



March 01, 2015

Family Violence Newsletter

Volume 1, Issue 1

Special points of interest:

- Every 9 seconds in the U.S. women are assaulted or beaten
- 1 in 3 women have been beaten, or sexually abused during her lifetime
- Domestic violence is the leading cause of death among women
- Up to 10 million children witness some form of violence in their homes
- People who witness violence in their homes as children are twice as likely to abuse their own partners than people of non-violent homes.

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CHARLESTON INTRODUCES THE FAMILY VIOLENCE UNIT

Family violence is a complex issue. Educating ourselves about the dynamics of family violence will clearly make a difference in the lives of victims.

Family violence does not distinguish between race, religion, social standing, economic, or educational level; anyone can become a victim. Family violence is a social problem shared by all people within our community.

Domestic abuse is a systematic pattern of intentional intimidation that is reinforced by violence or the threat of violence, for the purpose of gaining or maintaining power and control over one's partner.

Many victims, primarily women, hide behind closed doors out of fear. Their abusive partner thrives in secrecy, but secrecy only compounds the problem of family violence

because batterers continue their crime undetected by those outside of the household

The Charleston Police Department's Family Violence Unit (F.V.U) consists of a Detective, Victim Advocates, and a Mental Health Coordinator.

They are committed to responding and rendering assistance to families who experience violence as quickly as possible.

The goals of the FVU are:

- To ensure that identified children and families receive timely intervention following exposure to violence and other trauma
- To increase awareness among police officers about the needs of children exposed to violence, abuse and neglect.

ence, abuse and neglect.

- To establish a closer working relationship between police officers and the community to ensure coordinated response to children and families to violence and trauma.



Denise Jones

Mental Health Coordinator

Charleston Police Department Partners With Department of Mental Health

The Charleston Police Department and Department of Mental Health has formed a partnership. The purpose of this partnership is to help reduce the trauma of children and their families after an act of violence.

Denise Jones a Masters Level Mental Health Professional (MHP), is assigned to the Family Violence Unit. The MHP partners with Charleston Police by implementing basic elements of police practices

as well as assisting officers of any mental illness related matters following a violent incident. She will respond and follow up to all violent incidents.

The MHP will be contacted to assess any child or victim who the officer or detective determines to have been exposed to violence. The MHP will complete an assessment for crisis stabilization and has the option to complete follow up home visits as

deemed appropriate. Once the child/family becomes stable, a referral will be made to another therapist within Charleston Mental Health for the continuation of services for long term care if needed.

Treatment can include individual, group, or family therapy and in some cases medication may also be helpful. It is critical for the children and the victimized parent to receive treatment in a setting where they feel safe.



Gov. Nikki Haley to Establish Domestic Violence Task Force

On Thursday, January 29, 2015, Gov. Haley signed an executive order to combat domestic violence in South Carolina.

South Carolina is ranked # 2 in the nation for women who are killed by men domestic violence.

Gov. Haley made this announcement at a press conference in Columbia. The goal of the Domestic Violence Task Force is to systematically address the social issue of domestic violence and address the ways in which South Carolinians view do-

mestic violence.

Haley contends "If we don't change the culture, we will continue to see generational cycles of domestic violence in our state, but with this army of people behind me who are completely committed to this cause, I know we can finally do something about it."

The Domestic Violence Task force is made up of a diverse consortium to include representatives from the court system, cosmetologists, churches, legislators, educa-

tors and medical professionals.



Miriam Walker,
Victim Advocate

Bridging the Gaps in Service to the Latino Community

Victim Advocate Miriam Walker attended the Sea Island First Community Festival, which is held by the Latino residents of Johns Island.

During this event, brochures were dispersed to residents explaining resources in the community. Many crimes are unreported because of fear of police.

By this interaction we are

bridging the gap between law enforcement and the Latino community.

Subsequently, this same function opened many doors that provided a chance to assist Latino women and men who are victims.

Educating the Latino community on domestic violence and public resources availability is vital so that those whom are

abused can come forward for assistance.

Education within the Latino community will be the key to a cohesive relationship between law enforcement, the community and this unit.

South Carolina is ranked #2 in the Nation for women killed by men.

A Survivor's Story

This story, as told to Melissa Jeltsen, is part of "Why Didn't You Just Leave?", a Huff Post series on domestic violence in which six women share their reasons for staying in abusive relationships.

It started out pretty innocuously. He would make comments like: "Are you going to wear that out? That's not very attractive on you." Then it progressed to: "You're ugly. And you're a bad mother." He would poke me in the chest, in the middle

of my breastbone — back me up against the wall and just poke. The poking was very painful, but I didn't consider it physical abuse. What he was saying was so much more hurtful.

