SHEPARD O'DONNELL
MASSACHUSETTS TRIAL LAWYERS

Massachusetts Physician Sex Abuse

Warning Signs and Holding Perpetrators Accountable

www.shepardlawfirm.com

PHYSICIAN SEXUAL ABUSE

Warning Signs of Sexual Abuse by a Doctor

The patient–doctor relationship is built on trust, which can make abuse confusing and hard to name. Trust your instincts — any of these behaviors should raise concern:

- Breast or pelvic exams unrelated to your condition
- Sexually explicit questions or comments
- Touching in an inappropriate manner
- Texting or contact about non-medical issues
- Not properly documenting the visit
- Exams that are unusually long or repetitive
- Sharing explicit details about their own life
- Not explaining the reason for a procedure
- Scheduling appointments outside office hours
- Asking you to keep secrets

▲ You are not to blame. The hospitals and clinics that allowed abuse can also be held accountable.



YOU ARE NOT ALONE

Common Emotions Survivors Experience

Healing looks different for everyone. If you recognize these feelings, know they are a normal response to trauma — and that the abuse was never your fault.

Embarrassment
Fearing judgment, or that no one will believe you.

Shame
Wondering how you ‘let it happen,’ though you couldn’t have known.

Fear
Of being judged or ostracized by family, friends, or colleagues.

Guilt
Wrongly feeling you should have done something to stop it.

Ambivalence
Not fully recognizing the trauma — common with childhood abuse.

Anger
At the abuser and the institutions that failed to protect you.

▲ ‘White-coat’ anxiety, depression, and PTSD are common too. Be patient with yourself. Your feelings are valid.



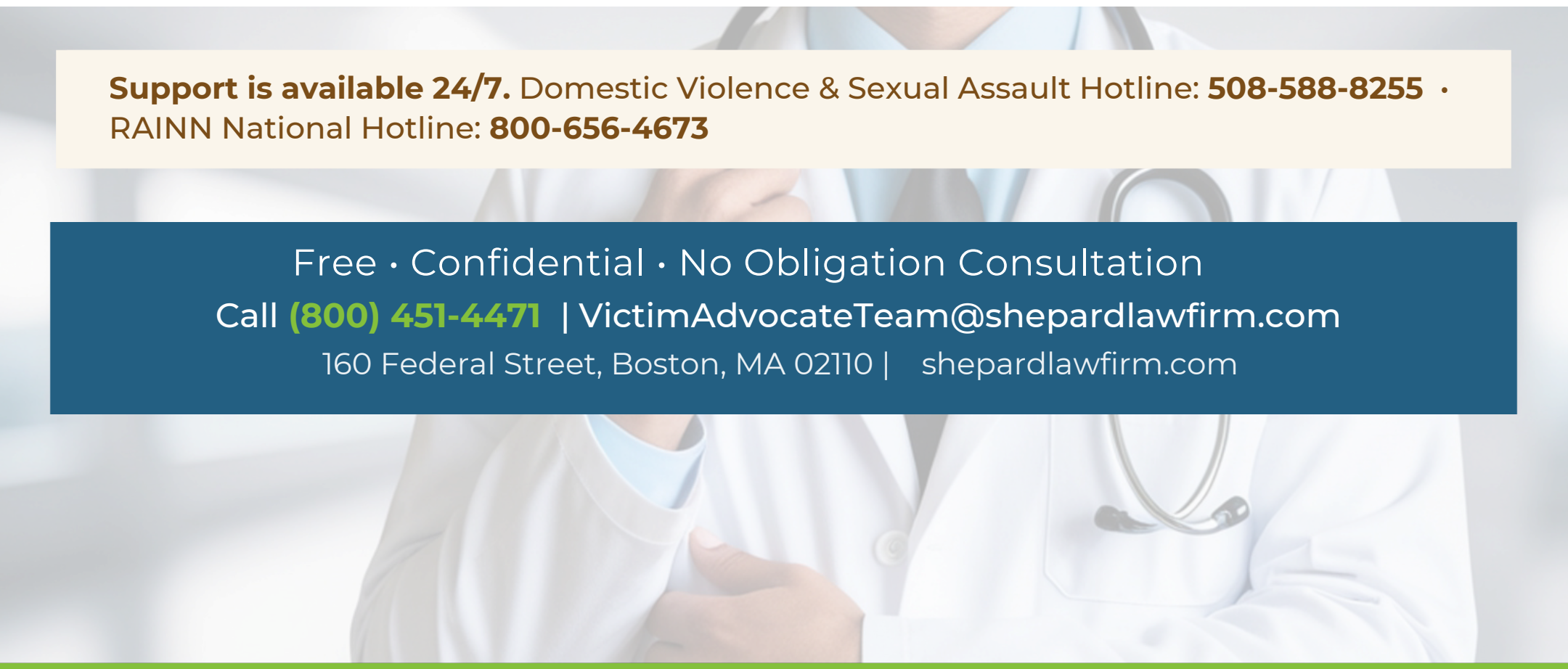
SHEPARD O'DONNELL

TAKING THE NEXT STEP

How to Hold Perpetrators Accountable

You don't have to navigate this alone. These steps can help protect you and preserve your legal options.

1. **Trust your instincts.** If something felt wrong, it deserves to be taken seriously.
2. **Prioritize safety & support.** Reach out to someone you trust or a confidential hotline.
3. **Report the behavior.** You can contact law enforcement or licensing boards at any time.
4. **Write down what you remember.** Dates, names, places, and any messages or communications.
5. **Remember institutions can be liable.** Hospitals, schools, and employers that enabled abuse may share responsibility.
6. **Talk to an experienced attorney.** A free, confidential conversation can explain your options before deadlines pass.



Support is available 24/7. Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault Hotline: **508-588-8255** · RAINN National Hotline: **800-656-4673**

Free · Confidential · No Obligation Consultation

Call **(800) 451-4471** | VictimAdvocateTeam@shepardlawfirm.com

160 Federal Street, Boston, MA 02110 | shepardlawfirm.com