**Education Options:**

A Summary of Resources for Survivors of Domestic Violence

Many abusers purposely limit the educational opportunities for survivors as a way to increase isolation and financial dependence. Obtaining financial independence can be a critical step that allows survivors to leave an abusive person and looking at educational options is a piece of getting there.

**What are my options?**

There are several ways to develop advanced skills, pursue higher education, learn an advanced trade or obtain a professional license. By completing a GED, undergraduate or advanced degree, certificate, or on-the-job training, you are more likely to get a better job and advance in your career. In fact, people with more education generally earn higher salaries.

* **General Educational Development (GED):** this is a program to obtain a high school diploma. Most businesses, colleges, and technical schools recognize the GED as the equivalent to a high school diploma.
* **On-The-Job Training (OJT):** this can be provided at the work-site. Training ranges from a month to a year or more and is sometimes supplemented with classroom training.
* **Community Colleges:** these provide associate degrees and the opportunity to transfer to a four-year college or university. Community colleges are often less expensive than other colleges and universities. Many also provide online classes to assist with schedules and location barriers.
* **Trade and Vocational Schools:** these provide sufficient training to work in a specific profession. A trade school may be appropriate if you know what you want to do and prefer hands-on learning.
* **Online Education:** this is an alternative to trade schools, community colleges, and four-year colleges and universities. Most online education programs allow you to work at your convenience as long as you can have access to a computer.
  + **Free Courses:** Many colleges and universities offer a variety of free courses online, called “massive open online courses” (MOOCs). Look to the following resources for more information:
    - **EdX** – A non-profit listing schools and courses available: <https://www.edx.org/>
    - **Coursera** – An educational company partnering with universities to make free online courses available: - <https://www.coursera.org/>A career counselor may be very helpful in assisting you in developing or changing your career path. They may also be helpful in finding scholarships or creating payment plans. Most colleges and universities provide these staff members for your needs. Visit the National Career Development Association (NCDA) – [www.ncda.org](http://www.ncda.org) – for information on finding a career counselor in your community and resources for choosing a career that best suits your needs.