

Kent County Domestic Violence: Media Packet and Resources



**Produced by the Kent County
Coordinated Community
Response Team**

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The **Kent County Domestic Violence Coordinated Community Response Team (DV CCRT)** is a multi-disciplinary team of local professionals who work in the field of domestic violence prevention, domestic violence intervention, law, education, faith community and health care.

Mission: to cooperate, coordinate and collaborate on all community efforts to eliminate domestic violence.

When do we meet? The 4th Thursday of each month from 12 p.m.-1:30 p.m. at the Kent County Courthouse in the 5th Floor Conference Room. Meetings are open to the public. Members of the media are encouraged to attend.

Why is the Media so Important?

Domestic violence cannot be solved by one person or agency alone. Success is defined through a team approach that includes members from all sectors of our community working together to address this epidemic. The media plays a vital role in educating the public about domestic violence. If we are to encourage action, awareness and prevention, we need the enlisted support of the media to supplement and duplicate our efforts.

What is Domestic Violence?

Domestic Violence is a pattern of controlling behaviors that includes but is not limited to physical assaults, sexual assaults, emotional abuse, isolation, economic coercion, threats, stalking and intimidation. These behaviors are used by the by one person in an intimate relationship to control the other. The partners may be married or engaged, heterosexual or homosexual, living together, separated or dating (Please see the “Healing Path”).

Domestic violence is not a family matter. It is a crime, and it is in Michigan. The Michigan State Police Uniform Crime Report tells us there were 54,258 reported victims and 30 reported murders related to domestic violence in 2004. Domestic violence is a misdemeanor punishable by up to 93 days in jail and/or a \$500 fine or both.

Under Michigan law, a person has a domestic relationship if any of the following apply:

- Spouse or former spouse
- Dating relationship or former dating relationship
- Child in common
- Resident or former resident of the same household

Sources: The Michigan Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence; Calhoun County Domestic Violence Council Education Prevention Safety, Support Information Guide, the Healing Path and the 2002 MSP Uniform Crime Report.

Warning Signs of Domestic Violence

Jealousy

A batter will say that jealousy is a sign of love. In reality, jealousy has nothing to do with love and is a sign of insecurity. A batterer may question the victim about who s/he talks to or be jealous of time spent with family, friends or children. As the jealousy progresses, the batter will call the victim frequently to drop by unexpectedly at home or the office. The batterer may refuse to let the victim work, check the car mileage or ask friends or co-workers to watch the victim's activities.

Controlling Behavior

The batter will claim that controlling behavior is out of concern for the victim's welfare. S/he will be angry if the victim is "late" and frequently interrogates the victim. As the behavior worsens, the batter will control the victim's appearance and activities. The batter may keep all the money or not allow the victim to leave the house or use the telephone.

Quick Involvement

Many victims of domestic violence dated or knew their abuser for less than six months before they were engaged or living together. The batterer comes on quickly, claiming "love at first sight" and will tell the victim flattering things such as "You're the only person I could ever love." A batterer will often pressure someone to make a commitment quickly.

Unrealistic Expectations

The batterer is dependent on the victim for everything and expects perfection. S/he will say things like, "You're the only person I need in my life." The victim is expected to take care of everything for the batterer, both emotionally and in the home.

Isolation

The batterer will attempt to diminish and destroy the victim's support system. If the victim is female and has male friends, she is accused of being a "whore". If she has female friends, she is accused of being a "lesbian". If she is close to her family, she is accused of being "tied to the apron strings." The batter will accuse people who are close to the victim of "causing trouble." The batterer may want to isolate the victim geographically by moving to a rural area or not having a telephone. The victim may not be able to use the car, go to work or attend school.

Blaming Others for Problems

Batterers will rarely admit to the part they play in causing a problem. For example, if the batterer is chronically unemployed, s/he will accuse others of being responsible. The batterer will blame the victim for almost anything that goes wrong.

Blames Others for His/Her Feelings

The batterer will tell the victim, “You made me mad”, “You’re hurting me when you don’t do what I ask,” or “I can’t help but be angry.” This is a way to manipulate the victim and other people.

Hypersensitivity

The batterer is easily insulted. The slightest setbacks are often seen as personal attacks. The batterer will rage about injustices that happen, things that are actually a part of life, such as having to work overtime, getting a traffic ticket or being asked to help around the home.

Cruelty to Animals or Children

The batterer may brutally punish animals or be insensitive to their pain or suffering. S/he may expect children to be capable of doing things far beyond their ability and then punish them when they do not meet their expectations. For example, a batterer may spank a two-year-old for wetting a diaper or may tease children until they cry.

“Playful” Use of Force During Sex

The batterer may like to hold the victim down during sex. A male batterer may want to act out sexual fantasies in which the woman is helpless. He may show little concern about whether the victim wants to have sex and use sulking or anger to manipulate the victim into compliance. A batterer may demand sex or starting having sex with the victim when s/he is sleeping.

