

# Winter Newsletter 2022



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# A LETTER FROM NCEDSV'S EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Welcome 2023!

As we welcome the new year, I am excited to join you all as I pick up the baton as the new Executive Director of NCEDSV. While many of you have already heard of my arrival, I would like to take just a moment to introduce myself. My name is Elizabeth Abdur-Raheem and I am dedicated to building healthier communities by breaking down structural oppression, empowering every individual, and ending marginalization. Professionally this has included many roles over more than 20 years. I have been a sexual support advocate in suburban New Jersey, directed family homeless shelters in New York City, and led a multi-service domestic violence agency in Columbus, Ohio. I am energized to bring my passion here to Nevada and I know we are going to do amazing things together.

First and foremost, I want to thank Amanda Bullard for serving as the Interim Executive Director these past months. Amanda has done an amazing job supporting the members, staff, and partners of the Coalition and is already a wonderful support to me as I am learning my way. I know that everyone joins me in thanking Amanda and appreciating her generosity with her time and expertise.

As we look into 2023, I encourage everyone to check out our trainings for both Human Trafficking Awareness Month in January and Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month in February. February also marks the beginning of an especially important legislative session in Nevada. The Coalition will be focusing its efforts on creating workplace protections for people who have experienced sexual assault. These protections would ensure the victim-survivor could take time off work to attend court hearings, doctor appointments, or advocacy and counseling sessions without fear of losing their jobs. We will also pursue legislation that streamlines school responses to disclosures of power-based violence. Currently, students who have experienced violence report that they have not been informed or connected to domestic and sexual violence community-based agencies. These students then go without free and confidential resources, counseling, and advocacy services and are often left navigating the system without the proper support. These are just two of the critical pieces of legislation we are hard at work on. I hope that each of you will join in these efforts by contacting your legislators. We will be reaching out to let you know how you can help as bills are coming up throughout the session.

Finally, I want each of you to know how much I am looking forward to meeting you in person – at a training, a hearing, a visit to your program, or a membership event. However, please don't wait for me to come to you (though I'm on my way!). Feel free to reach out with any questions, to share special things I should know about your community or just to say hello! My email is <u>elizabeth@ncedsv.org</u>.

In health, safety, and strength,

*Elizabeth Abdur-Raheem* Executive Director

## AWARENESS JANUARY

- January is Human Trafficking Awareness Month: It is an important time for groups dedicated to ending trafficking to collectively uplift one another's work and challenge legislators, police, communities and individuals to do their part to recognize and report human trafficking when they suspect it. NCEDSV is collaborating with our amazing colleagues in various events outlined below.
- January is Stalking Awareness Month: It is a time to educate oneself about the warning signs, facts and seriousness of stalking. Stalking is a crime that affects the wellness of a victim. One in six women and one in 17 men will experience this form of abuse in their lifetime. Get educated and donate or support causes that assist victim-survivors.
- January 4: Xquisite—12p Blue Ribbon Campaign in Carson City
- January 11: National Human Trafficking Awareness Day—Launched by the US Senate to raise awareness and combat human trafficking and slavery. This day is dedicated to awareness and prevention of the illegal practice.

- January 11: International Parity at Work Day—Raises awareness of ongoing inequality in the workplace with global events to celebrate the strength of diversity at work.
- January 21: Community Care and Panel Event by The Cupcake Girls at The Center in Las Vegas
- January 21: World Hug Day—This was a day created to encourage people to hug each other more often. While this is a fine idea for adults, forced hugs should not be demanded of children as it violates their bodily autonomy. It teaches them that they do not get to decide to say "no" about hugging people with whom they are not comfortable or when they do not feel like being touched.

