



Fall Newsletter 2021

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A LETTER FROM NCEDSV'S EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month, and September 30th was my last day as Executive Director of the Nevada Coalition to End Domestic and Sexual Violence. How to combine remembrance with leave taking? DVAM was established as a time to remember, celebrate, and rededicate ourselves to the work to end violence against all people. As I end my tenure, I am continually reminded of those who created, those who implemented, and those who are going to carry on this important work.

Remember... as someone who spent more than 30 years in this movement, my memories of who have gone before has helped me chart my own path forward. My memories will be different than yours but understanding our creation story and searching out the history of this movement will help you figure out which pitfalls to avoid and which paths are those less traveled. The old adage – those who don't remember the past are doomed to repeat it – is more than a saying. We can learn much from the past that will help us in the present and prepare us for the future.

Celebrate.... as I celebrate this ending in my life, I also know it is a beginning. Celebrations provide us with the opportunity to reassess and refocus ourselves. There are also times to acknowledge everything that has been accomplished that led us to today. I am so grateful for the women upon whose shoulders I was able to stand and hope that I leave a legacy that will allow others to stand with confidence.

Rededicate... and to do that, we need to remind ourselves to breathe deeply and laugh often; this is hard work but full of joy as well as sadness. As the late Senator Kennedy often reminded us, *the work goes on, the cause endures, the hope still lives, and the dream shall never die*. What better message to guide us into the future? I have had the honor of learning from the grandmothers, working side by side with the champions and seeing the emergence of new leaders who will take us into that future.

Until we meet again,

Sue

AWARENESS DATES

OCTOBER

Domestic Violence Awareness Month (DVAM)

Visit our DVAM 2021 page [here](#) for more information about this year's theme, Governor Sisolak's proclamation, links to interviews and articles throughout the month and so much more! In the meantime, learn about DVAM's origins.

NCESDV DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS MONTH: HISTORY AND THE COORDINATED NATIONAL CAMPAIGN

ARTICLE BY AMBER BATCHELOR AND SARAH SLAVENAS

In October 1981, the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence held a "Day of Unity" with the goal of connecting domestic violence advocates across the country who were working to end violence against women and their children. Today, while we recognize that domestic violence knows no boundaries around who it victimizes, without regard to gender identity, ethnicity, religious orientation, age or social standing, intimate partner violence continues to impact many intimate relationships. And its survivors continue to seek: services, justice, resources and ultimately (for some) to escape.

This original Day of Unity soon became an entire week. It was a week dedicated to a variety of activities held at the local, state, and national levels. From joining advocates working to end the violence, the goal expanded. Mourning those whose lives had been lost to domestic violence and celebrating survivors were added to the list of activities. Advocates grew to include survivors, volunteers, other professionals, allies and families and friends of both victims and survivors.

And throughout these activities were sprinkled the ideas and makings of change. In October 1987, the first Domestic Violence Awareness Month was observed. That year also marked the launch of the national domestic violence toll-free hotline.

The Nevada Coalition to End Domestic and Sexual Violence (NCESDV) has participated in Domestic Violence Awareness Month since that first October. And we've been supporting programs in helping survivors of DV for more than 40 years now. Over the past four

decades we've worked hard to implement legislation, supported our member agencies with trainings and technical assistance, and kept a pulse on the fluctuating needs of all Nevadans experiencing abuse.

Domestic violence thrives in silence. We often hear how surprised people are to find out that someone they know is, or has, faced the trauma of abuse by those they should be able to trust and rely on. While it's often thought of as physical violence, controlling behavior and other abusive tactics often begin long before any physical violence occurs. To support and help victims and survivors, and to prevent domestic violence in the future, we all need to normalize talking openly about it.

We all have a role in changing the narrative about what domestic violence is, to whom it happens, how we can support those who are experiencing it, and how to ultimately prevent it entirely. Having an informed conversation about domestic violence requires understanding what it is—that it's much more than physical abuse—and why 'just leaving' isn't so simple for survivors. [Click here to learn more facts about DV.](#)

NCEDSV is participating in Domestic Violence Awareness Month again this year. We're partnering with the National Network to End Domestic Violence (NNEDV) and other state coalitions across the nation to start a coordinated national conversation about domestic violence and how we can all contribute to flipping the script on this overshadowed, but fundamental topic.

How can you help? Join us! Attend our 2021 Annual Public Service award event on October 1st, when we honor Senator Julia Ratti for her work in making Nevada a safer place for victim-survivors and their families.

