



SafeNest Client Testimonial

This information is shared by one SafeNest client to understand the scope of what survivors go through and how SafeNest services save lives.

I was battered, broken, and terrified when I finally picked up the phone and called the SafeNest hotline. Days prior, I had run from my house, naked, with car keys and my purse in one hand and my abuser's shirt in the other. I had been raped, beaten, and believed him more than ever when he told me that this day would be my last. He was arrested while looking for me. He had been caught trying to attack two other women on the street. When my phone rang and it was the police saying they had my boyfriend in custody and that he was looking for me, I froze. Not knowing who was on the other end of the phone, I lied and said that I was fine. A few days later he was about to post bail and two friends of mine pleaded with me to call the SafeNest hotline, hoping that it would help me press charges, help me get a restraining order, help save my life. Little did they know it did so much more for me. That call was the first time in years that I didn't feel alone. The woman who answered the phone with a calm, understanding voice; patiently instructed me how to obtain a protection order and what the next steps would be if I chose to press charges. SafeNest provided me with the first step to safety and freedom.

SafeNest didn't know, but they provided me with much more than the initial step of saving my life. As soon as I received my restraining order and started working with the District Attorney to prosecute my ex-boyfriend on 22 gross felony charges, including Domestic Battery, Sexual Assault, Strangulation, and Coercion, I knew I needed to help someone else in my situation. The only way I would ever be at peace was to turn it into an opportunity to help other victims feel they are not alone. My friend, who helped me make that first initial call to SafeNest, put me in touch with the SafeNest Board of Director's President, who I knew but didn't realize we shared a similar connection.

His sister had been murdered by her boyfriend when she attempted to break up with him. I signed up for SafeNest's advocacy program to volunteer and share my story with young girls. I knew the best therapy for me was to save someone else's life, like SafeNest saved mine. I volunteered to speak with girls at the Juvenile Detention Center. In turn, each shared their personal story; one was raised in an abusive home where her mother was battered by boyfriends. Most of the girls assumed because of their race or class that domestic violence was expected. It broke my heart. I stood in front of them; with tears in my eyes. I explained that I was raised in a middle-class family in an un-abusive household, went to college, and was still almost murdered by my boyfriend. I shared my most horrid story where my incredibly charming, beautiful, professional athlete of a boyfriend poured vodka all over me, lit the stove, and continued to push my head over the flame until I promised I would never say I was going to leave him again. I watched their eyes light up in disbelief and fill with tears. All I wanted them to know was that no matter where they came from or who they were, they deserved to be loved in the right way, abuse-free.

Six months later I joined the SafeNest Board of Directors and have been a board member for the past four years. Last year my ex-boyfriend accepted a plea deal of 17 years in prison, with lifetime parole, and he has to register as a sex offender. In the three and a half years it took me to get through the court system, there were several times that I wanted to recant my story and try to move on with my life. I continued to push through with the support of my family, friends, colleagues, and fellow SafeNest board members. I'm always reminded that there are thousands of victims in this city that need to hear my story to prove that while leaving is scary, there is a better life waiting for them once they do. SafeNest didn't just save my life when I called, they gave my darkest days a purpose, and for that, I am forever indebted.