

October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month



No one is exempt

Amy Davidson
ADVERTISING MANAGER

Domestic Violence Awareness Month is to celebrate survivors, but many may be mourning the loss of loved ones. This is also a time to make awareness throughout the community that there is help and to never feel there is no one out there to save someone or themselves from domestic violence.

Domestic violence doesn't just always have to be physical. It may be emotional, sexual abuse, or financial, as well as neglect. This type of violence can happen to anyone regardless of age or gender.

Many that are in a domestic violence situation don't even realize it be-

cause they accept the behavior. No one deserves to be treated in any way and should never feel alone.

There is hope and survival. Anyone can contact local authorities, dial 911, or Safe Passage at their 24/7 helpline, toll free at 1-877-733-1990 or 812-933-1990. You can go to their website at www.safepassageinc.org or to Safe Place, the sexual assault crisis center at <https://safeplaceforhope.org/>.

Safe Passage and Safe Place serve Ripley, Dearborn, Franklin, Ohio, Switzerland, and Jefferson counties. They are completely confidential and there is no fees for shelter or any support services.

Ripley County resident shares personal story of abuse and triumph -

This is the first year I've been openly able to say I'm not scared to tell my story. It all started out with yelling fights, which led to me being in tears, then when I became unscared and spoke up for myself, the hitting started.

It was at first a push because I would not be home on time and to him it was because I was out cheating.

Then it became my stuff being broken and thrown towards me because I would not give him what he asked for.

Then the punches started and with them came the excuses I had to make up for my family to believe I was just clumsy so I didn't get hit again for telling them the truth and someone finding out.

Three phones, a laptop, a mirror and a window later – finally people starting seeing what I thought I could hide.

I was beaten to the point to where I called for help and no one was there.

Over the six years this happened, only two people stepped in and helped me and I'll forever be grateful for them.

I was beaten to the point I had panic attacks just thinking if I left and he found me and what the consequences would be.

After our second child was born he knocked me out with the walker that my baby used.

Before my third child, I had to protect him in the womb because the beating never ceased even when I was pregnant.

After the birth of my third child is when I escaped – never a proud moment for me on the reason why – but I knew I was safe.


Now I know this story was a bit everywhere, but I am here standing stronger than I ever thought I'd be! I may not be the same person I once was, but that's okay because then I didn't know my own worth and now I do.

Thank you to all that will take the time to read this.

Please anyone out there in fear – there is never an excuse for any kind of abuse!

Never settle to be controlled!

“Don't believe when they say they will change!”



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**The Prosecutor's Office stands
with victims of domestic violence**

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stop the violence

Ripley County resident shares personal story of dating violence

Forty years. It took 40 years for me to finally speak the truth out loud. I am a survivor of dating violence. I am a survivor of date rape.

True love should never hurt. Actually, true love doesn't hurt. That's how you know it's not true - it hurts. It mames, it leaves scars, both physical and mental.

I was young, actually only 15 years old. He was young, but a little older, 19 years old. Now I know he would have been taken to jail and punished for what happened. But, then the shock and bewilderment kept me from saying anything for four decades.

Of course I knew it wasn't right. I knew you shouldn't have to be taken to the hospital and stitched back together. I knew your fingernails shouldn't be ripped with fingers bleeding. I knew you shouldn't completely black out and not even know what happened. I knew the amount of blood should never have been there. But, still there were no words to say then. Nothing.

I thought I loved him. I was young, he more experienced. I thought we would be together for life. My young mind just thought hugging and kissing would be okay. However, things heated up on that summer night so long ago and even though I begged and cried for him to stop, he didn't. He didn't say a word. Nothing. The violence took place without any sound from him, only my cries for help. He didn't stop even when I passed out.

When I came to realize what had happened, he was standing outside the car calmly smoking a cigarette. "Get these clothes on," he ordered. I did so without a sound.

"Get out of the car," he said. I did so without a sound. "Hold your pocketbook over the back of your dress to cover the blood," he said. I did just that and went into my house as if nothing had happened.

The ordeal soon saw me in an emergency room still not sure why he would treat me in such a way. I thought we were friends. I thought we loved each other. I really thought this would be a lifelong relationship. I was wrong.

Later he would tell me that he went and hid that night afraid that the police would come after him.

Even then, I didn't say anything. I never went out with him again.

From that day forward my life was different. There was no one to tell. No one to talk to. No one who knew my secret. It would remain mine and his alone.

