



## NY may require stylists to undergo domestic violence training



By Laura Ly, CNN  
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**New York (CNN)** For Anthony Civitano, the bond between a hairdresser and his or her client is "as strong as a bond there is between relatives and friends."

A hairdresser can be someone's "priest, their therapist, their confidante," said Civitano, a second-generation hairdresser with more than 25 years of experience in the industry. "There's a trust factor -- you're allowing them to touch you."

It's that type of trust that prompted New York State Assembly member Linda B. Rosenthal to sponsor a bill to require domestic violence and sexual assault awareness education for all professionals in New York's cosmetology industry.

Under the bill, salon workers such as hairdressers and nail stylists would be trained to recognize signs of abuse and be given "instruction on how to help victims in dangerous situations and provide them with the appropriate resources to seek help."



The one-hour course would be a requirement for all cosmetology professionals seeking to obtain or renew a license.

"People confide in their hairstylists all the time. They [the stylists] just don't know how to respond in an active way. The training will give them the tools to answer in a way that is most helpful to their client," Rosenthal said.

Stylists also will be trained to identify signs of physical abuse, such as bumps or bruises on someone's scalp. Stylists won't be required to report any signs of suspected abuse to law enforcement, and there are no punitive measures if a stylist does not report abuse, Rosenthal said.

New York State's domestic violence and sexual assault hotline received more than 250,000 calls in 2015, according to statistics from New York State Office for the Prevention of Domestic Violence (NYSOPDV). Police officers responded to 286,365 domestic incidents statewide.

The notion of educating beauty specialists in domestic violence and sexual assault awareness is not new. The ["Cut it Out" initiative](#), now a program affiliated with the Professional Beauty Organization, has offered such training to professionals since 2003.

If Rosenthal's bill is passed, New York would join only one other state where such training is mandated by law. Last August, the Illinois State Assembly passed a law requiring similar training of stylists as part of their licensing process. The law took effect January 1.

Since the passing of the law in Illinois, more than 3,500 salon professionals received domestic violence and sexual assault training at an industry conference in March, according to Michele Rabenda, a representative from [Chicago Says No More](#), an advocacy organization that initiated the bill.

Rosenthal's bill has been referred to New York state's economic development committee and awaits its review. In the meantime, some domestic violence survivor advocates hope that the bill will expand to include further training beyond a one-hour requirement.

"I think it's a good way to start, but the training would have to have a continued approach, so people can continue to refresh themselves," said Saima Anjam, director of public policy at the NY State Coalition Against Domestic Violence. "This is really a health and safety issue, so if this is something we can codify into law, I think it's a great idea."

Civitano, who owns eight beauty schools in New York and Florida, said the bill may require him to adjust the curriculum hours in his schools, but said he has seen such training help survivors get the help they need.

"I've been in the business for over 25 years. I've personally seen it help," Civitano said. "Making anything mandatory is a slippery slope. It could be somewhat overreaching, but the right intent is there and it just has to be implemented well."

<http://www.cnn.com/2017/05/03/us/stylist-domestic-abuse-training/index.html>