



A HISTORY OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS MONTH

By Chad Felts

The first Domestic Violence Awareness Month (DVAM) was observed in 1987. This nationwide recognition evolved from an annual “Day of Unity” event, first organized by the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence in October 1981. The original intent was to connect advocates across the country who were working to end violence against women and their children. The Day of Unity soon evolved into a week-long event, and included a wide variety of programs at the local, state, and national levels. Even from the start, these diverse programs had several common themes – honoring victims and survivors of domestic violence, and acknowledging the efforts of those working to end domestic violence.

In 1987, a formal month-long recognition of domestic violence was organized, and coincided with the initiation of the first nationwide domestic violence toll-free hotline. In 1989, Congress enacted legislation which officially designated October as the national awareness month for domestic violence. In keeping with the event’s history, a Day of Unity is still celebrated on the first Monday of Domestic Violence Awareness Month each year.

The Importance of Awareness

In the United States, an average of 20 people experience intimate partner physical violence every minute. This equates to more than 10 million abuse victims annually. On average, domestic violence hotlines nationwide receive over 20,000 calls each day. Across the country, intimate partner violence accounts for 15% of all violent crime. In Virginia, that percentage is even higher – in 2017, approximately 22.5% of all violent crimes were committed against family members or intimate dating partners. In 2016, one-third of all homicides committed in Virginia were classified as family and intimate partner (FIP) homicides, as determined by the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner’s FIP Homicide Surveillance Project.



Nationwide statistics provided by the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence (NCADV). Virginia statistics provided by the 2018 Annual Report on Domestic and Sexual Violence in Virginia, prepared by the Office of the Attorney General.

Domestic Violence Prevention

By Anya Shaffer

Domestic violence is a preventable public health problem that occurs across the lifespan and can begin to occur when individuals first begin dating. Experiencing domestic violence can lead to a variety of negative consequences. In addition to physical injury and death, adverse health outcomes are associated with domestic violence, including a range of cardiovascular, gastrointestinal, reproductive, musculoskeletal, and nervous system conditions. These consequences highlight the importance of preventing incidents of domestic violence.

Research has identified a variety of factors that increase the risk of perpetration and victimization of domestic violence.

Likewise, protective factors have been identified that decrease the risk of perpetration and victimization. Risk and protective factors occur individually, in relationships, in communities and on a broad societal level. Effective prevention programming should aim to reduce the modifiable risk factors that lead to intimate partner violence, and increase the modifiable protective factors that decrease risk.

More information can be found in the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s publication: *Preventing Intimate Partner Violence Across the Lifespan: A Technical Package of Programs, Policies and Practices* (www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/ipv-technicalpackages.pdf)

The Lethality Assessment Program (LAP) in Virginia

The Who, What, Why, and How

By Andi Martin

WHAT IS LAP?

LAP stands for **Lethality Assessment Program**. It includes a protocol whereby trained police officers on the scene of an intimate partner violence call assess a victim's risk for serious injury or death using the LAP Screen. Officers immediately link "High-Danger" victims to the community-based domestic violence hotline in their area with the goal of having victims receive program services. The LAP protocol in Virginia is based off of the Maryland model. The LAP Screen is evidence-based, quick, and easy.

WHO'S INVOLVED?

The Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services, Virginia Office of Attorney General, and Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Action Alliance make up the statewide LAP team. The statewide LAP team provides training and technical assistance to jurisdictions in implementing and sustaining LAP. Local LAP implementation requires the agreement and cooperation of a law enforcement agency and a local domestic violence agency that offers hotline services. There are approximately 45 jurisdictions that have implemented LAP in Virginia.

HOW IS IT DONE?

Following an initial intimate partner violence investigation, a law enforcement officer administers an eleven-question screen with the victim. Answers to the screen will indicate

whether the victim is in high danger of being killed or seriously injured in the future. The adopted LAP protocol requires the officer to put all "High-Danger" victims in immediate contact with the local domestic violence hotline. The hotline advocate will provide immediate services and get the victim into follow-up services in the days that follow. This is a stark contrast to an officer handing a victim a brochure, or an advocate cold-calling a victim days after the offense.

WHY DO LAP?

Homicide prevention. Studies have shown that a great majority of domestic violence homicide victims had not been in contact with domestic violence services prior to their murder. LAP is designed to identify victims most at risk of serious injury or death and get them in touch with relevant services.

ARE YOU INTERESTED?