Twenty years later, he contacted me and told me he was sorry. I still didn't tell anyone. I still couldn't believe that was actually what happened. He affirmed that it had, I had passed out, he was scared, but continued because he was selfish. He said he didn't want me to die, but, wasn't willing to take the punishment the law would dole out if what he had done was ever made public.

It took 20 more years for me to even talk about the situation. Long years of hurt, pain, and shame - that really wasn't mine to bear. I was just a girl.

Now, I accept no blame or shame. There is still hurt and pain, but that too has eased with the passing of time.

I am a successful businesswoman, mother and grandmother, who is a fierce advocate for survivor rights. I am passionate about those who hurt others and definitely know the survivors need to tell their story to someone. Not necessarily public, but each one to their own preference.

I am completely overwhelmed when I hear words like "she was asking for it" or "what did she think was going to happen with that dress on". It almost takes me down a path I can't get back from.

I want people to know there is a path forward. It's not always easy. But, you can still make a good life for yourself. You can vow to avoid situations that might even given someone the opportunity to be hurtful.

I have a loving husband, who has been kind and gentle always. He is my greatest supporter - and stalwart friend.

My advice would be simply this: Don't wait 40 years to say something. Say it now and get the help you will need. Don't let anyone take your happiness away.

Ripley Publishing Company thanks those who have been brave to share their stories and have kept the names anonymous. They are true people in our community who have been through traumatic experiences and are living proof there is a way out. We encourage those who might be experiencing some of these situations to tell someone... call for help. You can remain anonymous.

Thank you to the advertisers who help to bring the message of Domestic Violence Awareness to our readers. You truly put your money behind the message and we thank you.

Did you know?

Data from the United States Department of Justice indicates that partner violence accounted for 20 percent of all violent crime in the U.S. in 2018. The World Health Organization defines intimate partner violence as behavior within an intimate relationship that causes physical, sexual or psychological harm. Such violence can include acts of physical aggression, sexual coercion, psychological abuse, and controlling behaviors. Violence perpetrated by both current and former spouses and partners falls under the umbrella of intimate partner violence. Domestic violence is so prevalent that the National Network to End Domestic Violence reports that it fields more than 19,000 calls on a typical day. Anyone who is a victim of domestic violence or suspects a loved one or acquaintance is being abused is urged to call the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-7233 (SAFE) or 1-800-787-3224 (TTY) right away. TF21A409

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Ripley and Franklin counties to receive grant money

The Indiana Criminal Justice Institute has announced grants to public and non-profit organizations in the amount of \$3M from the (ICJI) through the STOP (services, training, officers, and prosecutors), Violence Against Women Formula Grant Program.

Ripley County is among those on the receiving end to the tune of \$81,619 being awarded the Ripley County Prosecutor’s Office. Nearby Franklin County was also the recipient of \$24,898.

The program is designed to support communities in their efforts to develop and strengthen law enforcement and prosecution strategies to combat violence against women, as well as enhance victim services and safety.

“This funding is about making sure that more communities have access to the resources they need to prevent victimization and bring violent

offenders to justice,” said Devon McDonald, ICJI Executive Director. “It’s important that we do everything we can to help break the cycle of violence and shore up support for victims.”

Established by the Violence Against Women Act of 1994, the STOP Violence Against Women Formula Grant Program promotes a coordinated effort to improve the criminal justice system’s response to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking.

The funds are provided by the Office on Violence Against Women under the U.S. Department of Justice.

This year, the grants will be used to provide legal advocacy, counseling, training for law enforcement and court personnel, and victim support services.

Funding will also help pay for special prosecutors and investiga-

tors who are dedicated to handling cases involving crimes against women.

“For most victims, obtaining a protective order or pursuing legal action is uncharted territory, but we don’t want that to be a barrier to seeking safety or justice,” said Kim Lambert, ICJI Victim Services Director. “There are resources and advocates who can help that will stand with and alongside victims throughout the process. This funding expands those efforts.”

The grants were approved by the ICJI Board of Trustees in September and made available to organizations starting this month.

As a formula grant, funding was distributed based on a predetermined amount, with a majority (96%) going to law enforcement, prosecution, and victim service programs.

The remaining 4% was allocated to court programs.

Recognize teen dating violence

Many changes take place during a person’s teenage years. In addition to the physical manifestations of puberty, which bring hormonal shifts and heightened sexual awareness, emotional and psychological changes can occur. This often is a time when social circles develop, and also when many teens begin to date.

Teenage dating can be both exciting and tumultuous. Teens may be so anxious to feel accepted and loved that they overlook some of the warning signs of a bad relationship. In such instances, teens may compromise their own safety in an effort to keep relationships alive.

