

The Advocate's Role and DVPOs



Proceed with Caution



- Protective orders are an important option for some people.
- &
- A protective order does not make sense for everyone.

- As advocates, we have a responsibility to help people think through the pros and cons of pursuing any option, including the option of getting a protective order.

Proceed with Caution

- We cannot assume that getting a protective order is the right thing to do. An order might be helpful, or it might make things worse.
- ALWAYS press the pause button and explore the pros and cons before helping someone apply for a protective order.





The Advocate's Role

- Help survivors figure out if there are any protective orders in place already
 - Search court records online [here](#)
 - Court clerks, system-based advocates, and local law enforcement may have information
- Know the different types of orders & the criteria for obtaining them
- Know what the law says AND how things actually work in your local community
 - Talk with experienced advocates. Watch what happens in courts. Find out from survivors.

The Advocate's Role

- Help survivors safely and effectively access the court process
 - Help survivors understand court forms, instructions and advocate for their participation in the hearing(s)
 - Literacy help; Language interpretation; Cognitive ability
 - See RCW [2.42](#) and [2.43](#)



The Advocate's Role

- Make sure survivors can get into and around the courthouse
 - Disability access, transportation, childcare, time off work
- Address safety concerns about being at the courthouse with the other person

The Advocate's Role

- Support survivors during the process of filling out paperwork & preparing for court
 - Connect survivors to legal advice and representation whenever possible
 - Provide general information about the law and legal procedures*
 - Assist individuals to complete protection order or anti-harassment order forms*

*if no fee is charged, advocates are permitted to do these activities under the rules governing the practice of law [\[GR 24 \(b\)\(6\) and \(d\)\]](#)

The Advocate's Role

- Discuss what survivors can do if the order is violated
 - Advocate for criminal and civil enforcement of protective orders in general
 - Advocate specifically on behalf of individual survivors when requested by the survivor
- After an order is issued:
 - Help survivors explore the pros and cons of maintaining, modifying or dropping an order
 - Explore how a protective order fits into the person's overall plan for safety and well-being