

## October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month: 10 Ways to Make it Meaningful

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With an estimated four million victims of domestic abuse a year, every single person reading this has most likely been touched in some way by this social epidemic. October is **National Domestic Violence Awareness Month** so let's commit to ending the violence within our homes, our communities, and where ever else our voices reach. Things you can do to make **Domestic Violence Awareness Month** more meaningful.

- 1. Don't Mind Your Own Business.** Know someone whose relationship concerns you? Let them know you're there and willing to listen. The **National Domestic Violence Hotline** ([www.thehotline.org](http://www.thehotline.org)) website has guidelines to help you express your concerns in the most productive manner.
- 2. Talk to Your Teens/Tweens/Grandkids.** Got a teenaged or tweenaged girl (or grandchild) at home? Talk to them as soon as possible about what a healthy, non-violent relationship is. Check out **Love Is Not-Abuse** ([www.loveisnotabuse.com](http://www.loveisnotabuse.com)) for guidelines on how to approach the subject most effectively. Teach the boys (and men) in your life very early to respect women and use their strength to help not hurt: **Men Can Stop Rape** ([www.mencanstoprape.org](http://www.mencanstoprape.org)) is a great resource.
- 3. Examine Your Own Relationships.** If there's a pattern of abuse in your life, it's harming your children and those around you who love you as well. Take this quiz from the **AARDVARC: An Abuse, Rape & Domestic Violence Aid & Resource Collection** ([www.aardvcaarc.org](http://www.aardvcaarc.org)). And, be honest! For more clues: <http://www.thehotline.org/is-this-abuse/am-i-being-abused-2/>
- 4. Help Someone Get Help!** Help someone who's considering leaving an abusive relationship by steering them to a **Family Justice Center** ([www.familyjusticecenter.com](http://www.familyjusticecenter.com))--a one-stop-shop that houses most of the agencies and services domestic violence victims need to get advice and assistance, all in one location. To find one near you, check with your local district attorney's office or domestic violence service provider.
- 5. Promote Awareness.** Ask your local library, supermarket, chain restaurants, department stores, houses of worship, etc. if you can regularly supply them with material from national and local domestic violence programs (they'll give you all you want) to display by cash registers and leave around for women to quietly put into their pocketbook. Great project for your group or organization!
- 6. Adopt a Shelter.** Shelters are usually short staffed, so they'll definitely appreciate your time, your help and/or your money. Travel a lot? Collect and donate those mini-soaps, shampoo bottles, shower caps and other items hotels provide their guests. Shelters also need gently used clothing, furniture, toys, books and school supplies. Another great project for a group or organization!
- 7. Address Domestic Violence in the Workplace.** Does your employer have a policy for workplace safety? Too many lives---and billions of dollars---are lost each year because employers are unprepared. **Employers Against Domestic Violence** (<http://www.eadvma.org/>) helps large and small businesses, hospitals and other kinds of workplaces formulate policies to deal with domestic violence issues.
- 8. Encourage Donations.** Urge your industry, corporation, union or service group to donate money directly to local domestic violence service providers. According to a national survey by

Jewish Women International, less than 1% of corporations do so!

9. **Entrepreneurs Address Domestic Violence Too.** Do you operate a business that caters primarily to women? Follow the lead of **Cut it Out** (<https://www.probeauty.org/pba-charities/cio/charities---cut-it-out>), a national organization of hairdressers and members of the beauty industry, whereby salon employees (and others) learn how to recognize the signs of domestic abuse in their clients and discreetly refer them to local resources.
10. **Get Politically Involved.** Contact your state and city legislators about important issues like restoring funding for housing for domestic violence victims coming out of shelters and money to non-residential service provider agencies, some of whom sustained funding cuts up to 40% due to sequestration and budget deficits. If you add your voice to the discussion, much can be accomplished.

*If you need immediate help:*

*National Domestic Violence Hotline @ 800-799-7233*

*Resources, National Domestic Violence Hotline, <https://www.thehotline.org/resources/>*

*National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, <https://ncadv.org/resources>*

*National Resource Center on Domestic Violence, <https://nrcdv.org/>*

*Family Violence Prevention & Services Resource Center, <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/fysb/fv-centers>*

*Family Justice Centers Alliance, <https://www.familyjusticecenter.org/what-we-do/>*

*Domestic Violence Awareness Month, Break the Cycle,  
<https://www.breakthecycle.org/blog/it%E2%80%99s-national-domestic-violence-awareness-month>*