To ensure teens stay safe while dating, parents must speak to their children about violence, particularly as it pertains to dating. Violence includes physical abuse and more. Sexual assault, psychological and emotional violence or even stalking also must be discussed with teens. Parents should emphasize that healthy relationships are built on honesty, trust, equality, and compromise.

Teen dating violence may be more common than parents know. Youth.gov says a national survey of teens in the United States found

that 10 percent of them had been the victims of physical dating violence in the past year, and approximately 20 percent of adolescents reported psychological or verbal abuse within the previous year.

Friends and family close to teens who are of dating age can take steps to recognize and thwart teen dating violence.

- Use respectful language that does not promote stereotypes or sexism and is unlikely to be perceived as condescending by teens.
- Learn the warning signs of abuse. These can include a drop in grades; disinterest in previous hobbies or activities; physical bruises; symptoms of depression or anxiety; and other changes in behavior.
- Keep an open dialogue with teens who are dating to ensure that the relationship

is healthy and safe.

- Reduce risk factors that can increase the likelihood of someone being subjected to violence in a relationship. Exposure to stressful life events, coming from disadvantaged homes, participation in risky behaviors, participating in peer violence, and being exposed to harsh parenting all increase the risk that teens will be subjected to relationship-related violence.
 - Lessen the stigma for those who may have experienced violence coming forward by openly communicating and supporting others.
 - Show respect to others and be proud and respectful of who you are. Be a positive role model in all you do.
- Teen dating violence is a problem that requires attention and a voice so that it can be reduced. TF192786

Protect our families



Elect Kimberly Jolly

for South Ripley School Board

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Warning signs of domestic violence

Domestic violence is a serious issue that’s more prevalent than people may realize. Data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention indicates that nearly 20 people per minute are victims of physical violence by an intimate partner in the United States, and researchers suggest the pandemic contributed to increased instances of domestic violence.

A study from the University of California, Davis released in February 2021 found that 39 percent of the nearly 400 adults surveyed indicated they had experienced violence in their relationships during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Researchers noted that the increased social isolation during the pandemic created environments in which victims and aggressors, or potential aggressors in a relationship, could not easily separate themselves from each other.

Victims of domestic violence often feel helpless against their aggressors, and those feelings might have been exacerbated during the pandemic, when people were urged to stay home as much as possible. But domestic violence victims are not alone. Anyone can help by learning to recognize the warning signs that someone is being abused, and WebMD notes that such

signs include:

- Excuses for injuries
 - Personality changes, like low self-esteem in someone who had previously been a confident individual
 - Constantly checking in with their partner
 - Never having money on hand
 - Overly worried about pleasing their partner
 - Skipping out on work, school or social outings for no clear reason
 - Wearing clothes that don’t align with the season, such as long sleeve shirts in summer to cover bruises
- Concerned individuals also can learn to spot the warning signs of an abus-

er. According to the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, abusers come from all groups, cultures, religions, and economic backgrounds. In fact, the NCADV notes that one study found that nine out of 10 abusers had no criminal records and were generally law-abiding outside their homes. That can make it hard to spot abusers, though the NCADV indicates that such men and women may exhibit certain warning signs, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Extreme jealousy
- Possessiveness
- Unpredictability
- A bad temper
- Cruelty to animals

- Verbal abuse
- Extremely controlling behavior
- Antiquated beliefs about gender roles within relationships
- Forced sex or disregard of their partner’s unwillingness to have sex
- Sabotage of birth control methods or refusal to honor agreed upon methods
- Blaming victims for anything bad that happens
- Sabotage or obstruction of the victim’s ability to work or attend school
- Controls all the finances
- Abuse of other family members, children or pets
- Accusations of the victim flirting with others or having an affair

- Control of what their victim wears and how the victim acts
 - Demeaning the victim, either privately or publicly
 - Embarrassment or humiliation of the victim in front of others
 - Harassment of the victim at work
- Instances of domestic violence have been on the rise since the onset of the pandemic. Anyone who is a victim or suspects a loved one or acquaintance is a victim of domestic violence is encouraged to call the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-7233 (SAFE) or 1-800-787-3224 (TTY) immediately. TF21A407



Stop Tearing Families Apart... Break the Silence on Domestic Violence

Asking for your support • Vote Randel McIntosh
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Ripley County Sheriff's Office



We Love Our Families!

We support National Domestic Violence Abuse Awareness Month.