Join us and show your support for victims and survivors by following our social media accounts and sharing the content we've already prepared with your own networks throughout the month of October with the hashtag #Every1KnowsSome1. Participate in our week of action, October 18 - 24, 2021 and stay engaged throughout the year to show your support for victims, survivors, for your local domestic violence program and for the Nevada Coalition to End Domestic and Sexual Violence. None of us can do it alone.

OCTOBER

- **October 19:** [LGBT Center Awareness Day](#) – people within the LGBT+ community experience higher rates of interpersonal violence than those outside of the community. Abuse happens in all relationships. Learn more about members of the LGBT+ community and how to support them!

NOVEMBER

- **November 20:** [Transgender Day of Remembrance](#) – NCEDSV believes nobody should be abused due to their gender. We honor, reflect on, and mourn the lives lost to hatred.
- **November 25:** [International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women](#) – Domestic and sexual violence are not geographically isolated. Join us on this international day dedicated to ending violence against women
- **November 25 – December 10:** [16 Days of activism](#) - The 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence is an annual international campaign that kicks off on **25 November**, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, and runs until 10 December, Human Rights Day.

LEADERSHIP VOICES – CLICK PHOTOS TO WATCH VIDEOS!

INTERVIEW WITH JULIE PROCTOR

Safe House, Executive Director



1. When did you first begin your journey with Safe House?

Back in 1994 when we incorporated. I was co-founders of the organization, along with a lot of different community members in Henderson.

2. What drew you to the Domestic Violence Movement?

I am a survivor from the 1970's, so back then there weren't really any services that were provided to victims. There was a lot of victim blaming. I had some firsthand experience with domestic violence quite young, so that's

what drew me to this organization.

3. When you look back on the domestic violence movement here in the state of Nevada, what were some pivotal moments for you?

I think probably one of the most pivotal would be the marriage license fees. The group of people that were so genius to come up with something like that have made a big difference in funding and unrestricted monies. I also think that opening up the first domestic violence shelter was a pivotal moment of safeness. That opened the doors for others to follow, and it also made you realize that our community was in need of those types of services.

4. Of the many accomplishments that you've had over the past few years, which I'm sure has made a great impact on the community, can you name 1 or 2 moments that you're most proud of?

The most proud moment I have is when we were able to open up our 8,500 square foot facility in 1997, after we started with a 700 square foot facility townsite home that Saint Rose Dominican let us lease for several hundred dollars a year.

We had 12 bunkbeds in there. It was shocking to see how many people needed the services in the city of Henderson. So, it was apparent, at the time, that we needed to do something bigger. I worked for an attorney that used to be the City Attorney of Henderson. He was representing different developers, and he made a contract with a developer that was supposed to be an apartment complex. But, that's how we got our shelter built.

It was a lot of community involvement. The Board of Directors were even painting, putting in floors and things like that. The day that we opened was a really, really proud moment for all of us because we had this beautiful facility. At the time, we could house 58 women and children at one time, so that was huge for us.

The next one was probably when we were awarded non-profit of the year by the Henderson Chamber of Commerce a few years ago. To me, I thought it was amazing that we were recognized for some of the things that we've done in the community over the last several years.

5. What do you know now that you wish you knew in your early days as the Executive Director? Would you change anything?

When I took on this position in 2003, I was pretty much coming from a legal field; I did a lot of legal work. So, when you ask me what I wish I knew, probably everything. I walked in, and I had some leadership because I was a supervisor prior throughout the years. But, as far as running a non-profit organization, I really didn't have a lot of knowledge, especially with grants, budgeting, and things like that. So, I really learned by jumping into the fire and just doing it. I also had a lot of assistance from some people that ran non-profits in the past that were very instrumental in becoming the Executive Director that I was.

6. And I could imagine that you had a lot of support from the community and fellow advocates coming from a different field into the non-profit world?

Yes, and I was part of the Board of Directors that recruited me onboard at the time. So, we had interviewed several people, and they were very instrumental in me taking this position; they really encouraged me. It's the best thing I've ever done. I am so thankful that I jumped into this and put my heart and soul into it because it's been very rewarding throughout the years.

7. And congratulations on your retirement! Do you have any plans?

Thank you! I'm going to spend more time with my family. I have a brother in Saint George. He's currently ill, and he just lost his wife so there's things that I wanted to do there. I'm definitely going to be part of Safe House forever. I will be volunteering and consulting with them over the next year, so I'm not really saying goodbye to the organization. It's a part of my life and my heart. I will never say goodbye to Safe House, so I'll always be involved in this somehow. I hope to travel. I love traveling, so that's another goal that I have when I retire.

