

## Goals of the SAFE Program

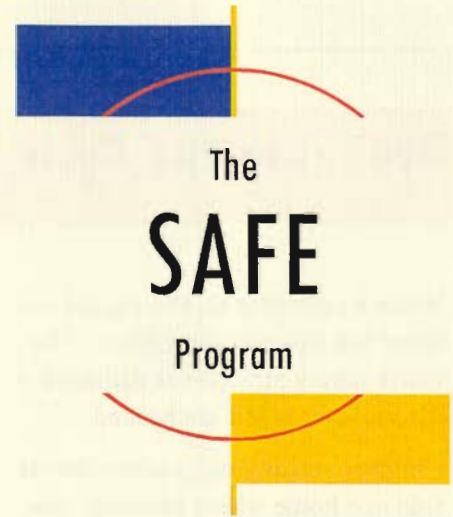
- *To protect the community*
- *To enforce the Court's orders and enhance success of felony domestic violence probationers*
- *To increase the availability of supportive health and social services for families;*
- *To educate parents to promote caring, effective and responsible parenthood;*
- *To protect the family*



### Merced County Probation Department

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## The SAFE Program

### Merced County Probation Department



*Supervise and Alter  
Family Environments*

A program to prevent family violence

## Breaking the Cycle

When a partner is an abuser, the violence has far-reaching effects. The entire family structure is damaged if the violence is left unchecked.

Children suffer greatly when they reside in a home where domestic violence is the norm. The abuse may be physical or emotional, and tends to “beget” more violence in the children, as they mature and seek relationships of their own. Studies show that children who grow up with violence tend to resort to violence and are, themselves, ineffective in dealing with family problems, as adults.

The key to breaking the cycle of family violence is to protect children and provide stable home environments, while treating the abuser. Treatment can be required by legal means, via Court orders, such as probation conditions. With those mandates as a tool, the probation officer can assist the family by enhancing their safety, while ensuring that the offender participates in appropriate therapy. The probation officer is positioned between the offender, treatment providers, the family and the community.

## The Probation Caseload

The Merced County Probation Department has developed the SAFE (Supervise and Alter Family Environments) Program, a specialized probation caseload consisting of felony domestic violence offenders. The program is designed to provide probationers and their families with appropriate services, while protecting the victims and children from further physical and emotional abuse.

Offenders are held accountable for their behavior through concentrated supervision and enforcement of probation orders of the Court. Offenders who do not comply with conditions of probation are returned to Court on a violation of probation. Probation may, at that time, be revoked and the offender may be ordered to serve additional jail time, or may be committed to State prison.



The Courts Make Specific Orders and Hear Violations of Probation

## Special Conditions

Specialized conditions for the caseload include parenting classes and substance abuse counseling; chemical testing to detect any substance abuse; search and

seizure for weapons or other illegal material, and family counseling, where appropriate. Offender's residences and other belongings are searched periodically, to ensure their adherence to the plan of probation.

All conditions are designed to prevent future instances of abuse, to protect and strengthen the family while facilitating rehabilitation for the offender.



The Probation Officer Acts as a Family Advocate and Enforcer

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