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(Neb.)-Domestic Violence Doesn't Discriminate; Assistance Available  [Listen](#)



By: Roxie Graham-Marski Posted at: 11/05/2013 02:05 PM

(PANHANDLE)-Domestic violence, just like mental illness, is one of those subjects that most people seldom talk about. Often, there is confusion regarding domestic violence. If you aren't being physically beaten, then maybe you're not a victim of domestic violence. That is not necessarily a true statement. There are many forms of domestic violence, including physical, sexual, financial, emotional and psychological abuse. Domestic violence does not discriminate. It will affect 1 in 4 women and 1 in 7 men during their lifetime, causing up to 10 million children to witness some form of domestic violence in any given year.

October was Domestic Violence Awareness Month. Both the Panhandle Mental Health Center and the DOVES Program of Western Nebraska encourage individuals to share their experiences and to gain knowledge about domestic violence in a safe atmosphere. DOVES advocate Jennifer Ponce (PAHN-Say) explains what the DOVES program entails.

\*Listen to story for sound bite\*

Although there is no longer an actual DOVES office in Chadron, Ponce explains that resources are still readily available.

\*Listen to story for sound bite\*

Ponce says intimate partner violence can have a relatively broad scope.

\*Listen to story for sound bite\*

Therefore, Ponce says DOVES advocates are not able to assist individuals who are suffering other forms of abuse, such as familial. However, they can definitely put a person in touch with someone who can help them.

There are a variety of red flag warnings that individuals should watch for when considering a relationship, says

Ponce.

\*Listen to story for sound bite\*

Ponce encourages people to think through what makes them happy in a relationship. An ideal relationship empowers, she says. It doesn't destroy or belittle.

\*Listen to story for sound bite\*

The DOVES Program believes that every person has the right to feel safe, live free from abuse, and expect healthy relationships, regardless of gender. They work with men and women who have experienced or are experiencing domestic and dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking. Individuals can call 866-95-DOVES (866-953-6837) to talk with someone who will listen without judgment and will provide resources and guidance. Ponce says she is also able to meet in person with individuals each Wednesday, as that is her day in the Chadron area. She wishes to assure people who are considering seeking help that advocates will seek to empower individuals and will not try to tell them what to do, including not expecting them to leave the abusive partner. They just want to keep victims safe and help them think about their own safety along with providing a listening ear.

DOVES is a non-profit organization that is always open to donations. Ponce says gift cards and non-perishable food are two really good ways of supporting the organization.

The Panhandle Mental Health Center is also dedicated to providing quality behavioral health services that encourage healthy lifestyles. They are available to help individuals begin the healing process. Call 877-492-7001 to make an appointment with a trained mental health clinician.

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For more discussion with DOVES' Jennifer Ponce, visit our Community Focus tab for an exclusive interview KCSR conducted with her in October.

(Questions? Comments? E-mail [news@chadrad.com](mailto:news@chadrad.com).)

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