

Dana M. Bellingrath:

Domestic violence in North Carolina requires a certain type of relationship, but it doesn't have to be marital. Certainly, a marriage falls into that category. But it can be any household member. It can be a parent, two people who are parents together, anybody who's been in a romantic relationship with one another, like dating partners. There's certain types of relationships that are required for it to fall into the category of domestic violence.

There are three ways that somebody can get a domestic violence protective order. There's been a threat of violence or actual violence that's been committed against somebody. There's been a threat to commit violence, or there's just been so much harassment. And harassment is defined, there's very specific acts, but an engaged in an ongoing, repetitive course of pattern of conduct that causes the victim to feel so harassed and stressed and fearful that it starts to affect them physically and emotionally, and it's causing their life to be so difficult. And so they need the protective order for that reason.