8. Last question, what advice do you think you would give to the new Executive Director?

The organization and I are very fortunate because we just completed our interviews, and they chose somebody that's been working with me for about the last 10 years. So, the last couple of years, I've been teaching her things that I do on a day-to-day basis, showing her the ropes, and how to do tasks that Executive Directors need to do.

So, I would just give her the advice that I've always given her, which is to listen to your staff and be compassionate. Talk to staff about their issues and plan how you're going to overcome issues and obstacles as a team. Team efforts are very, very important. You get the buy in of everybody. Treat people, like you do with our clients, with trauma informed care.

Make sure that our staff is taken care of emotionally and physically, so that they're able to help the clients move forward. Trust your instincts, your passion, and just remember what the mission of Safe House is. If you always keep that in the back of your head, you're always going to do well.

INTERVIEW WITH DENISE YOXSIMER

Domestic Violence Resource Center, Executive Director



1. When did you first begin your journey with the Domestic Violence Resource Center?

I started here in October of 2011, so almost exactly 10 years ago.

2. What drew you to the Domestic Violence Movement?

Well, prior to my work here, I was the Executive Director of the Nevada Women's Fund, which is a small community foundation focusing on issues pertinent for women and families in our community. I was in that role for about seven years. We were very familiar with what was then the

Committee to Aid Abused Women because our organization provided grants to that cause.

So, I was familiar with the work of this organization and the Domestic Violence Movement, from that perspective. And when the position at the Committee to Aid Abused Women, now the DV Resource Center, opened, I was interested in the work. I really wanted to try my hand at working in an organization that provided direct services to individuals and families, so that was my rationale for making this leap.

3. When you look back on the domestic violence movement here in the state of Nevada, what were some pivotal moments for you?

Again, I've only had this direct experience for about 10 years, which is a relatively short period of time in a whole movement. One really recent moment that stands out for me that

I know our organization and other domestic violence and sexual assault providers in the state are really grateful for is the passage of SB 177.

SB 177 is legislation that was passed during the most recent legislative session; it increased the surcharge placed on marriage licenses purchased in the state of Nevada. After many years of that level remaining the same, this increase is really going to make a tremendous difference for our organization, others, and then, in turn, for the individuals we serve. That funding is really critically important to help provide support for the whole picture of the work we do here in the community. So, we're really grateful to the Coalition along with Senator Ratti for all of their support in helping to get this legislation passed.

4. Of the many accomplishments that you've had over the past few years, which I'm sure has made a great impact on the community, can you name 1 or 2 moments that you're most proud of?

Thanks to our staff, board, community supporters, and donors, we have made many wonderful accomplishments.

Several years ago, we, thanks to community support, were successful in running a capital campaign that allowed us to more than double our capacity at our transitional housing program. Basically, we went from seven 1-bedroom apartment units for domestic violence survivors and their families, and we added 12 additional units, all two bedroom, two bathroom units. We did this so that we could provide our transitional housing program to more people and larger families. That was a huge accomplishment, and it has made a huge difference in the lives of so many families over the last five or six years.

Also, about four years ago, we partnered with Noah's Animal House to provide a pet boarding facility for the clients that we serve. Our current emergency shelter cannot accommodate the pets of the families we serve because we serve so many individuals in one setting. So, I had the privilege of working with Stacey Alonzo and inviting Noah's to build a pet boarding facility on the grounds at one of our facilities. We know that a lot of times, individuals don't leave abusive environments because they don't want to leave their pets behind. So, this removes one more obstacle that they face in leaving an unsafe situation.

Several years ago, we, with community support, also changed our name. As I mentioned earlier, we went from the Committee to Aid Abused Women to the Domestic Violence Resource Center. That was a big project we undertook because we felt it was time to make a shift and have a name that better reflected our current status and the work that we provide for individuals today in our community.

And then finally, we are entering into year five of our financial literacy program. We developed this program 4.5 years ago to provide financial coaching and enhanced financial skills for all of our clients. When they are ready to leave our program, they have an

additional skill set that will help them lead more independent and sustainable lives free of abuse and in safe environments as well.

5. What do you know now that you wish you knew in your early days as the Executive Director? Would you change anything?

There are a lot of things, but I think one really basic thing that I think about is that there's so much support everywhere for leaders of non-profit organizations and, particularly, leaders of domestic violence programs. I think it's important to remember that there is support. There are a lot of people who are really interested in helping provide that support, and there's no shame in asking for help when you need assistance tackling new and big issues relative to health and safety of clients.

6. And congratulations on your retirement! Do you have any plans?

Thank you! No, not immediately. I am planning to take a little bit of a break until the first of the year, and my husband and I will be traveling. I'll just be looking forward to having some additional flexibility. I certainly hope to stay involved in some community projects as well. But, in the short-term, just kind of take a bit of a break.