Verbal Abuse

In addition to saying things that are meant to be cruel and hurtful, verbal abuse includes degrading, cursing or discounting the victim. The batterer may call the victim stupid or useless. Female victims are often called “fat”, “slut”, or “whore”.

Rigid Sex Roles

Male batterers often expect women to serve and obey them. They view women as inferior to men and believe that a woman is not a whole person without a relationship with men.

Jekyll-and-Hyde Personality

Explosiveness and mood swings are typical of batterers and these behaviors are related to other characteristics such as hypersensitivity. This is not necessarily a sign of mental health problems but may be a way of controlling the victim by being unpredictable.

Past Battering

The batterer may say “I have hit a women in the past, but they made me do it.” A batterer who minimizes what happened with a previous partner is likely to be violent with his/her current partner. Batter behaviors do not just go away.

Threats of Violence

Threats of violence include any threat of physical force meant to control the victim. Most relationships do not involve threats, but a batterer will try to excuse this behavior by saying that “everyone talks like that.”

Breaking or Striking Objects

The batterer may break things, beat on tables or walls, or throw objects around or near the victim. Such behavior may be used as a punishment, but its primary function is to terrorize the victim into submission.

Any Force During an Argument

The batterer may use force during arguments, including holding the victim down, physically restraining the victim from leaving a room, pushing and shoving. For example, a batterer may hold a victim against a wall and say “You’re going to listen to me.”

Adapted from *When Violence Begins at Home: A Comprehensive Guide to Understanding and Ending Domestic Abuse*, by K.J. Wilson, Alameda, CA: Hunter House Publishers, 1997.

Suggestions for Helping A Victim of Domestic Violence

Approach the person in an understanding, non-blaming way. Tell her that you care about her that she is not alone and that it takes strength to trust someone enough to talk about abusive behavior. In no way should she feel ashamed.

Acknowledge that it is very difficult and scary to talk about domestic violence. Tell her she doesn't deserve to be threatened, hit or beaten. Nothing she can do or say makes the abuser's violence OK.

Support her as a friend. Be a good listener. Encourage her to express her hurt and anger. Allow her to make her own decisions, even it means she isn't ready to leave the abusive relationship.

Provide information about what types of behaviors create a pattern of violence, what the warning signs are and where to go for help. You may be giving her information she has never seen and that will help her understand what is happening and how she can protect herself (see page 12).

Ask if she has suffered physical harm. Encourage her to go to the hospital to check for injuries or tell her that if she ever needs to seek medical attention, you will go with her.

Assist her in getting legal protection and information. In Michigan, domestic violence is a crime. For more information, contact Legal Aid of Western Michigan at (800) 442-2777.

Tell her she is not alone. Many women encounter domestic violence. For more information, contact the Kent County Domestic Violence Community Response Team at www.kentcountydvcrt.net.

* This is geared toward women because the majority of domestic violence is perpetrated against women. It is important to emphasize, however, that violence occurs to others as well and is equally unacceptable.

Recommendations for Reporting on Domestic Violence

- Educate the community on the prevalence of domestic violence. For example, include local and statewide statistics (see pages 9 and 10) when reporting on domestic violence.
- Report on domestic violence with the support of local experts that work with victims, offenders, law enforcement, prevention education and the faith community.
- Have headlines state who perpetrated the domestic assault instead of highlighting the victim. For example, Boyfriend Assaults Girlfriend, rather than, Woman Assaulted.
- Avoid the use of acquaintance or casual observer testimonies. For example: “He seemed like a nice guy. I could never imagine him hurting his wife like this.” These testimonies contribute to “victim-blaming” and hold no merit. Rather, contact local experts that will supplement the report by providing valuable insight in domestic violence awareness.
- When forums/educational/advocacy events are organized in town, try to announce them ahead of time to encourage viewer participation and cover these events with some comprehension.
- Always let viewers know where there are able to receive services within Kent County or helpful website links. Let this be an opportunity to educate the community on where to go if they need help.

**Safe Haven Ministries – (616) 452-6664
YWCA Domestic Violence Shelter and 24 Hotline
(616) 451-2744**

**Domestic Violence Statistics for Grand Rapids, MI
January 1st, 2005 to December 31st, 2005**

SAFE HAVEN MINISTRIES

Ramoth House:

Ramoth House served 73 women and 95 children.
63 were from Kent County, and 10 were from other areas.
27 were age 18-25, 26 were age 26-34, 19 were age 35-49, and 1 was 50 and older.
The average length of stay at the Ramoth House was 16 days.

Protective Hands:

An average of 4.19 women per week participated in one of our 3 support groups.
187 new cases were opened.
1, 615 phone calls were received requesting information about domestic violence and/or our services.
73 women received counseling.

