

Awareness-raising activity ideas

NATIONAL INITIATIVES

Purple Ribbons

The purple ribbon is used nationally to raise awareness about domestic violence. Purple ribbons can be made into pins and passed out at local events, embroidered on t-shirts, hats and bags, tied to the antennae of police cars, hung on doors, wrapped around trees, etc. In addition to the demonstration of support for victims and advocates, the display of purple ribbons throughout a community conveys a powerful message that there's no place for domestic violence in the homes, neighborhoods, workplaces or schools of its citizens.

Clothesline Project Display

The Clothesline Project comprises T-shirts designed by survivors of abuse and those who have lost loved ones to it. The shirts are hung on a clothesline display to honor survivors and memorialize victims; help with the healing process for survivors and people who have lost a loved one to violence; and educate, document, and raise society's awareness of about the crimes of violence against women and children. Most events include a shirt-making session held in conjunction with a display of recently or previously created shirts. For more information, visit www.clotheslineproject.org.

Empty Place at the Table Exhibit

This exhibit serves as a visual reminder of the lethality of domestic violence by memorializing women killed by their abusers. A table with victims' place settings, photographs and personal belongings, as well as newspaper clippings about the murder, is set up somewhere with high visibility in the community—a library, bank, post office, church, etc.—to help garner awareness, community involvement and education on domestic violence. For more information, visit www.wrcnepa.org/community/empty.php.

Silent Witness Initiative

The Silent Witness campaign is a national initiative to raise awareness about domestic violence. Life-sized red, wooden figures representing women killed by abusive partners are displayed in the community. The display can be moved throughout the month for maximum visibility. For more information, visit www.silentwitness.net.

OTHER IDEAS

Table Tent Campaign

Print table tents with a reminder that October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month and information about services and how to access them. Distribute table tents to area restaurants and hospital cafeterias.

Utility Company Campaign

Ask local utility companies to include a message about domestic violence in their October bills. Sometimes banks are also willing to include information in their monthly statements.

Library Displays

Contact public libraries in your area and provide them with materials for a display.

Chili Cook-Off

Have a chili cooking contest with prizes and entertainment. Invite individual cooks, teams and restaurants to compete, with tasting open to the public. The proceeds benefit your local domestic violence program.

Wish List Drive

Put posters in areas with high visibility displaying your local domestic violence program's wish list and make literature and information on domestic violence available. For every item donated, the contributor's name could be entered in a drawing for a grand prize.

Ringling of the Bells

Encourage your communities of faith to ring their bells or observe silence to honor the memory of women and children in your community who experience domestic violence every day.

Visual Arts Contest

Have local artists create work around a theme such as "peace at home," "the deafening silence of domestic violence", or "together we can end domestic violence." These pieces could be auctioned off to benefit your local domestic violence program. Or, hold an art or poster design contest at your local high school or college to help raise awareness.

REQUEST A PROCLAMATION FROM PUBLIC OFFICIALS

Public officials—such as mayors or county executives—can use the sample proclamation below to proclaim October as Domestic Violence Awareness Month in your city or county. Securing an official proclamation can help ensure government involvement and attract media attention to your community’s observance of DVAM. Contact your mayor or county executive’s office at least one month before DVAM to request the proclamation. Often, a public official will hold a public signing of the proclamation and will invite community stakeholders and local media representatives to attend. This can be a great way to launch DVAM.

Domestic Violence Awareness Month, October 2007

WHEREAS, {include local statistic on services/domestic violence arrests/etc.};

WHEREAS, Missouri domestic violence programs provided a safe place to stay to more than 10,400 women and children in 2006, but where forced to turn away 5,625 others due to lack of space;

WHEREAS, Missouri law enforcement agencies recorded 39,850 domestic violence incidents this past year—the highest number since 1999;

WHEREAS, domestic violence is not confined to any specific group or people, but effects people of all races, backgrounds, economic levels, education levels, family structures, ages and religions;

WHEREAS, the crime of domestic violence violates members of our community’s privacy, dignity, security and humanity in the form of physical, emotional, sexual, psychological and economic abuse; and

WHEREAS, advocates, professionals, volunteers and community members concerned with domestic violence will devote the month of October to raising awareness on the causes, interventions and prevention of this devastating crime;

Now, therefore I, _____, as {Mayor, County Executive, etc.} of _____, do hereby proclaim the month of October as

Domestic Violence Awareness Month

And reaffirm this {city’s/county’s/etc.} commitment to ending domestic violence in our community.

_____ Signature

_____ Date



domestic violence awareness month

.....| October 2007

Sample news release

GET THE WORD OUT WITH A NEWS RELEASE

Domestic Violence Awareness Month offers you the opportunity to raise public awareness about the impact of domestic violence, the vital need for victim services, and the services your local domestic violence program provides. Your local media outlets—news-paper, radio and television—should have a strong interest in helping you spread the word about Domestic Violence Awareness Month. Send your news release to media outlets at least ten days before you would like to see coverage. The sample news release below can help you get started on your own, localized release.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

{Date}

CONTACT: {Name/Title/Organization}

{Phone Number}

{E-mail}

{Your Community} Joins 2007 National Domestic Violence Awareness Month Observance

{City, State}—October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month, a time for all Americans to learn about domestic violence, reflect on the costs of the crime to our society, and promote laws, policies and programs to improve services to victims, hold offenders accountable and prevent domestic violence in our communities.

During the past two decades, Missouri has made great strides in securing rights, protections and services for victims of domestic violence. Lawmakers and domestic violence advocates have worked tirelessly to criminalize domestic violence and marital rape, establish Orders of Protection with criminal penalties for violations, obtain funding for domestic violence services, ensure confidentiality for the safety and dignity of victims, strengthen Child Welfare Laws to protect battered mothers and their children, and enhance penalties for offenders to match the seriousness of the crime.

