

# DOMESTIC VIOLENCE CLINIC

Apply online at: <http://apps.law.georgetown.edu/clinic-application/>

Faculty	Prof. Deborah Epstein, Prof. Rachel Camp and Fellows
What do students do	Students represent indigent victims of family violence in protection order cases in the D.C. Superior Court, and engage in projects designed to increase access to justice and improve the system's response to domestic abuse.
Semester or year-long	One semester, Fall or Spring
Open to	All 2Ls and 3Ls (at least 30 credits). Preference given to 3Ls.
Prerequisite(s)	All first-year courses and (as a pre- or co-requisite) Evidence
Credits	10
Requires Student Bar Certification	Yes
How many students	10-12/semester
Conflicts	Handled on a case-by-case basis
Average time commitment	35 hours/week, on average. Work on cases may continue into the reading and exam period.
Seminar hours	Tues. & Thurs. 1:20pm-3:20pm
Orientation	A multi-day orientation will be held before classes begin in both the Fall and Spring
Information session(s)	TBD

## THE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE CLINIC EXPERIENCE

The Domestic Violence Clinic offers students the opportunity to represent victims of intimate abuse in civil protection order cases in the District of Columbia Superior Court. Through on-the-ground client representation, individual supervision, “case rounds” conversations with colleagues, and seminar-based simulations, exercises, and discussions, students learn to engage in client-centered advocacy, develop strong trial and negotiation skills, obtain a thorough understanding of family, criminal, and poverty law, and provide representation in an area of substantial community need.

Clinic students work to obtain civil protection orders (“CPOs”) for their clients. These orders typically last for one year, and may include a broad spectrum of relief designed to effectively end the violence in an intimate partner relationship. A CPO may contain basic safety provisions, directing the abusive partner to stop assaulting and threatening the victim, to stay away from her, her home, and her workplace, vacate her residence, and not to contact her in any manner. The order also may resolve family law issues, including an award of temporary custody of the parties' children, visitation rights for the non-custodial parent, and child support awards. Other commonly-litigated issues include reimbursement for injury-related medical bills and property damage, referrals to appropriate counseling programs, and the surrender of firearms and other weapons.

Students in the Clinic serve as lead counsel for their clients, and learn to excel in every phase of expedited civil litigation, including pretrial skills (such as counseling, interviewing, investigation, and negotiation)

and trial skills (such as opening statements, direct and cross examination, making objections, and closing arguments). Students gain expertise in the law of evidence; a typical case load involves the introduction of photographs, text messages, police reports, 911 calls, and/or medical records at trial. In addition, in those cases where clients are interested in pursuing a criminal prosecution of their abusive partner, students learn to navigate the criminal justice system, working with the U.S. Attorney's Office. Clinic students learn a systematic approach to lawyering involving careful planning, practical engagement, and critical post-performance reflection. They leave the clinic having internalized a valuable method for long-term professional improvement and with essential skills that transfer across a wide variety of practice areas.

Although case loads are flexible and depend on the scope of each individual case, Clinic students can expect to represent 3-4 clients over the course of the semester, working in teams of two. It is not possible to predict whether any particular case will settle or go to trial, but every Clinic student will have an opportunity to question a witness on the stand at one or more ex parte Temporary Protection Order hearings, and each student will have opportunities to negotiate a settlement or go to trial. Each student team has regular meetings with a faculty supervisor to discuss litigation strategy and receive intensive feedback on drafts of documents, testimony, and legal arguments.

In addition to their litigation work, Clinic students work on a project, designed to expand their understanding of the potential scope of legal services and to meet larger-scale community needs. Clinic projects have included: providing in-court legal counseling to pro se petitioners in CPO cases, creating know-your-rights presentations and pamphlets, and drafting proposed revisions to the Metropolitan Police Department's policies and to DC Superior Court rules.