YWCA- DOMESTIC CRISIS CENTER

DCC housed 269 women and 275 children.
169 adults and 326 children assessed for safe housing with alternatives to shelter found
406 non-residential counseling consumers
2042 crisis calls to shelter and main building

MEN'S RESOURCE CENTER

103 men received an assessment
82 of the 103 men completed the domestic violence group.
Of the 21 remaining men that did not follow through with treatment, an average of 20% were not referred for their services

GRAND RAPIDS POLICE DEPARTMENT

GRPD received 5451 Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) calls about Domestic Violence.

61st DISTRICT COURT FACTS

Number of arrests for domestic violence in 2005: (Jan-Dec)

Males	855
Females	226

Total	1081

NATIONAL COALITION AGAINST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE



MICHIGAN

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE FACTS

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN MICHIGAN

- About 4 of every 10 females seen in selected emergency departments for injuries related to assault were there because of intimate partner violence.¹
- It is estimated that there were 22,328 domestic violence cases handled in Michigan's prosecuting attorney offices in 2000.²
- From 1999-2001, a total of 316 violent deaths connected to intimate partner relationships were registered in the Michigan Intimate Partner Homicide Surveillance System.³
- 48,310 domestic violence offenses were reported to the Michigan Uniform Crime Report (UCR) Program in 2003.⁴

MICHIGAN COALITION AGAINST DOMESTIC AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE⁵

- The Michigan Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence (MCADSV) is a statewide membership organization whose members represent a network of over 70 domestic and sexual violence programs and over 200 allied organizations and individuals.
- MCADSV is dedicated to the empowerment of survivors of violence as well as to the development and promotion of efforts to eliminate all domestic and sexual violence in Michigan.

SEXUAL ASSAULT IN MICHIGAN⁶

- 5,535 cases of rape were reported to Michigan's Uniform Crime Report program in 2003.
- In 2003, 726 of rape victims reported to Michigan's UCR program were under the age of 10.
- According to the UCR on rape victims in Michigan, the victim and offender were acquaintances in 25% of cases.
- There were 4,216 rape victims identified by Michigan's UCR in 2003.
- 296 of the rape victims identified by Michigan's 2003 UCR were raped by a parent.

CHALLENGES⁷

- The MCADSV is currently working to address domestic violence needs and implement prevention strategies on a statewide level. Although the coalition has made significant progress in these efforts, bringing together all of the Michigan's communities and programs is challenging.
- MCADSV is also struggling to achieve survivor empowerment on a statewide level. This involves realizing a balance between empowering survivors while simultaneously providing support and advocacy.
- MCADSV is working with youth organizations to address the needs of youth victims of sexual assault as well as youth homeless due to domestic violence.

If you or someone you know is in an abusive relationship and wants help, please contact the Statewide Domestic Violence Linkline at 1-800-997-LINK, the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-SAFE or the National Sexual Assault Hotline at 1-800-656-HOPE.



The Public Policy Office of the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence (NCADV) is a national leader in the effort to create and influence Federal legislation that positively affects the lives of domestic violence victims and children. We work closely with advocates at the local, state and national level to identify the issues facing domestic violence victims, their children and the people who serve them and to develop a legislative agenda to address these issues. NCADV welcomes you to join us in our effort to end domestic violence.

Domestic Violence Contact List

Victim Services and Advocacy

Jennifer Marcum
Executive Director
Safe Haven Ministries
(616) 452-6664

Rosalynn Bliss
Program Manager, KidsFirst
Kent County Domestic Violence CCRT – Chair
(616) 361-5227

Tom Cottrell
Vice-President of Counseling Services
YWCA West Central Michigan
(616) 459-7062 ext. 515

Offender Treatment

Randy Flood
Director
Men's Resource Center
(616) 456-1178

William Edwards
HAULT
(616) 821-3386

Law Enforcement

James K. Benison
Assistant Prosecutor
Kent County Prosecuting Attorney
(616) 632-6710

Faith Community

Jennifer Marcum
Executive Director
Safe Haven Ministries
(616) 452-6664

Prevention Education Programs

Annie Funke
Education Manager
Child and Family Resource Council
(616) 454-4673

Community Resources

Safe Haven Ramoth House Shelter – 452-6664

*YWCA Domestic Violence Shelter – 451-2744

*YWCA Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner Program – 776-7273

Men's Resource Center - 456-1178

RAVE (violence prevention education) – 454-4673

United Way First Call for Help – 211

Or Cell Phone – 459-2255

National Hotlines

*National Domestic Violence Hotline (800) 799-7233

*RAINN – Rape Abuse and Incest National Network (800) 656-4673

*Indicates where Spanish Services are Available

*Indica Donde Los Servicios en Espanol Estan Disponibles

Websites

Kent County Domestic Violence Coordinated Community Response Team

www.kentcountydvcrt.net

Safe Haven Ministries

www.safehavenministries.org

YWCA West Central Michigan

<http://www.ywcawcmi.org/>

Men's Resource Center

www.menscenter.org

Michigan Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence

www.mcadsv.org

National Domestic Violence Hotline

<http://www.ndvh.org>