Do you want to learn more? Do you want to implement LAP in your community? You can find more information about LAP through the Office of the Attorney General website: www.oag.state.va.us/programs-initiatives/lethality-assessment-program or by contacting the OAG LAP Coordinator, Morgan Abbate, at MAbbate@oag.state.va.us.

In honor of October being Domestic Violence Awareness Month, DCJS offered a free training titled, "Navigating Rocky Relationships: How to Address College Intimate Partner Violence". Held on the campus of William & Mary, this training featured advocate, author, and motivational speaker, [Susan Omilian](#). She presented "Telling Maggie's Story: Exploring the Myths about Dating Violence". Maggie, Ms. Omilian's niece, was tragically killed as a result of intimate partner violence while in college. In telling Maggie's story, Ms. Omilian explored the myths of dating violence and the action that can be taken to address dating violence among young adults. She also shared how to create opportunities for resiliency and thrivership for young adult survivors of domestic violence. In addition to hearing from Ms. Omilian, DCJS staff conducted "One Love's Escalation Workshop Training" with students, community members, and victim-serving professionals who want to learn more about how to identify an unhealthy relationship and how to help a friend and/or family member who is in an unhealthy relationship. [One Love](#) is an organization whose mission is to educate young adults about healthy relationships. The organization was formed after Yeardeley Love was killed by her ex-boyfriend during her senior year at the University of Virginia.

resilience

/re'zilyens/ noun.

the capacity to recover quickly from difficulties; toughness

By Dione Bassett

Resilience is internal. And, with the right people and support, it can be created and maintained. A priceless gift. In human services, we have the amazing opportunity to help others become resilient and empower them to rise above the terrible experiences of their lives. I recently read a quote that I love by Bryan Stevenson, "Being broken is what makes us human. We all have our reasons. Sometimes, we're fractured by the choices we make; sometimes by things beyond our control. But our brokenness is also the source of our common humanity and our shared search for comfort, meaning, and healing." There are new, innovative ways to promote healing and resiliency in the Victims Services field and they are proving to be effective. Yoga is one of them. One way to balance emotions is to regulate our breathing. Conscious breathing promotes emotional balance and well-being. Rapid and shallow breathing contributes to the arousal of the nervous system and it hinders a person's response to stress. To learn more about the connection between yoga and how it can affect our minds and bodies, consider reading "Yoga for Emotional Balance: Simple Practices to Help Relieve Anxiety and Depression" by Bo Forbes. (www.amazon.com/Yoga-Emotional-Balance-Practices-Depression/dp/1590307607)



The Purple Dot Yoga Project (www.purpledotyogaproject.org) is another resource that uses yoga as a healing tool to support those effected by domestic violence and trauma. This is their inspirational mission statement: "PURPLE is the color of domestic violence awareness. Purple is also the color associated with the crown chakra, our conscious center used to communicate with our spiritual nature. Purple is also the color of royalty and respect. Our aim is to connect to our highest self and in doing so demand to always be treated with respect! DOT signifies an end, like a period at the end of a sentence. Full stop. No more. We wish to eliminate violent and manipulative behavior that stifles true growth and healthy love in relationships. YOGA is used as a tool to get out of the mind and check into the body to release trauma and reconnect to our inner strength. Yoga is what we bring to the table. It's the tool we share with our community and our tribe to assist in the healing process. A PROJECT in motion To represent, always, a work in progress. As an individual, as a movement, as a cause."

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Hope Cards

By Chrissy Smith

Hope Card is a free laminated card that provides essential protective order information in a convenient wallet-sized card. The Hope Card does NOT replace a protective order, but it gives law enforcement information to verify an order through the Virginia Criminal Information Network. The card is available to petitioners and protected parties who have been awarded a 12-month or longer final civil protective order. Each locality has to opt-in to the program, which is through the local Chief Judge at the Juvenile and Domestic Relations (JDR) Court. Want to know if your locality participates? Go to the link, hopecard.vacourts.gov, and use the drop down menu to find the participating courts.

Petitioners can apply for a card through their local Juvenile and Domestic Relations (JDR) Court Clerk or the local Victim/Witness Program. The card will be sent to the petitioner within 14 business days.

If you are a service provider interested in getting your locality involved, please contact: Jaime Clemmer, Hope Card Project Coordinator, at jclemmer@vacourts.gov.



Pulaski County, VA Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court

CASE NO: JA000001-17-00

PETITIONER: Molly McButter

GENDER: Female PO ISSUED: 8-9-2017

RACE: Caucasian PO EXPIRES: 8-7-2019

DOB: 10-5-1971 ISSUED BY: Judge CHITWOOD

PETITIONER GRANTED: NO contact NO exceptions and respondent shall NOT commit acts of family abuse. Possession of 1976 Subaru Leone.