## **FEBRUARY**

- **February is Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Month:** This is an opportunity to shine a light on the prevalence and seriousness of abusive patterns in formative relationships. It is also a call to action for legislators, practitioners, educators, parents, public health officials and others to do their part to educate young people about healthy relationships and setting boundaries so that they feel safe and respected.
- **February is Black History Month:** A month to acknowledge, learn about and celebrate Black culture and history (though this important work should not be limited to the month of February). February was chosen as Frederick Douglass and Abraham Lincoln both had birth dates in this month and were two key activists in ending slavery.
- **February 6: International Day of Zero Tolerance to Female Genital Mutilation History**—UN campaign to end genital mutilation of girls and women and highlight the dangers of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), which is an abuse of human rights and can cause fatal bleeding.
- **February 20: World Day of Social Justice**—Raise awareness and support the efforts of the international community to eradicate poverty, promote full employment, decent work, gender fairness and access to social well-being and justice for all.
- February 21: International Mother Language Day—The Coalition recognizes the horror that took place when Native American children were forcibly removed from their families and forbidden to speak their native language. On this day we celebrate mother languages because they are critical to identity formation and contribute to a positive self-concept. The Intercultural Development Research
  <u>Association (IDRA)</u> reiterates that continuing to study one's mother tongue after childhood helps one learn how to value one's culture and heritage. For parents, keeping one's first language alive at home teaches children to take pride in their culture and roots. When we go back to our roots and culture we begin to heal from

the trauma that has been endured by our Native relatives.

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## MARCH

- **March 1: Zero Discrimination Day**—Promotes efforts to achieve a fairer, just and equitable world by challenging all forms of discrimination wherever it happens.
- March 8: International Women's Day—A day that celebrates women's rights across the globe.
- March 21: World Down Syndrome Day—People living with disabilities are more likely to experience forms of sexual and dating violence. <u>NCEDSV launched a</u> <u>campaign "Believe my Truth"</u> to shine a spotlight on the disproportionality of the rates of victimization of those who have a disability, including Down Syndrome.

# LEADERSHIP VOICES INTERVIEW WITH KAITLYN DICICCO

<u>3Strands Global Foundation</u> Director, Social Services Program



## EDUCATION AND TRAINING UPCOMING TRAININGS

Visit our training and events calendar here.

## **PAST TRAININGS**

Visit our training and events **webpage** to view recorded trainings.

# NOTES FROM THE CHALKBOARD: WHAT'S NEW IN EDUCATION & TRAINING

Written by <u>Judy Henderson</u>, Sr. Training Coordinator

With 2023 arriving, are you looking for some fresh ideas to meet the needs of victim-survivors and their children? Can't quite find the right tools to do advocacy work more efficiently? We at NCEDSV know what it is like when the number of cases rise and

resources dwindle. Our training and technical assistance staff are listening to your concerns as well as the challenges facing your community partners. All impact the lives of the people we serve.

In response to your needs, NCEDSV is revamping its education and training program by increasing and diversifying its offerings: The NEW Domestic Violence live Core Advocacy Trainings begin this March and will be accompanied by the Sexual Violence live Core Advocacy Trainings beginning in May. Both live sessions require the completion of assignments before being accepted into the program. Watch your email for more detailed information of these nine sessions offered during each of those months.

Both live webinar series are designed for the working advocate whether you are a novice or have years of experience. Your organizational membership opens these offerings to you at no cost. If you were just hired or you volunteer as an advocate, another opportunity you do not want to miss is the online, self-paced series of modules for which you can register for at any time. The successful completion of these online modules will earn you "privilege" so you can keep your conversations with victim-survivors confidential. Confidentiality is an essential element in your work to increase the safety of victim-survivors and is a priority for providing all trauma-informed services. The online sessions should be completed prior to registering for the live sessions so you can begin your advocacy work as soon as you are done. Contact Lindsay Yates at <u>adminlv@ncedsv.org</u> to register.