Clinic alum Chris Harlem says: *Working with Georgetown's Domestic Violence Clinic gave rise to the most meaningful semester I've had at law school. Not only does it provide a much-needed service to the DC community, but it also bridges the gap between doctrinal teachings in lecture courses and the practice of law. Having gone through two trials this semester, I was exposed to trial practice and litigation in a way that could not have been simulated in a standard class. The DV Clinic philosophy promoted taking ownership over one's work and pushing students towards a level of competence whereby they could handle their clients on their own. I highly recommend applying for a seat in the Domestic Violence Clinic.*

Clinic alum Kerry Bollerman notes that: *The DV Clinic is an incredible hands-on experience for law students interested in litigating. Clinic students will invariably speak multiple times before a judge on the DC Superior Court and will get extensive practice and feedback from experienced faculty. I grew as a person and a lawyer thanks to the DV Clinic.*

Alex Hughes, 2016 graduate, puts it this way: *Participating in the Domestic Violence Clinic was without a doubt the highlight of my law school experience. First, it gives you a chance to hone your litigation skills in a real life setting, with the benefit of receiving thoughtful faculty feedback throughout the process. Second, and most importantly, it provides you an invaluable opportunity to provide direct legal services in a practice area where legal services are scarce. Every semester, the clinic makes a meaningful impact in several people's lives. Professionally and personally, it is hard to imagine a more rewarding experience.*

## CLINIC CLIENTS

The stories of two of the clients whom the Clinic has assisted illustrate the scope of our work.

### **Tyesha**

Tyesha's boyfriend, a crack user, frequently assaulted and threatened her. Most recently, he shoved her and threatened to kill her, and then left home and returned with a gun. He held Tyesha at gun point, punching and choking her until she lay on the floor unconscious. Two hours later, Tyesha awoke and called the police. They refused to arrest her boyfriend or help her to move her four young children out of the house. Afraid for her life, Tyesha was forced to leave her home without her children to seek refuge.

A few days later, a Clinic student interviewed Tyesha at the courthouse. She was extremely anxious; her neighbors had told her that her boyfriend had left the children alone with no food, and her two youngest had been seen playing outside, unsupervised, at 3:00 a.m. The student helped Tyesha draft a petition for a civil protection order, and represented her in a hearing to get emergency temporary protection. By the time she left that day, Tyesha had a temporary order directing her boyfriend to leave the family home so that she could safely move back in, awarding her temporary custody of their four children, and ordering the boyfriend not to assault or threaten Tyesha and to stay away from her. Clinic students represented Tyesha four weeks later at her protection order hearing, where they obtained a comprehensive one year protection order after an extensive negotiation with her boyfriend.

### **Leslie**

Leslie's husband regularly physically and emotionally abused her, including several incidents when he threw her to the ground and hit her while she was pregnant with their child. At one point, Leslie separated from her husband and he went into counseling to learn how to control his violence. But counseling failed to solve the problem.

In October, Leslie's husband became angry and began to yell and shove her in front of their five year-old son. The boy became upset and placed himself between his parents, yelling, "Don't hurt my mother!" His father slammed the boy's head and back into a wall. Leslie ended the relationship and her husband moved out of the family home. But several weeks later, her husband followed her out of a teacher's meeting at their son's pre-school, grabbed her by the arm, and told her, "If I'm not going to have you, no one will." In the weeks that followed, he repeatedly came to Leslie's home and assaulted or threatened her. Terrified, Leslie was forced to take her son and stay with relatives.

In December, Leslie was referred to the Clinic. After two contested hearings on issues of domestic violence and child support, the court granted Leslie a CPO requiring her husband to stay away from her, not to assault or threaten her, and ordering him to participate in domestic violence counseling. The order also awarded temporary custody of the couple's son to Leslie and directed her husband to pay more than \$700 per month in child support.

## TIME COMMITMENT

Over the years, students have found their Clinic experience to be intense, exciting, exhausting, and rewarding. The benefits are substantial – by the time students complete the Clinic, they are likely to have more trial experience than most attorneys several years out of law school. However, enrollment in this litigation-intensive Clinic requires that students commit to fulfilling extensive demands on their time. Students have some opportunity for vacation time during their Clinic semester, but, because they are representing clients in fast-paced, emergency cases, students must obtain faculty permission before making plans to leave town, even during school vacations and weekends. Although it is highly unusual,

client obligations may require that students continue to work on cases during some portion of the reading and exam period.

Students participating in the Clinic will be required to return to school several days before classes begin for the semester in which they are enrolled, for a multi-day, intensive Clinic Orientation. During Orientation, we will introduce students to a wide range of substantive law and essential lawyering skills, so that they are ready to represent clients as early in the semester as possible.

