

# impact stories

LifeWire has helped over 148,000 survivors of domestic violence, but we measure our impact by more than the numbers.

Success, to us, means:

- Survivors feeling safe and independent after leaving an abusive partner.
- Adults and young people building skills that contribute to positive, healthy, and balanced lives.
- Families finding long-term stability after their lives have been uprooted by violence.
- Schools promoting gender equity and challenging violent attitudes and behaviors.

Read on to see how your support has impacted survivors in our community. By working together, we can fulfill our mission to end domestic violence and create a world where every person lives in a safe environment, free from oppression, and with the opportunity to thrive.

## SURVIVOR ADVOCACY IN ACTION

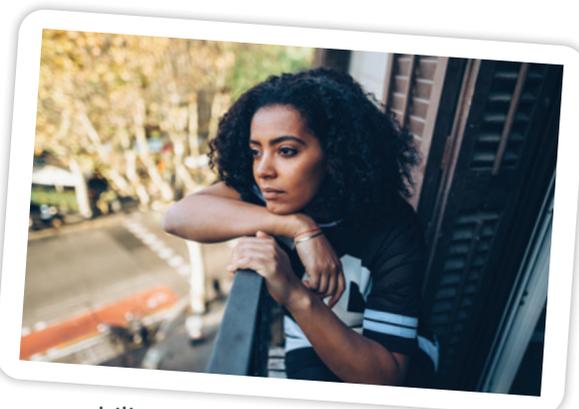
Mia was a political activist in her South American home country. After years of demanding change and accountability from her government, she faced growing threats and harassment. Eventually, a member of the military assaulted her during a political rally. No longer feeling safe in her country, Mia made the tough decision to leave her two daughters with her sister, and flee to the United States.

Mia won political asylum and relocated to Washington. Her limited English proficiency made it challenging to find work, but a friend from church helped her find a restaurant job. Mia was relieved that she could begin saving to bring her daughters to the U.S.

Several months into the job, Mia's boss began making unwanted sexual advances. She asked him to stop and made it clear she wanted to keep her work and personal life separate. The harassment continued, and he eventually threatened to call the police and report her for stealing if she refused his advances. Over the next year, the violence escalated in Mia's forced "relationship" as her boss routinely physically and sexually assaulted her. Mia felt isolated, afraid, and depressed.

After Mia's boss slammed her hard against a kitchen wall, she tried to call 911. He grabbed her phone and smashed it, yelling that he would destroy her life by telling the police that she tried to stab him. When the police arrived, the cook and her boss told the same story. But when Mia tried to tell her side, the interpreter had trouble understanding her. Mia was arrested, and her boss fired her.

Once she got out of jail, Mia called her friend from church. She helped Mia connect with a LifeWire legal advocate. Mia was especially worried about being deported and finding a new place to live but had no



### 24-HOUR HELPLINE

425-746-1940 or 1-800-827-8840

### VOICE/TTY/INTERPRETERS

8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m., Monday - Friday

### BUSINESS

425-562-8840

### WA STATE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HOTLINE

1-800-562-6052

### FAX

425-649-0752

### LIFEWIRE

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Bellevue, WA 98008-0398

[www.lifewire.org](http://www.lifewire.org)

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United Way of  
King County.



(Story 1 name continued)

idea how to navigate the many complicated systems.

Her legal advocate connected Mia with an immigration attorney to answer her asylum questions. Collaborating with Mia's public defender, her legal advocate helped Mia write a lengthy supplemental statement for the police and obtain a protection order. LifeWire helped Mia get temporary housing in a hotel until space became available at My Sister's Home, LifeWire's emergency shelter. Her advocate helped connect her to the resources she needed to get settled and find a new job.

Mia enjoys her new job and hopes to bring her daughters to the country soon. She is still working to address the criminal charges, and she feels hopeful now that she has an advocate to help her navigate the legal system. Mia is relieved to have someone who believes her and wants to support her every step of her journey.

## A HOME OF HER OWN

Layla's husband controlled just about every part of her life. She had a part-time job because he wouldn't let her work full-time—it was harder to monitor her when she worked. He controlled not only her paycheck, but all of their money. Her name wasn't even on their accounts, and he made her beg when she needed to buy essentials like food, soap, or toilet paper.

Layla felt isolated and cut off from her family and friends. He didn't let them visit and limited how much time Layla could spend on her phone and who she could call. Feeling alone, one day she used the phone at work to call LifeWire during her lunch break because she didn't know who else to call.

With the help of her LifeWire housing stability advocate, Layla found a new apartment close to work. Flexible funds paid for her first month's rent, giving her the financial flexibility she needed to leave her abuser and find safety. As a Black woman with limited credit and banking history, the temporary financial assistance offered Layla a path forward to achieving stability. Layla has started working full-time and is able to support herself and enjoy her growing career and personal freedom.



## "THAT SOUNDS LIKE MY BROTHER"

After class, Serena approached LifeWire's Youth Advocate to talk about what she'd learned from LifeWire's presentation on healthy relationships. Her voice shook with emotion as she spoke. Serena explained that her older brother Simon had experienced an abusive relationship a few years before.

Serena described the verbal, emotional, and psychological abuse Simon experienced from his girlfriend. How she tried to manipulate and threaten him with comments like "If you loved me, you would do this," and "I guess you don't care about me, no one does. I should kill myself."

She was a constant presence in Simon's life. Calling all hours of the day, demanding his attention when Simon had practice or family commitments, and intentionally causing problems with his friends and then demanding

Simon choose between them and her. The abuse affected Simon's mental health, his relationships with his friends and family, and his ability to enjoy the things he loved like playing lacrosse.

Serena teared up as she talked about how LifeWire's healthy relationship training made it clear that domestic and dating violence isn't just men hurting women. All genders can experience abuse.

Because she'd see it first-hand, she found it comforting and helpful to hear that violence isn't just physical and that abuse can take many forms. Serena wished Simon could have had the training when he was younger because it might have saved him a lot of pain and isolation. Simon, she shared, didn't tell any of his friends what was happening because he was embarrassed. The stigma of being a young, male survivor of dating violence kept him from reaching out for support from friends and community resources. But, Serena reflected, she was so glad the training would help other young men like her brother.



### MISSION

Lifewire's mission is to end domestic violence by changing individual, institutional and societal beliefs, attitudes and behaviors that perpetuate it.

### VISION

Domestic violence is a human rights issue. Lifewire envisions a world in which every person lives in a safe environment, free from oppression and with the opportunity to thrive.