Yet many domestic violence victims have not experienced the promise of such progress. We know that despite these advancements, each year, more than 50 percent of domestic violence incidents are never reported to the police according to the U.S. Department of Justice. Some victims may not recognize their experience as a crime. At times, not all protections are enforced. And, some victims may face difficulty when trying to access services—last year, 5,625 Missouri women and children were unable to find shelter at a domestic violence program due to lack of resources according to the Missouri Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence.

“Behind these numbers are victims—women and children in our communities—who often need help and protection that they never receive,” {organization spokesperson} said. “It is vital that we take the time to raise awareness of domestic violence and the need for additional resources to ensure help is available to all who need it.”

{City/County} will kick off commemorate Domestic Violence Awareness Month with {describe event}. Special events are planned from {date} to {date}. Among these activities are {list examples and attach a summary of main events (who, what, where, when) to the news release}.

Community members are encouraged to join in this month’s activities and get involved in helping victims of domestic violence. For additional information about Domestic Violence Awareness Month and additional information on domestic violence, please contact {agency/organization} at {phone number} or visit {organization’s} Web site at {Web site address}.

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Domestic violence statistics

- ▶ One in four women will experience domestic violence in her lifetime.¹
- ▶ One in five high school girls report being abused by a boyfriend.²
- ▶ In Missouri, 39,850 incidents of intimate partner violence were reported to law enforcement in 2006.³
- ▶ About half of the incidents of intimate partner violence experienced by women are reported to the police. Of those reported, the offender was immediately arrested only 20 percent of the time.⁴
- ▶ The majority of domestic violence victims are women. Females are 84 percent of abuse victims and 86 percent of victims abused by a boyfriend or girlfriend.⁵
- ▶ Seventy-five percent of domestic violence victims defend themselves during the attack.⁶
- ▶ The percentage of female murder victims killed by a current or former intimate partner has remained at about 30 percent since 1976.⁷
- ▶ Intimate partner violence occurs less often between women in same-sex relationships. While 30.4 percent of women in opposite sex relationships have reported abuse, only 11 percent of women in same-sex relationships have reported similar abuse. However, men in same-sex relationships report intimate partner violence almost twice as often as men in opposite-sex relationships—15 percent as opposed to 7.7 percent.⁸
- ▶ In a study on women with disabilities, 56 percent reported abuse. The abuser was their male intimate partner 80 percent of the time.⁹
- ▶ Women with unwanted or unplanned pregnancies have four times the odds of experiencing violence by their partners than women with intended pregnancies.¹⁰

1. Tjaden, P., & Thonennes, N. (2000). *Extent, nature and consequences of intimate partner violence: Findings from the National Violence Against Women Survey*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice.

2. Silverman, J., et al. (2001) Dating violence against adolescent girls and associated substance use, unhealthy weight control, sexual risk behavior, pregnancy and suicidality. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 286(5).

3. *Missouri Uniform Crime Reporting Program Supplemental Domestic Violence Incident Report* (2006). Missouri Uniform Crime Report Statistical Query, Missouri State Highway Patrol Statistical Analysis Center, www.mshp.dps.mo.gov/MSHPWeb/SAC/index.html.

4. Greenfield, L. A., et al. (1998). *Violence by intimates: Analysis of data of crimes by current or former spouses, boyfriends and girlfriends*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice.

5. Durose, M., et al. (2005). *Family violence statistics: Including statistics on strangers and acquaintances*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice.

6. Greenfield, L. A., et al. (1998). *Violence by intimates: Analysis of data of crimes by current or former spouses, boyfriends and girlfriends*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice.

7. Rennison, C. M., & Welchans, S. (2000). *Intimate partner violence*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice.

8. Tjaden, P., & Thonennes, N. (2000). *Extent, nature and consequences of intimate partner violence: Findings from the National Violence Against Women Survey*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice.

9. Wayne State University (2004). *Michigan study on women with disabilities*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice.

10. Gazmararian, J. A., et al. (1995) Prevalence of violence against pregnant women. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 275(24).



domestic violence awareness month

.....| October 2007

Additional resources

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS MONTH PROJECT (DVAM): www.dvam.vawnet.org

The National Resource Center on Domestic Violence coordinates this national project to support domestic violence programs' awareness and education efforts for Domestic Violence Awareness Month (DVAM). On this web site, you will find additional resources to help you plan your DVAM activities and events.

NATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE (NRCDV): www.nrcdv.org

The National Resource Center on Domestic Violence is a project of the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence and provides support to all organizations and individuals working to end violence in the lives of victims and their children through technical assistance, training and information on response to and prevention of domestic violence.

NATIONAL COALITION AGAINST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE (NCADV): www.ncadv.org

NCADV serves as a national information and referral center for the general public, media, battered women and their children, allied and member agencies and organizations.

NATIONAL ONLINE RESOURCE CENTER ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN (VAWnet): www.vawnet.org

VAW net is a project of the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence (PCADV) and the National Resource Center on Domestic Violence (NRCDV). VAWnet provides support for the development, implementation and maintenance of effective violence against women intervention and prevention efforts at the national, state and local levels through electronic communication and information dissemination.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE, BUREAU OF JUSTICE STATISTICS: www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs

The Bureau of Justice Statistics Web site provides a variety of national statistics regarding the crimes of domestic and sexual violence in addition to links to other data sources.

NATIONAL CENTER ON DOMESTIC AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE (NCDSV): www.ncdsv.org

NCDSV provides training, consulting and advocacy at local, state, regional and national levels.

NATIONAL NETWORK TO END DOMESTIC VIOLENCE (NNEDV): www.nnedv.org

NNEDV ensures that federal legislation and public policy are responsive to the needs of victims of domestic violence.