### SELECTION CRITERIA/APPLICATION PROCESS

To apply for the Domestic Violence Clinic, students must have completed all first-year courses and (as a pre- or co-requisite) Evidence. Although we reserve one or two clinic seats for students with interest, experience, or enthusiasm about domestic violence issues and/or litigation, we hope to include students with a wide range of background, experience, and interests. We give preference to students entering their final year of law school.

### FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

To find out more about the Domestic Violence Clinic, interested students are welcome to call us at 662-9640 to speak to faculty, fellows, or students. In addition, students can visit [our website](#) for information about the Clinic class and faculty. We will also hold an Open House on Zoom on a date TBD.

During the 2019-2020 academic year, the Clinic is being taught by Professors Deborah Epstein and Rachel Camp, and Teaching Fellows Jabeen Adawi and Bonnie Carlson. The students who were enrolled in the Domestic Violence Clinic during this academic year are listed below. Please feel free to contact them.

### FACULTY

#### **Professor Deborah Epstein**

Professor Deborah Epstein is Co-Director of the Domestic Violence Clinic and Professor of Law. She joined the faculty in 1993 and has spent more than thirty years working as an advocate for victims of domestic violence. Professor Epstein co-chaired the effort to create DC's ground-breaking specialized Domestic Violence Court, and spent many years as Co-Director of the court's Domestic Violence Intake Center, where survivors can obtain assistance with civil protection orders, criminal prosecution, crisis intervention counseling, and social service referrals. She spent 10 years as Director of the Emergency Domestic Relations Project, a public interest organization that provided legal and educational services to thousands of indigent victims of intimate abuse every year. Professor Epstein recently served on and then resigned from the NFL Player's Association's Commission on Violence (see [https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/im-done-helping-the-nfl-pay-lip-service-to-domestic-violence-prevention/2018/06/05/1b470bec-6448-11e8-99d2-0d678ec08c2f\\_story.html?utm\\_term=.bafdfce706f6](https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/im-done-helping-the-nfl-pay-lip-service-to-domestic-violence-prevention/2018/06/05/1b470bec-6448-11e8-99d2-0d678ec08c2f_story.html?utm_term=.bafdfce706f6)). She is a Commissioner on the D.C. Judicial Nominations Commission, and has served as Chair of the D.C. Domestic Violence Fatality Review Board, and as a member of the D.C. Mayor's Commission on Violence Against Women, the D.C. Superior Court's Domestic Violence Coordinating Council, and the Board of Directors of both the D.C. Coalition Against Domestic Violence and House of Ruth. She has consulted on domestic violence law and policy at the local, national, and international level. Her most recent publication is *Discounting Women: Doubting Domestic Violence Survivors' Credibility and Dismissing Their Experiences*, 167 U. PENN. L.REV. 63 (2019). In addition to numerous other law review articles and book chapters on domestic violence law, she is co-author of LISTENING TO BATTERED WOMEN: A SURVIVOR-CENTERED APPROACH

TO ADVOCACY, MENTAL HEALTH, AND JUSTICE (APA Press 2008); LITIGATING CPO CASES: A PRACTICE MANUAL (10th ed. 2017); *Litigating Domestic Violence Cases*, in THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA PRACTICE MANUAL (6th ed. 2014), and TEACHING THE CLINIC SEMINAR (2014); she is sole author of THE D.C. SUPERIOR COURT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE BENCHMARK (13th ed. 2018). She served as Georgetown's Associate Dean for Experiential Learning from 2006-2013. Professor Epstein is the recipient of the Georgetown Women's Forum Alumnae Award (2012); the Clinical Legal Education Association's Outstanding Advocate for Clinical Teachers Award (2011); the Georgetown University Law Center Faculty of the Year Award (2006); and the Georgetown University Law Center Wendy Webster Williams Award (2002).