Here is a brief overview of what is coming up in February 2023. In honor of Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month, we are offering the following seven webinars:

- Hanging Out or Hooking Up: Addressing the Needs of Adolescent Survivors of Relationship Abuse
- Human Trafficking presented by Xquisite as a Regional Training
- Supporting Adolescent Survivors with Disabilities from Sexual Assault
- Recognizing & Responding to Stalking: Supporting Adolescent Victim-Survivors presented by SPARC
- A Conversation about Indigenous Young Adult Issues
- Relationship Abuse for Adolescents Who Identify as Trans and Non-Binary
- Coaching Boys into Men: Respect, Integrity, and Non-Violence presented by Futures Without Violence

As we finalize the titles, presenters, dates, and times please check your email for the latest registration information. CEU applications are being submitted to Nevada Board of Examiners and the Nevada Department of Education.

Not receiving our education and training announcements, sign up using <u>this link</u>. Scroll down to the bottom of the home webpage.

To ask any questions, please complete <u>this online form</u>.

#### **IMPROVING OUR RESPONSE TO SEXUAL ASSAULT: SELF-PACED TRAINING** *Written by Sarah Slavenas, Communications Director*

After a year of statewide and cross-sectional collaboration, NCEDSV is proud to announce that with the help of our many partners on this project, we recently rolled out our newest self-paced training, <u>Improving Our Response to Sexual Assault.</u>

An internal team contracted with a former Nevada-based law enforcement victim's advocate, <u>Maclane Olson</u>, and over a dozen experts from across Nevada and beyond, for more than a year to conduct research, examine best practices, evaluate current standards of care and much more. Our multi-disciplinary approach created project success and ensured the training would speak to a broad audience. It is geared to educate anyone from first day students to seasoned police officers, advocates, medical practitioners and more.

The training focuses on addressing sexual assault cases from a victim-centered, trauma-informed approach, whether that is in a cold case setting, such as for the sexual assault kit initiative (SAKI), or a case that has recently occurred. Learners will better understand the neurobiology of trauma and its effect on behavior during and after an assault, its effect on memory, and more. Additionally, attendees will come away better understanding how different systems intersect and work with victim-survivors after an assault, experiences from the field and more. It also discusses benefits, and suggestions based on an agency's ability, for creating a local multi-disciplinary team to effectively handle these cases.

Improving Our Response to Sexual Assault is POST approved (for 8 hours) for Law Enforcement Officers. However, advocates, nurses and others whose professions intersect with these cases are highly encouraged to enjoy the training in preparation for a multi-disciplinary response to sexual violence in their communities that is both victim-centered and trauma-informed. **Register here for this self-paced, free training!** 

## **EVENTS**

For more events, check out our **<u>CALENDAR</u>**.

## **SUPPORTERS**

We appreciate all of the support we received this holiday season but we're still shy of our winter goal! Take a stand against domestic and sexual violence with a **donation** today.

## THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS





## NCEDSV PUBLIC POLICY FEDERAL POLICY UPDATE

Written by Serena Evans, Policy Director

President Biden signed the Fiscal Year (FY) 23 omnibus appropriations bill on December 23. While there were substantial increases in program funding, there were also a few disappointments despite strong advocacy.

Unfortunately, the Family Violence Prevention Services (FVPSA) Improvement Act, S. 1275, was not included in the package due to disagreements around parental consent and protections for trans individuals. Additionally, Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) was only funded at \$1.9 billion, but this is the first time no Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) funds were set aside. Additionally, states may see cuts in VOCA of up to \$30 million. The Nevada Coalition to End Domestic and Sexual Violence (NCEDSV) will continue to monitor this situation and provide updates as they become available.

While the FVPSA Reauthorization and VOCA funding levels have raised concerns for advocates and programs, there are still wins to celebrate in the FY 23 omnibus appropriations bills.

- Despite the FVPSA Improvement Act not making it into the omnibus bill, FVPSA funding was increased by \$37.5 million.
- The Sexual Assault Services Program (SASP) increased by \$24.5 million for a total of \$78.5 million.
- VAWA Culturally Specific Programs funding increased by \$1 million.
- The DV/SA Bonus at HUD level funded at \$52 million.
- VOCA funding does not include a VAWA set aside.

