



METROPOLITAN GOVERNMENT OF NASHVILLE AND DAVIDSON COUNTY

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Fact Sheet

Jean Crowe Advocacy Center for Victims of Domestic Violence

NASHVILLE, Tenn. – The Jean Crowe Advocacy Center, a family justice center, includes nearly 3,300 square feet of space divided into three components: a reception/waiting area, team workspace and Metro Police/District Attorney workrooms. It is located in the Ben West Building at 100 James Robertson Parkway.

Many of the function and design features of the advocacy center are a direct result of the recommendations in a 2013 Domestic Violence Safety and Accountability Assessment, and opening the advocacy center accomplishes 14 of the 55 report recommendations.

- Secure entrance includes a Davidson County Sheriff's deputy stationed outside the center's front door; cameras to monitor hallways activity; and a buzz-in entry system. Panic buttons are dispersed throughout the center.
- Great care was taken to design features to be inviting, warm and familiar to help reduce stress in victims. Design input was gathered from non-profit partners, including Baptist Healing Trust, which has similar design features.
- Victims are greeted in a reception area, where they sign in and receive information about the advocacy center.
- They can learn more about the center in a video room that plays educational videos about the services provided at the center; courtroom layout and roles of those that work within the court system; and how to fill out an order of protection. Additional videos will be added focused on the dynamics of power and control in a domestic violence relationship; the impact of domestic violence on children; safety planning; how a case progresses from warrant to disposition in court; and survivor testimonials.
- A computer room provides computer terminals so that victims can independently fill out order of protection paperwork and handle other personal matters. Victims are encouraged to use the computers to register with Smart 911, a system to provide emergency responders with additional details about themselves, like medical history and family information. Victims often do not have the freedom to use their home computers or smart phones without their internet searches being tracked by their offender.

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- The waiting room is designed to feel like a home's den with a faux fireplace, reading materials, and books and toys for kids. It was intentionally designed without a television, as television programs can increase stress in some victims.
- A self-service kitchen includes beverages and light breakfast and lunch food – all donated, including donations from Costco coordinated by Laura Little of Little Lady Big Cause. Most victims do not eat before they come to court because they say they are too nervous but end up hungry during long days at the courthouse.
- A Retreat Room is available for clients to make private phone calls or for those who become emotional and need privacy.
- There are four intake rooms, as well as an intake room with a children's corner. While there, advocates can help victims with safety planning, lethality assessments, needs assessments, and assistance in filling out order of protection paperwork. Intake rooms are also utilized by the District Attorney's office to meet with victims privately before and during court. This ends the previous practice of speaking with victims in open court near the offender.
- Glass doors in the intake rooms can help reduce the feeling in victims of being trapped and not in control. White noise in the ceiling outside each intake room help keep sessions with victims free of distraction.
- The conference room includes teleconferencing equipment that connects directly to Night Court. This enables victims to receive an order of protection between the hours of 8 a.m. and 3 p.m. without having to go to Night Court (which actually operates 24 hours a day).
- Workrooms for Metro Police and District Attorney's Office to meet with victims is available on the west side of the Ben West Building to utilize at their convenience.

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