### **Professor Rachel Camp**

Rachel Camp is Co-Director of the Domestic Violence Clinic (DVC) and a Professor from Practice at Georgetown University Law Center. She joined Georgetown's faculty in 2011 and became Co-Director of the DVC in 2013. Professor Camp has represented, and has supervised law students representing, hundreds of survivors of intimate partner violence in civil protection order and family law cases during her time at Georgetown and while a Clinical Teaching Fellow at the University of Baltimore School of Law. In addition to direct legal representation, Professor Camp has supervised law students on a variety of community education and systemic legal reform projects aimed at increasing access to justice for survivors. Between 2000-2008, Professor Camp served as an Assistant Attorney General with the Oregon Department of Justice (ODOJ), representing a variety of state agencies, including the Department of Human Services in child abuse and neglect matters. Prior to her employment at the ODOJ, Professor Camp was an attorney at the Maryland Disability Law Center representing patients at a maximum-security state psychiatric hospital in civil and administrative matters. Professor Camp currently serves as the law school representative on the D.C. DV Fatality Review Board and is on the Board of Directors for the D.C. Affordable Law Firm and Girls on the Run of Central Maryland. In addition to other law review articles and publications, in *Coercing Pregnancy*, 21 WM. & MARY J. WOMEN & L. 275 (2015), Professor Camp examined the intersection between intimate partner violence (IPV), reproductive coercion, and pregnancy. In *Pursuing Accountability for Perpetrators of Intimate Partner Violence: The Peril (an Utility?) of Shame*, 98 BOSTON UNIV. L. REV. 1677 (2018), Professor Camp explores how formal and informal methods of shaming perpetrators of IPV lead to counterproductive outcomes for reducing violence in intimate relationships and to increased risk of harm for survivors. In addition to her work in the DVC, Professor Camp also directs the LL.M. program for the D.C. Affordable Law Firm, a program that allows recent law graduates to provide civil legal representation to D.C. residents who fall between 200-400% above the federal poverty rate and who otherwise may be unable to obtain legal representation.

### **Teaching Fellow Jabeen Adawi**

Before her appointment as the Clinical Teaching Fellow in Georgetown's Domestic Violence Clinic, Jabeen Adawi served as the Victim Legal Network of DC Project Coordinator at the Network for Victim Recovery of DC (NVRDC). There she coordinated ten DC legal service providers to create an enhanced referral network serving victims of crime with any legal needs stemming from their victimization. Prior to joining NVRDC, she had worked for three years as a staff attorney at the Sexual Assault Legal Institute of the Maryland Coalition against Sexual Assault, where her responsibilities included providing civil legal services to survivors of sexual assault. Jabeen is a 2010 graduate of the American University, Washington College of Law. At American, she participated in the International Human Rights Law Clinic as a student attorney, focusing on immigration and refugee law. Jabeen also received her BS in Applied Physics from New Jersey Institute of Technology in 2006. Jabeen is a native Urdu speaker and is proficient in Hindi.

### **Teaching Fellow Bonnie Carlson**

Prior to becoming the Domestic Violence Clinical Teaching Fellow, Bonnie Carlson was a Training and Technical Assistance Staff Attorney with the American Bar Association Commission on Domestic & Sexual Violence. At the Commission, Bonnie wrote training curricula and publications for attorneys practicing domestic violence law around the country. Prior to this position, she was a family law staff attorney for the Alexandria office of Legal Services of Northern Virginia (LSNV) for four years representing victims of domestic violence. She started at LSNV on a year-long fellowship from the George Washington University Law School, where she graduated in May 2012. Upon her graduation, Bonnie was awarded the National Association of Women Lawyers Outstanding Law Graduate Award for her work with domestic violence victims as well as her academic success. She was an active member of the Alexandria Bar Association and was honored with the Don F. Mela Award for her service to the community in 2015. She taught Legal Research and Writing to first-year law students at the George Washington University Law School for three years. Ms. Carlson grew up in Arlington, Virginia, and earned a Bachelor of Arts in American Studies and Women's Studies from the University of Virginia.

## 2019-2020 DOMESTIC VIOLENCE CLINIC STUDENTS

### **Fall 2019**

Anna Aguillard  
Rachel Bayer  
Meagan Edmonds  
Zach Gaines  
Jessie Gerson  
Hunter Howe  
Katherine Kubak  
Ryan Malo  
Marisa Manzi  
Anni Morales-Kimball  
Isabella Riishogaard  
Junqi Zhang

### **Spring 2020**

Madeline Bardi  
Raymond Barefoot  
Rachel Clarke  
Alexandra Day Coyle  
Katherine Diggins  
Sarah Eberspacher  
Sara Ellis  
Hannah Henderson  
Jermall Keels  
Sarah Ottone  
Alina Pastor-Chermak  
Memmi Rasmussen