NCEDSV and our national partners are pleased overall with the omnibus bill and are relieved that the legislation passed without another Continuing Resolution, or worse, a government shutdown. We will continue to work to pass the FVPSA Improvement Act and bring VOCA deposits.

### **STATE POLICY UPDATE**

Written by Serena Evans, Policy Director

#### **Upcoming Advocacy 101 Training**

In preparation for the 2023 Legislative Session, NCDESV invites you to attend our Advocacy 101 Webinar: Understanding Political Advocacy and Effective Engagement with Policymakers. This webinar will focus on the differences between direct and grassroots lobbying and how and why non-profit organizations should engage in lobbying. More importantly, this webinar will give attendees the tools and resources to understand the Nevada State Legislature and how to engage with legislators to influence policy effectively.

Political advocacy is one of the most effective ways to encourage and influence change within a cause or movement. Every day, laws are passed and implemented at the state and federal levels that directly affect our communities and the clients we serve. Engaging in the legislative process is crucial in that it:

- Ensures that victim-survivor voices are heard, and their needs are centered; and,
- Allows us to elevate marginalized communities; and,
- Gives us a platform to educate on the need for violence prevention.

#### **Economic Justice Community Panels**

NCEDSV invites you to join the Nevada Economic Justice Workgroup, content experts, and victim-survivors of power-based violence from across the state for an informative panel on economic equity as a tool for violence prevention.

Robust economic opportunities are the foundation for strong and healthy communities contributing to violence prevention. Over the past year, NCEDSV convened an inclusive statewide Economic Justice Workgroup to address inequities and challenges in order to prevent violence. Knowing that working in silos leads to failure, this work group leans into organizational strengths to highlight the intersections of our individual missions to collaboratively address violence caused by economic inequity. This group of untraditional anti-violence and anti-oppression agencies has identified five policy areas Nevadans should focus efforts on to increase economic opportunities as tools for violence prevention:

- (1) Access to affordable and available mental health providers; and,
- (2) Increase state revenue to raise public benefit levels and supports; and,
- (3) Comprehensive, medically accurate sex and health education; and,
- (4) Access to safe and affordable housing; and,
- (5) Increasing workplace equity and supports.

The panels will feature content experts on all five of NCEDSV's Economic Justice Workgroup policy priority topics and will discuss the challenges Nevada is currently facing, the impacts on victim-survivors of power-based violence, and the need to prioritize policies related to

these issues. You can register for the panels using the links below:

• Tuesday, Jan. 24 from 1-2:30 pm. Register here.

# **ADVOCATES CORNER**

## HUMAN TRAFFICKING ON SUPERBOWL WEEKEND

Written by Loralee Rae, Technical Assistance Coordinator

When we think of the Super Bowl, we think of Super Bowl parties with friends, gathering at homes of other fans, enjoying wings, chips and dip, beer and sodas, etc. Everyone stands around discussing the bets they have placed, whom the better team is, who is rooting for what team, and who are their favorite players. Super Bowl LVII will be here before you



know it, Feb. 12, 2023 to be exact. One can assume that these friends are not also sitting around talking about sex trafficking and whether it increases at the Super Bowl.

Commercial sex trafficking is force, fraud or coercion to compel a person into sex acts against their will. A decade ago it was thought that sex trafficking greatly increased during high profile sporting events, especially the Super Bowl. According to Anti-Trafficking Review, by researchers at The

University of Texas at Austin and University of Minnesota, before 2018, 76% of U.S. print <u>media</u> helped propagate the myth of spiking numbers of sex trafficking during the Super Bowl. However, rich research demonstrates that sex trafficking does not increase at these events. <u>Research debunks myth of Super Bowl sex trafficking, improves media</u> <u>narrative (phys.org)</u>. In fact, sex trafficking is a lot different from what most people envision.