7. Last question, what advice do you think you would give to the new Executive Director?

I think the most important thing I would share, and I know she already knows this, is to trust her team, trust the people around you, and know that, in my view, this role is all about supporting the people who do the really hard work around us every day, in terms of working one-on-one with clients who are going through such intense trauma.

It's also my view that the administrative team is the most important role that they can play to help provide support to the advocacy team, so we can really move forward in accomplishing our mission to help create safety and sustainable futures for the families in our program.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

UPCOMING TRAININGS:

Visit our training and events [calendar here](#).

SAVE THE DATES:

- December 16, 2021 Working with survivors with Mental Health-related needs
- January 13, 2022 Working with survivors with Substance Abuse/Addiction
- February 10, 2021 Crisis, Self-Harm, Suicidal Risks, Grounding, and Self-Care

DVAM EVENTS

Annual Award Celebration

- **October 1:** Annual Public Service Award Luncheon to Recognize Senator Julia Ratti
- **October 1:** [Paint the Town Purple, Carson City](#)
- **October 6:** [Domestic Violence Memorial Vigil, Henderson](#)
- **October 7:** [Intervention and Resource Center Grand Opening, Carson City](#)
- **October 7:** [Domestic Violence Intervention \(Yerington Office\) Grand Opening](#)
- **October 16:** [Light After Dark Walk/Run](#)
- **October 18 – 24:** [Week of Action](#)
- **October 21:** [Donna Thomas at Reno Little Theatre](#)
- **October 26:** [Domestic Violence Awareness Walk, Yerington](#)

For more events, check out our calendar: <https://www.ncedsv.org/events/>

THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS



Interested in becoming a corporate sponsor, contact Amanda Bullard, Administrative Director at accounting@ncedsv.org

NCEDSV PUBLIC POLICY

Federal Policy

VOCA Fix Act Passes

After tireless advocacy, the VOCA Fix Act finally became law on July 22, 2021. The VOCA Fix Act addresses the urgent need to sustain the Crime Victims Fund (CVF).

The VOCA Fix redirects monetary penalties from federal deferred prosecution and non-prosecution agreements that would otherwise be deposited into the General Treasury. Additionally, the VOCA Fix:

- Requires state VOCA Administrators to waive the 20% match requirement for victim service subgrantees for the duration of the COVID-19 crisis and one additional year;
- Allows state VOCA Administrators to waive subgrantee match requirements at their discretion after the above-mentioned waiver expires and requires state VOCA Administrators to develop and publish a policy and procedure for obtaining a waiver;

- Allows flexibility for state compensation programs to waive the requirement to promote victim cooperation with law enforcement if good cause is identified by the program;
- Increases the federal grant calculation for funding to victim compensation programs from the current 60% to 75% of state-funded payouts;
- Allows states to request a no-cost* extension from the Attorney General, as allowed for other Department of Justice formula grant programs, to ensure states can thoughtfully and effectively distribute victim service grants without being penalized; and
- Instructs OVC not to deduct restitution payments recovered by state victim compensation funds when calculating victim compensation awards.

The VOCA Fix Act addressed the urgent need to sustain the CVF; however, there is anticipation of continued VOCA budget shortfalls while the CVF replenishes. Currently there is only around \$2-3 billion in the CVF and appropriators will likely not be able to provide increased funding for VOCA for FY2022. We are still waiting for final FY22 appropriation numbers and because VOCA administration is unique to each state, the strategies, reductions and timeframe of the impact of the VOCA Fix Act will vary state to state.

State Policy

During the 2021 Nevada Legislative Session, NCEDSV Policy Team had an active presence in the legislative process. You can view our full 2021 Legislative Summary [HERE](#).

ADVOCATES CORNER

MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE: AN ADVOCATE RESPONSE

ARTICLE BY LISA LYNN CHAPMAN, JD

[This article was adapted from Real Tools: Responding to Multi-Abuse Trauma,(Edmund & Bland, 2011)]

Depression, anxiety, and self-medicating are common for victim-survivors of domestic and/or sexual violence. And considering what they have survived, this should not be surprising. Clients with mental health and/or substance use challenges are often the most complicated client with whom to work and are the ones who need an advocate's support the most.

NCEDSV is working with The SAFE Alliance in Austin, TX, to present a three-part training series to support advocates working with clients with co-occurring issues. So, mark down these dates and look for the upcoming registration!