Over the next two decades, his verbal assaults became more frequent and more intense, until it was rare that a day went by without some sort of altercation. During those years, I considered leav-

ing several times. But one thing stopped me: my two children. I was very concerned that if I did leave, I wouldn't get full custody. I was afraid of what would happen if he were left alone to look after them. It seemed safer to stay. At least, I thought, I could protect them if I was there. (continued on page 4)

FOLLOW THE YELLOW BRICK ROAD

As victims attempt to move forward after traumatic experiences, they are filled with self doubt, despair and are unsure as which way they should go.

As they try to figure out the next step to take, an excerpt from the Wizard of Oz comes to mind.

The lion felt he needed a boost of courage. The Wizard addressed him by saying " You have plenty of courage, I'm sure . All you need is confidence in yourself.

There is no living thing that is not afraid when it faces danger. The true courage is in facing danger when you are afraid and that kind of courage you have plenty." (Wizard of OZ, 1963).

This paradox symbolizes what many of our victims feel as they transition through an traumatic experience. The only way to true empowerment for these individuals is that they get on the yellow brick road to freedom. It doesn't matter what type of event has occurred these steps will work for all.

In the movie Dorothy realized that she had to first get on the road, that she could not stay in her situation for she knew it was not a healthy environment for her nor Toto.

Secondly, she knew that it was a mistake for her to be there and that the problem needed to be corrected.

Thirdly, the road Dorothy met

people who would now be her friends for life. These people encouraged Dorothy during her darkest hours.

Finally, Dorothy reach the end of the road and found herself back home. She felt empowered, her self-confidence had return, and she was happy again.

The same is true for our victims. They too need to find their way back home.

You too can be like Dorothy, but first you must get on the yellow brick road. You can get through this event and change your direction. Problem-solving skills, engaging in positive activities, community resources and support from family and friends are all the tools you need to find your way back home.



“You have plenty of courage, I’m sure . All you need is confidence in yourself.

Mary Harriet Woodley

“SWEAT SUIT SUNDAY” TO BE AN ANNUAL EVENT

The Family Violence Unit’s “Sweat Suit Sunday” project has received an outpouring of support from local churches within the Charleston community.

They have received more than three hundred items of clothing to include- sweat suits, shirts, capris, and shorts to assist our victims for at least six months.

This is a great start. Because of the love and enthusiasm exhibited by our local churches, they are able to provide

victims clothing to wear when they leave the hospital or

emergency room after a traumatic event.

“Sweat Suit Sunday” creates an open door to educating the community about domestic violence and the impact it has on an individual, their families and the community.

This collaboration allows for much greater and more substantive roles by the faith based community to help develop solutions to problems affecting the community.

Sweat Suit Sunday will be an annual event to be held the second Sunday in July.



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Family Violence Unit**

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VICTIM'S AND WITNESS'S BILL OF RIGHTS

If you are a victim of crime or a witness to crime, you have the right to:

- ⇒ Be treated with dignity and compassion
- ⇒ Be protected from intimidation and harm
- ⇒ Be informed concerning the criminal justice process
- ⇒ Be compensated (if eligible) and/ or receive restitution
- ⇒ Be able to preserve your property and employment
- ⇒ Receive due process in criminal court proceedings

Each day choose to live with an attitude that expects good things to happen to you

A Survivor's Story Continued from Page 2

I also felt societal pressure to stick it out. The way I grew up, your married for life. I knew things were pretty rough and rocky in my marriage, but I forged ahead. I wanted to believe he could change and be the loving, respectful man my father was to my mother. I was constantly torn between trying to create the dream — the stable, loving family I grew up with — and the reality of my situation.

One day I was sitting in a chair, putting on my shoes when I saw him in the doorway. He said, "I love you too much to live without you," and aimed for my head. I stood up and the bullet hit me in the chest. I ran past him and away as

he continued shooting. The final shot in my back narrowly missed my heart. He killed himself at the scene. Both my children were home and witnessed everything.

This incident has left my daughter severely depressed. She cycles in and out of being suicidal despite medication. My son has recurring nightmares that a monster is in our house and he goes from neighbor to neighbor trying to get help but no one is home. He refuses to talk about his dad in any way and has episodes of depression. Anxiety and panic attacks

I am proactive about therapy for them, but with history like

this, they are so vulnerable. Vulnerable to being in abusive relationships or abusing themselves, vulnerable for drug use and high-risk behaviors. They will have to actively fight this legacy their entire lives.



Lisette Johnson, 56