It does not just affect women. Men and boys are also trafficked. Sex trafficking can start with a relationship where the individual and/or pimp convinces the adult or child that they love them and have their best interests at heart. They might buy them expensive things, convincing the victim that they love them and "they are the only person for them". They might say to the victim, "if you love me you will do this for me". On the other hand, the exploitation may begin much more abruptly and violently.

Sex trafficking is one of the most profitable criminal activities, bringing in billions of dollars a year. It is a modern form of sexual slavery. Men are traffickers, but women participate in trafficking as well. Parents, and other trusted caregivers and adults can be traffickers. Traffickers use force, substances, and emotional and financial tactics to control their victims. Some of you might ask why those being trafficked "do not just leave". Most victims do not have the financial means to do so, as they are required to turn all of their income and identification over to the trafficker. In addition, many victims do not realize there is help out there, and, if they do, they are unsure of how to obtain it.

Victims are strictly controlled and may not get regular contact with the outside world. Some traffickers threaten victims or their family, and the victim feels that if they try to escape, harm will come to their families. According to the Polaris Project, another reason victims do not leave is they do not see themselves as a victim. They have been so manipulated by their trafficker that the victim believes they are making the choice to engage in commercial sex acts. <u>Understanding Human Trafficking - Polaris</u> [polarisproject.org]

Sex trafficking intersects with domestic and sexual violence; therefore, NCEDSV is collaborating with our colleagues in Nevada and beyond to bring trainings about this critical issue to you this January! Be sure to <u>check out our interview</u> with 3Strands Global Foundation about their upcoming training, and register for the others by visiting our <u>Training and Events</u> page!

#### **TEEN DATING VIOLENCE AWARENESS**

Written by Amber Batchelor, Program Director

Experts (the Center for Disease Control and Prevention or CDC) and numerous professionals consider teen dating violence or adolescent relationship abuse (identified as ARA) to be a serious public health concern. While many teens don't call their relationships "dating" studies show that by the time they are in middle school, many young people are involved in intimate, romantic dating relationships. A study conducted by the **Robert Wood** 



**Johnson Foundation** found that 75 percent of seventh graders reported having a boyfriend or girlfriend. Fortunately, for some young people their relationships are emotionally satisfying, psychologically healthy and even loving connections. These present them with opportunities to explore their beliefs and values about relationships; to challenge them, strengthen or reject some, but ultimately to form their identity as a young adult. For too many adolescents these relationships are unhealthy or cross the line into being emotionally and physically abusive. Dating violence or ARA violence is a pattern of verbal, physical, sexual or emotional violence against a romantic partner. Adolescents may be vulnerable to violence in their romantic relationships because of the different patterns of adult relationships they observe. Other contributors are the relationships seen on TV, in the movies, and in media. These are frequently very unrealistic or unhealthy examples of relationships where violence is the norm and is "proof" of love. The description of ARA seems simple but it's consequences are complex and far reaching for victim-survivors, the partner using violence and their families and friends. Adolescent relationship abuse can result in high risks for long-term consequences, serious injuries and even death.

### **Consequences of Teen Dating Violence**

Teens are heavily influenced by their relationship experiences. Healthy relationship behaviors have positive effects on their emotional development, while unhealthy, abusive, or violent relationships can have negative consequences. Research focused on consequences of teen dating violence suggests victims are more likely to experience depression, eating disorders, engage in substance use, have poor educational outcomes and have suicidal thoughts.

These may involve:

- doing poorly in school or avoiding school due to feeling unsafe ~report binge drinking, smoking, using drugs, or engaging in unhealthy diet behaviors (taking diet pills, laxatives or self-induced vomiting for weight loss
- developing a negative body image and become uncomfortable with their sexuality
- becoming pregnant or acquiring an STD
- reporting feelings of hopelessness and sadness or attempting suicide
- eventually having difficulty establishing intimacy in adult relationships, or entering into violent adult relationships

Teen dating violence has also been linked to poorer physical health, linked to chronic health conditions, such as heart disease, increased blood pressure, autoimmune disorders, chronic pain and others.

