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Family & Relationships

**A Safe Place for Women: How to Survive Domestic Abuse and Create a Successful Future**
Kelly White
Hunter House
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Twenty years after she first sought refuge with her two small children in a battered women's shelter, Kelly White was honored by having a 105-bed shelter in Austin, Texas, named for her. After being a frightened, beaten, humiliated victim of spousal abuse, White transformed her life and discovered the strength she needed to leave her husband and begin working to support her children. She also became passionately involved in the challenge to stop violence against women and children.

White details her own journey in A Safe Place for Women: How to Survive Domestic Abuse and Create a Successful Future. More than a memoir, the book tells the stories of battered women from the author's unique perspective as a formerly abused spouse and from her over twenty-five years professionally helping others in her position.

White says battering is largely a crime of violence perpetrated by men against women. "Every day, domestic violence takes the lives of four women in this country. Almost one-third of female homicide victims reported in police records are killed by an intimate partner." While abuse towards men does happen, "women make up 84 percent of victims of spousal abuse," she says.

White describes the abusive relationship and the indicators of a potentially abusive relationship. She talks about the characteristics of the batterer and gives information about intervention and treatment programs for batterers as well as the battered. But mainly, she details the ripple effect of violence against women and children and how they can find the help (and hope) they need to turn their lives around.

Giving concrete advice and encouragement to victims of abuse, White also writes about the survivors, the women who break out of these harmful, potentially deadly, relationships to protect themselves and their children: “I have continued to work with battered women’s programs for decades because of the extraordinary survivors I have met along the way.”

The book includes chapters about domestic abuse and sexual assault, tracing the roots of violence within families, and the long-term impact of domestic violence on children. Also covered are the workings of shelters, a chapter on leaving the shelter, and how women can empower themselves and work toward a vision of the future.

This book is well-written, informative, and heartfelt. It is also persuasive that our culture needs to do more to end violence against women.

Kelly White has worked for twenty-five years as a non-profit executive, with more than a decade as Executive Director of SafePlace, the domestic violence and sexual assault services program for Austin and Travis County, Texas. She is currently Executive Director of the Chicago Foundation for Women.

*Penny Hastings*