

YWCA IS ON A MISSION: Advocacy & Prevention

Meet Legal Advocate Amy Bower and learn about the important work she takes on in the YWCA Wise Options Program



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When people think about the YWCA Northcentral PA, they may be surprised to learn how much advocacy and counseling is offered within our brick walls that help foster feelings of safety, comfort, and encouragement to those seeking our services.

Since 1977, Wise Options has provided confidential services to survivors who have experienced, witnessed, or had a family member involved in domestic violence, sexual violence, or other violent crimes. Services range from confidential emergency shelter for survivors and their children fleeing violence, to community-based services, advocacy, and support. It’s here in Survivor Services that you’ll find Amy Bower, Legal Advocate for the Wise Options program.

As a legal advocate, Amy conducts confidential intakes and assessments for men, women, and children providing individual counseling to victims regarding their legal options, as well as how the process and procedures work.

“I was overwhelmed with fear and anger before my appointment,” said one client. “Amy had a calming effect while explaining the process that put me at ease during each step to obtain my PFA.”

In Amy’s experience, no two situations are ever the same. She works with clients to provide safety plan strategies, as well as accompanies them to courtroom and hospital appointments. She attends abuse and contempt hearings with clients to provide comfort and support during frightening, unnerving, and daunting times. Amy also helps clients through many legal services including No Trespass Orders, Protection From Abuse Orders, Contempt Orders, and emergency relocation just to name a few.

So far, this fiscal year, Amy has handled more than 180 screener appointments. A screener appointment is anytime a staff member completes a client intake, a safety plan/risk assessment, makes an appropriate referral, and prepares paperwork and court documents. These appointments help staff assess the issues at hand in order to better help clients with their specific needs. In all, the legal advocacy department at Wise Options has had over 400 screeners since July 1st, 2021.

While the work is often taxing and at times emotionally charged, Amy has worked for Wise Options for more than three years and couldn’t imagine doing anything else. Amy’s professional experience is enhanced by a true understanding of a survivor’s state of mind and specific circumstances. Amy is a domestic violence survivor herself and was once a client of the YWCA. Her personal background allows her to truly hone into a client’s journey and provide them with a level of service she knows to be critical to their outcome.

“What I have learned is that a healthy relationship doesn’t drag you down. It inspires you to be better,” Amy said.

Long after appointments are held and life-saving paperwork has been filed, it’s Amy’s care and empowering words that stick with clients and make a lasting impact on them as they move forward.

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Amy and all the YWCA staff continuously work to engage our community’s networking services on behalf of those we serve. She works closely with the Lycoming County judges and the court administration team, Prothonotary’s Office, Sheriff’s Office Deputies, and North Penn Legal Service and McCormick Law Firm attorneys.

“Networking is not only about sharing information, but also serves as an avenue to create long-term relationships with mutual benefits that can help our clients succeed,” she said.

To learn more about Violence Prevention & Response Services offered at the YWCA Northcentral PA, please visit us online at www.ywcawilliamsport.org.

All services are free and confidential and can be accessed by calling our
24/7 Crisis Hotline at 1-800-326-8483.