

October is National Domestic Violence Awareness Month. Domestic Violence Awareness Month evolved from the first Day of Unity observed in October 1981 by the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence (NCADV). In 1989, Congress passed the first DVAM commemorative legislation. Such legislation has been passed every year since 1989.

According to the U.S. Department of Justice, one in four women will be the victim of domestic violence at some point in her lifetime. Domestic Violence is the leading cause of injury to women (American Bar Association), though it should be noted that 15 percent of domestic violence victims are men. (NCADV)

On average, three women are killed every day at the hands of a current or former intimate partner. The CDC estimates that intimate partner violence costs exceed \$8.3 billion, of which \$5.8 billion are due to follow up medical and mental health care and \$2.5 billion are indirect costs of lost workforce productivity. The CDC believes these numbers to be an underestimate because they do not include any criminal justice costs.

Domestic violence occurs at alarming rates regardless of race, ethnicity, income level, education, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity or any other social factors.

Domestic violence can take place on a range of levels, from psychological abuse such as name calling, making threats and humiliating the other person to physical and sexual abuse, such as slapping, kicking, throwing things and/or forcing a partner to be intimate.

The Sandhills Crisis Intervention Program (SCIP) is one of 21 Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault Advocacy Programs in Nebraska. SCIP provides services to Arthur, Deuel, Garden, Grant, Keith and Perkins counties.

Some of the many services SCIP offers include emergency shelter, agency referrals, court accompaniment, protection order assistance, crisis counseling, support groups, a 24-hour crisis line and teen dating education.

According to the 2010 year-end count, SCIP served 202 women, 45 men and 321 children, for a total of 568 individuals served in the six-county region within a single year.

In the continuing efforts to help prevent domestic violence, SCIP recently began facilitating a batterer intervention program known as New LEAF (Leaders Ending Abuse in Families).

New LEAF provides offenders with the information and tools needed to help them change their behaviors, based on the curriculum of the Duluth Model for violence intervention.

New LEAF is the only known Batterer Intervention Program in the state of Nebraska west of North Platte and referrals to the New LEAF program are accepted from all sources.

If a domestic violence situation is known or for more information on any of our services or programs, please contact SCIP at 308-284-8477.