OTHER PROTECTED PARTIES:
Marg McButter DOB: 3-17-2008

The Affordable Housing Crisis and Domestic Violence

By Chrissy Wengloski

Domestic violence advocates have enough on their plate, working towards safe outcomes for survivors in complex, unique situations. Yet, one of the issues outside of daily victim services deserves our attention on a local, statewide, and national scale.

Virginia, similar to states across the country, is experiencing an affordable housing crisis. Lack of affordable housing affects all vulnerable populations who are competing with the general population of renters for affordable places to live, but this issue can have an especially deadly effect on survivors of domestic violence. A study by the National Resource Center on Domestic Violence showed that 84% of survivors in domestic violence shelters needed help finding affordable housing; survivors who are unable to secure permanent housing often face decisions of returning to their abuser or becoming homeless. While “housing-first” models are on the rise and emergency shelter is a core function of many programs, the impact of this national crisis makes it even more difficult to be successful in housing survivors; the fewer survivors



who are able to find stability in affordable permanent housing, the slower and fewer shelter beds are opening up for additional survivors in danger. The impact of lengthier shelter stays, fewer beds available, and fewer permanent housing placements may even be noticeable in your outcomes and data tracking of recent years.

During Domestic Violence Awareness Month, and throughout the year, it is important to remember how victim advocates can assist survivors in systems outside of traditional victim services. Here are two goals every agency can work toward as we support survivors: 1) Improve and expand “housing-first” programs and/or increase case management support with the goal of stable housing; and

2) support and collaborate with community partners working on affordable housing advocacy. These partners may even find it helpful if you are able to share your data and facts around domestic violence and housing in your service area. The more work towards housing solutions, the more opportunities will be available for individual survivors seeking safety and stability as heads of their own households.

Addressing Barriers for Rural Domestic Violence Victims

By Courtney Meyer

Being a victim of domestic violence has many challenges, and those challenges are exacerbated when living in a rural area. Domestic violence victims living in rural areas face barriers in receiving services, such as geographic isolation, minimal transportation options, lack of shelter space near them, communication access (e.g., landline, limited cell phone service range), fewer childcare options, and language access. When attempting to seek help in an unsafe situation, it may take hours for police, fire departments, and/or ambulance services to arrive. Additionally, if the victim wants to take legal action against the abuser, it can be more difficult to find a pro bono or low-cost lawyer in a rural area.

There are some strategies that domestic violence agencies can take to address these barriers and assist rural domestic violence victims. Some of those strategies are:

- Develop a cooperative working agreement with local transportation
- Involve faith communities: Set up space at churches for counseling or support groups

- Create a mobile advocacy program, where trained victim advocates travel to the victim
- Partner with surrounding hotels when shelter space is full
- Create a language access plan
- Maintain relationships with neighboring domestic violence agencies

Resources for tackling these strategies:

- [Limited English Proficiency: A Federal Interagency Website](#)
- [Eve's Place: Mobile Advocacy](#)
- [Cooperative Agreement Template](#)
- [Safe Havens Interfaith Partnership Against Domestic Violence and Elder Abuse: Resources](#)
- [Rural Health Information Hub: Violence and Abuse in Rural America](#)

Reference: Office for Victims of Crime. (n.d.). Rural Victim Assistance. Retrieved from www.ovc.gov/publications/infores/rural_victim_assistance/3_olcr.html

Virginia's Domestic Violence Shelters Provide Accommodations for Pets

By Jennifer Kline

Her husband had become physically abusive to her during her first pregnancy. The moment he angrily shook her five-year-old son, she knew she had to leave, but the local shelter would not take the beloved family pet, Max, a beagle-terrier mix with a sweet, playful manner. Whenever her husband started yelling at her or the kids, Max would bark and run in circles. Her husband had threatened to shoot the dog and had kicked him on more than one occasion, so she knew she could not leave Max behind.

