



OCTOBER

Did you know... October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month!

Domestic Violence Awareness Month (DVAM) was launched nationwide in October 1987 as a way to connect and unite individuals and organizations working on domestic violence issues while raising awareness for those issues. Over the past 30+ years, much progress has been made to support domestic violence victims and survivors, to hold abusers accountable, and to create and update legislation to further those goals.

Domestic violence is a serious issue that requires immediate action. It occurs when an individual suffers abuse at the hands of a family member or partner, and it can come in many forms:

- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Economic abuse
- Sexual violence
- Stalking

Whether the individual is a spouse, child, or older relative, everyone deserves a life free from violence and abuse.

Many people know a victim of domestic violence, but most people don't know what to do to help. Here are ways to start a conversation:

- **Offer support without judgment or criticism.** There are a lot of reasons why victims may stay in an abusive relationship, and many reasons why they may also leave and return to the relationship multiple times. Let them know it's not their fault and that they are not alone.
- **Don't be afraid to tell them that you're concerned for their safety.** Help your friend or family member recognize the abuse while acknowledging that they are in a very difficult and dangerous situation.
- **Avoid confrontations.** There are many reasons why people experiencing abuse don't reach out to family and friends. It's important to recognize when they are ready to talk about their experiences while still offering support.
- **Encourage them to get help.** Help them look into available resources, such as the National Domestic Violence Hotline number - **800-799-SAFE (7233)** or website at www.thehotline.org. This resource also finds local support groups and provides information on staying safe.

Preventing Violence and Abuse

Domestic violence relies on an environment of isolation and secrecy. People with high self-esteem and strong social support are less likely to become victims.

To advocate against domestic violence, consider getting involved in programs that work to support strong communities. Many successful domestic violence prevention programs focus on:

- Investing in healthy relationships
- Advocating for accessible community resources
- Social programs aimed at reducing poverty
- Increased educational opportunities

*If you or someone you know is a victim of domestic violence, seek help. Call 911 if you are in a dangerous situation or reach out to the domestic violence hotline at **800-799-SAFE**.*

Sources:

- <https://ncadv.org/2022DVAM>
- <https://healthylearn.com/connerstrong/hn/start-a-conversation-about-domestic-violence.html>
- <https://healthylearn.com/connerstrong/hn2/advocate-against-domestic-violence.html>