ARA is more common than many believe – due partly to being misunderstood and under-reported. Like some adults, certain teens believe that "it's okay" or "normal" to have emotional and physical abuse as part of intimate relationships. Shoving, pushing, hitting, slapping, punching, kicking or grabbing are aspects of physical abuse. Emotional abuse includes name calling, threatening, insulting, shaming, manipulating, dismissing the victims' feelings and being hyper-critical. Isolation by controlling access to friends and family, expecting a partner to check in constantly, extreme unwarranted jealousy or using technology like texting to exert control or to coerce the victim are also forms of emotional abuse. These and more can make up the pattern of abuse.

#### Signs a Teen May be Experiencing Relationship Violence

Many parents are surprised to learn that their teen is at risk for dating violence, so it's important that parents, guardians or adults working with adolescents be familiar with warning signs that may be due to relationship violence. Some of the following can just be a part of being a teenager experiencing a variety of physical and emotional changes during this time of their life. And they may not readily share these with a parent or trusted adult all of the changes they are experiencing. But as the adult it's important we be aware of what could be a sign of teen dating violence: changes in behaviors (particularly in the areas of school), and changes in attitude/mood, physical appearance, and activities. This combined with being mindful, respectful and open can help you to check in with your teen and express your concern without judgment.

Consider if the young person is:

- Having difficulty making decisions, shows changes in personality, is becoming anxious or depressed
- Acting out or being increasingly secretive; having "crying jags" or becoming emotionally uncontrolled
- Experiencing changes in eating or sleeping habits; using alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs
- Making sudden changes in clothes or make-up
- Excessively text messaging, phone calling, emailing or visiting with their boyfriend/girlfriend/partner
- Avoiding friends or changing peer groups; giving up activities, interests, or family time that was previously important
- Having declining grades or missing school
- Being pressured by a partner about what to do, where to go, or what to wear
- Being worried about upsetting their boyfriend/girlfriend/significant other
- Apologizing or making excuses for their boyfriend's/girlfriend's/significant other's behavior
- Is having injuries that she/he/they tries to cover up or can't explain

It's equally important to know something about their partner.

- Is their dating partner extremely jealous, possessive or controlling
- Overly jealous or upset if the victim gets attention from others
- Are they seeing someone who breaks objects, hurts animals or threatens people or things that the victim cares about
- Hiding bruises or injuries that can't be satisfactorily explained
- Do they call their partner names and undermine their goals
- Do they constantly monitor their dating partner through phone calls, texts or by using other people

Teens may not realize that they're experiencing unhealthy relationship abuse while normalizing it as evidence of intensity and love. Prevention through education is key. Those of us in contact with adolescents and their families must work tirelessly to educate ourselves and our community to address and improve our response to teen dating violence. If you've noticed a changes in a teen or identified warning signs of abuse plan **now** to get information and help. To that end, NCEDSV will be providing the following training opportunities during February Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month.

#### **RESOURCES**

Robert Wood Johnson Foundation TDVAM Resources Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention: Teen Dating Violence Literature Review Scope of the Problem Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention: Teen Dating Violence Literature Review Scope of the Problem Risk Factors for Teen Dating Violence Youth At Risk of Teen Dating Violence | Youth.gov A Parent's Guide to Teen Dating Violence Early Childhood Predictors of Teen Dating Violence Involvement at Age 17

## ORGANIZATIONAL UPDATE STAFF UPDATES

Judy Henderson was promoted to Senior Training Coordinator Serena Evans was promoted to Policy Director

#### **BOARD UPDATES**

NCEDSV welcomes Linda Perez to the Board

## **BOARD RECRUITMENT**

We strongly encourage individuals who have been active members of NCEDSV to consider board membership. NCEDSV is committed to representing all survivors of domestic and sexual violence and strives to have a broad range of representation. Please contact the Administrative Director, Amanda Bullard, at <u>admin@ncedsv.org</u> to obtain an application packet.