This agonizing dilemma has forced many domestic violence victims to stay in abusive situations, risking their own lives rather than separating from their pets. Studies have shown that when victims attempt to leave their abusive partners they are at the greatest risk of being killed or seriously injured (Campbell, 1995; J. Campbell et al., McFarlane et al., 1999). When a victim owns a pet, there is even more risk because abusers frequently use threats or violence against a pet as a means to control the victim (Favor & Strand, 2007). The abuser may torture the animal in order to emotionally harm the victim, use threats against the animal to control the victim, or to coerce her/his return after they leave the household. These forms of abuse constitute one aspect of the broader pattern of control that characterizes an abusive relationship (Upadhyay, Vivek, 2014). One study found that 71% of victims who owned pets entering domestic violence shelters reported that their abuser threatened, harmed, or killed a family pet (National Coalition Against Domestic Violence). Victims often have to face the impossible choice of abandoning their pets or entering a shelter. Up to 48% of domestic violence victims delay leaving a dangerous situation out of concern for their pets' safety (Animal Welfare Institute, Facts and Myths).

More and more domestic violence shelters across Virginia are offering accommodations for victims' pets. Through partnerships with local animal shelters, domestic violence shelters can offer foster homes for victims' pets, until the victim acquires their own housing. However, recognizing that pets are an emotional support to victims that can enhance emotional healing, there are some domestic



violence shelters that now allow pets to be housed with their owners in the shelter. One of those shelters is [Madeline's House](#) in Farmville, Virginia. Madeline's House Forensic Advocacy Program Director, Monica Ratliff, said, "One of the worst things we can imagine is an individual needing shelter and not seeking it because they cannot bring their pet. We wanted to not force people to choose between their safety and their beloved pet's safety." Furthermore, Madeline's House responded to the need for a place for pets to go while residents are working or attending appointments by receiving a grant from Red Rover to build an on-site kennel to house pets during the day.

Currently, there are approximately 1,400 safe havens for pets of domestic violence victims nationally and over 20 in Virginia. Visit the website <http://awionline.org/safe-havens> to see shelters that accept pets of domestic violence victims. For information about grants for temporary boarding, veterinary care, and start-up costs for domestic violence shelters seeking to create a program to allow families and pets to escape abuse, go to: <https://redrover.org/dv-safe-housing-grants>.

DCJS
UPDATES



Sign up for *DCJS Updates* to receive email notification of grants, training and events, publications, and other information from the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services as soon as it is available on our website. You may choose to receive all notices, or select specific ones of interest. To subscribe to this free service, begin by creating an account at: www.dcjs.virginia.gov/subscribe.

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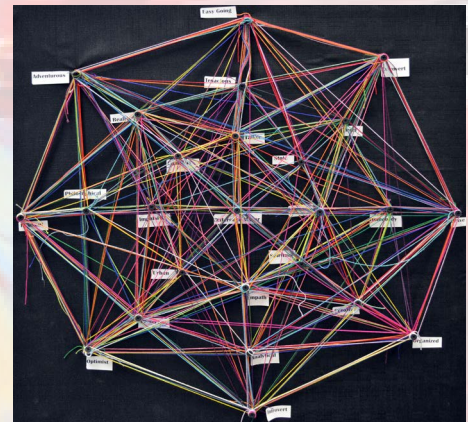
Envision: Creating Paths of Resiliency for Underserved Domestic Violence Survivors

The Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) hosted the “Envision: Creating Paths of Resiliency for Underserved Domestic Violence Survivors” Conference on October 10–11, 2019, at the Hotel Madison & Shenandoah Valley Conference Center located in Harrisonburg, Virginia. Over 260 attendees came together to participate in presentations from speakers across the country. This conference featured renowned experts in working with underserved and marginalized communities. Plenary sessions included *Eyeing Race: The Impact of Racism on African American Women Survivors’ Help-Seeking*; *Best Practices: Working with Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming Survivors of Domestic Violence*; *Phonocentrism and Survivorhood*; *Culture, Conspiracies, and Competence in Understanding and Working with Native American Communities*; and *Domestic Violence in Muslim Communities*. Examples of breakout workshop sessions included *Sheltering Male Survivors*; *Strategies for Addressing the Language Barrier*; and *Cross-Cultural Interactions: Choices and Challenges*.



Shannon Dion, Director, DCJS and Kristina Vadas, Manager, Victims Services, DCJS.

String “art” was created by providing attendees the opportunity to wrap a string around the words that related to them and their work in victims services.



DCJS Victims Services Staff:
 Left to right: Amia Barrows, Courtney Meyer, Tierra Smith, Tricia Everetts, Dione Bassett, Michelle Miles, Kristina Vadas, Chad Felts, Shannon Dion (DCJS Director), and Chrissy Wengloski.
 Not pictured: Patricia Foster, Julia Fuller-Wilson, Tyler Hinton, Andrew Kinch, Jennifer Kline, Andi Martin, Anya Shaffer, and Chrissy Smith.