free legal assistance for seniors 60 and older in San Diego County can be obtained from the Senior Citizens Legal Services Program of Elder Law and Advocacy (ELA). Staff attorneys travel to community outreach sites on regular monthly schedules. Call **(858) 565-1392** for an appointment. And visit its website at **<http://seniorlaw->**

**sd.org** to see what resources it has available and sign up for its newsletter to keep up to date on legal issues facing seniors.

Some disputes can be resolved quickly and inexpensively in a Small Claims Court. It's a special court where individuals, representing themselves, resolve disputes in an informal setting without attorneys present. You can find information about them in San Diego County online at [www.sdcourt.ca.gov/portal/page?\\_pageid=55,1424399&\\_dad=portal&\\_schema=PORTAL](http://www.sdcourt.ca.gov/portal/page?_pageid=55,1424399&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL). You can find information about their use in a paper entitled *The Small Claims Court: A Guide to Its Practical Use* published by the State of California Department of Consumer Affairs. It's online at [www.dca.ca.gov/publications/small\\_claims/small\\_claims.pdf](http://www.dca.ca.gov/publications/small_claims/small_claims.pdf).

## CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Many personal and family problems can be resolved through mediation. By California law aimed at reducing court caseloads, the initial mediation sessions are free of charge. One organization you can call to negotiate restitution and resolve conflicts between victims and offenders arising from property crimes like theft, vandalism, burglary, and trespass is the San Diego Restorative Justice Mediation Program at **(619) 280-1993**. It also deals with conflicts between family members, e.g., parent-child. Mediation provides an opportunity for frustrated parents, unhappy children, and troubled families to talk about the things that bother them, set goals, and work out agreements to help them get along better.

To resolve civil disputes involving neighbors, landlords and tenants, family members (divorce and parent-child), businesses, etc., you can call the National Conflict Resolution Center (NCRC) at **(619) 238-2400** or go to its website at [www.ncrconline.com](http://www.ncrconline.com) to open a case. A case coordinator will call you within 24 hours to gather information about your case. The NCRC mediates disputes free of charge through funding by the County of San Diego.

To deal with parent-child problems, the NCRC lists the following reasons to consider mediation:

- It's different from therapy.
- No one tells you what to do.
- What everyone has to say is important.
- Each person is listened to with respect.
- It works for 90 percent of the parents and teens who try it.
- Your family controls the outcome by forming agreements that work for those involved.
- It can prevent disputes from escalating to violence.
- It's confidential. No one reports anything that is said in mediation.
- You have nothing to lose.

## CRIME VICTIM AND WITNESS SERVICES

The County DA's Victim Assistance Program offers comprehensive services to victims and witnesses of all types of crimes. Services are provided from the moment the crime occurs for as long as assistance is needed; there is no cutoff for assistance by the program. The Program was created by the passage of Sec. 13835 *et seq* of the California State Penal Code, which mandates local comprehensive centers for victim and witness assistance throughout California. Its services are described online at [www.sdca.org/helping/victims/victim-services.html](http://www.sdca.org/helping/victims/victim-services.html). If you have been a victim of a crime and need assistance, you can call **619-531-4041**. A Victim Advocate will speak with you and determine how we can assist you. Program services are provided free of charge, and there is no legal citizenship requirement to receive assistance.

Mandatory victim services include the following:

- Crisis intervention
- Emergency assistance
- Resource and referral assistance
- Direct follow-up counseling

- Property return assistance
- Orientation to the Criminal Justice System
- Court escort and court support
- Case status and case disposition information
- Notification of family and friends
- Employer notification
- Victim of crime claims assistance

Optional services include:

- Creditor intervention
- Child care
- Restitution information
- Witness notification
- Funeral and burial arrangements
- Crime prevention information
- Temporary restraining order information
- Transportation assistance
- Court waiting area
- Employer intervention

The Program also provides help in getting emergency funds, financial assistance from the California Victim Compensation Program (CalVCP), and referrals to other agencies that provide assistance. Information about CalVCP can be obtained online at [www.calvcp.ca.gov](http://www.calvcp.ca.gov) or by calling (800) 777-9229. More information on victim assistance and links to other resources can be found on the Victim Assistance page of the California Courts' website at [www.courts.ca.gov/1107.htm](http://www.courts.ca.gov/1107.htm).