- December 16, 2021 Working with survivors with Mental Health-related needs
- January 13, 2022 Working with survivors with Substance Abuse/Addiction
- February 10, 2021 Crisis, Self-Harm, Suicidal Risks, Grounding, and Self-Care

In the meantime, here are some tools to help you better advocate with clients who have co-occurring issues.

- **Create a welcoming environment.** This is important to help someone dealing with trauma by helping to reduce anxiety. So make sure your facilities feel safe with good security and lighting. (Yes, there is a difference between providing a safe place and a prison-like place. Remember, it is to keep unwanted people out and not keep people in.) Pay attention to accessibility issues. Provide private retreat areas other than the bedroom, like a quiet space or meditation garden. Most importantly, make sure everyone entering your project program knows they can come to an advocate if something makes them feel unsafe or uncomfortable. The staff will try to make them more comfortable.
- **Always convey respect in words and actions.** Advocates need to be considerate, respectful, understanding, supportive, and empathetic. This means listening to what clients are saying. Facing them when they speak and not taking notes or trying to "solve their problem." Ask them how they would like you to help instead of assuming you know best. Sometimes, there isn't anything to do but just listen and believe.
- **Work on building trust.** Often, persons who have been traumatized and have multiple challenges in their lives don't trust easily. Often, they have been rejected, let down, ignored by, or abused, judged, or denied services by the very systems and programs that should be there to assist them. Many clients also have fears of legal repercussions, of losing their children, and fear of their abusive partner for saying anything about their abuse. It takes time to build trust.
 - Give clients control of their safety, treatment, and service plans. Clients shouldn't be forced into your program, but be able to pick and choose what services of yours they need.
 - Be open and up-front about what you are doing and why. No surprises. Make sure they have to opportunity to ask questions and express their concerns. Your actions should be based on joint decisions and not unilateral decisions by you.
 - Maintain confidentiality. This also means with other staff. While case rounds and debriefing with other staff are necessary, not everyone needs to know everything about each client. Ask first before sharing with other staff members.
 - Respect their time. Be on time for your appointments, give them undivided attention, and listen to what they have to say.
- **Never in front of the children.** Do not discuss the abuse, mental health challenges, or substance use in front of the children. Also, NEVER use children to interpret.
- **Validate their resourcefulness.** When someone confides in you about their experience and responses, make sure to credit them for finding a way to cope and offer options to make coping and surviving safer. Yes, this means adopting a harm reduction approach with clients. Harm reduction approach focuses on a reduction of harmful behaviors like substance use or risky behaviors instead of abstinence.

The all or nothing attitude toward substance use or risky behaviors sets clients up for failure.

- **Discuss risks respectfully.** Express concern about the dangers of their behavior for both the client's and their children's safety. "While drug use may kill the pain for a while, there are safer ways to coping that also open up more options for your safety and self-sufficiency." Provide objective information about possible legal and health consequences.
- **Ask open-ended questions.** Build on your client's strengths. Remember, they are the expert in their own life. So, ask questions like "What have you done to keep safe/sober/well up until now?" "What have you been able to do to care for yourself and the welfare of your children?" "What has worked well for you and the children, and what has given you problems?" "Many people tell me they have tried _____. Has this worked for you?"
- **Validate their concerns.** "Give yourself credit; you have been doing your best in difficult circumstances." "Of course you are feeling stressed. Anyone would. May I offer some safer coping tools for you to consider?"
- **Normalize their response and discuss co-occurring issues in a way that is comfortable and non-judgmental.** Don't expect someone to be the "perfect" victim. Give them room to experience their emotional responses. Accept and meet the client where they are, even if they are angry, depressed, or argumentative. Particularly if they are angry, depressed or argumentative since victims (especially female victims) are rarely allowed to have and express those feelings.
- **Focus on their experiences.** If you have experiences similar to your clients, always remember, this isn't your path; it is your clients. Don't project your story onto your client.
- **Provide intensive service coordination if requested.** Explore options such as shelter, gender-specific treatment (if available), support groups, safety planning, services for children, and referrals. Don't overwhelm your client with referrals. Also, be up-front about costs and insurance.
- **Constantly affirm your client's autonomy and right to control the decision-making.** Discuss the many options your client may have and explain the benefits of safety planning, stopping, or reducing substance use. Advocates may have to discuss safer ways to use (harm reduction) rather than abstaining.
- **Finally, remember that you have as much to learn as your client.** Always be open to learning from your clients.

References

Edmund, D., & Bland, P. (2011). *Real Tools: Responding to Multi-Abuse Trauma*. Juneau: Alaska Network on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault.

ORGANIZATIONAL UPDATE

STAFF UPDATES

Welcome Sarah Slavenas as our Communications Director