



THE ADVOCATE

News from WIRC-CAA Victim Services

24-Hour Crisis Hotline: (309) 837-5555

2021

VOLUME 28, ISSUE 1

In This Issue:

VS Expands Telehealth Offerings	Page 1
VS Highlights Challenges...	Page 2
Free Seminar Discusses How...	Page 3
Remote Prevention Education Options	Page 5
VS 2020 Report At-a-Glance	Page 7
What Does Consent Look & Sound Like?	Page 7
Staff News	Page 8

The Advocate

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VICTIM SERVICES EXPANDS TELEHEALTH OFFERINGS

In order to serve as many survivors of abuse as safely as possible during the ongoing pandemic, Victim Services, a local domestic and sexual violence agency, has expanded its counseling options for domestic violence clients. As of January 2021, clients have the added option to meet with their counselors virtually.

The agency's Domestic Violence Program is using Doxy, a HIPAA-compliant telemedicine software company, to provide this new service to their clients. Public Relations Manager Jamie Roth said the agency believes that clients will appreciate the flexibility of this extra option. "Doxy allows our clients to join a secure and confidential counseling session via their home computer or smartphone," said Roth. "This flexibility increases the likelihood that a survivor will be able to find a quiet, safe place away from their abuser to attend their counseling session. Virtual counseling can be a great option for survivors who miss the face-to-face interaction of in-person appointments."

Roth continued that Doxy will be familiar to those who have used video conference tools like Zoom or have made video calls. "The service has a friendly, intuitive interface, even for those who are not

technologically-inclined. Clients who choose virtual counseling will be sent a secure, temporary website link from their counselor. After clicking the link, clients need to give Doxy permission to access the camera and microphone on the device they are using. After that, their counseling session can begin."

At this time, sexual assault clients can access through their counselor or advocate a similar secure platform to use through Illinois Coalition Against Sexual Assault (ICASA). Sexual assault clients are encouraged to contact their counselor for more information.

Anyone interested in this new service should request it from their counselor at least one week prior to their first virtual appointment. Telephone-only counseling options are still available. Availability for in-person counseling is subject to state and local guidelines.

For more information about Victim Services, visit <http://wirpc.org/victim-services/>, find them on social media, or call their business line at 309-837-6622. If you have experienced abuse at any point in your life, or if you think someone you know is being abused, call Victim Services' free and confidential crisis hotline at (309) 837-5555. ☺

VICTIM SERVICES HIGHLIGHTS CHALLENGES ABUSE SURVIVORS FACE DURING A PANDEMIC

Every October, Victim Services puts a spotlight on domestic violence for Domestic Violence Awareness Month. In October 2020, the annual campaign had a higher sense of urgency due to the ongoing Coronavirus pandemic, as many domestic violence survivors are in prolonged, close contact with their abuser(s).

"Abusers will often use situations like the pandemic to escalate their behavior and further isolate their victim(s) from friends and family," says Public Relations Manager Jamie Roth. "For domestic abuse survivors, the pandemic is creating a terrifying scenario where they have little-to-no time apart from their abuser(s), which makes it difficult to reach out for help."

Throughout the pandemic, Victim Services counselors and advocates have continued to provide their free and confidential services by offering phone counseling and following the CDC recommended physical distancing guidelines during face-to-face interactions. They have a crisis hotline monitored by trained staff and volunteer counselors that is available 24/7 by calling (309) 837-5555. Concerned friends and family members are also encouraged to call the hotline if they think someone they know is being abused.

Roth continued that domestic violence survivors who want to leave their abusers often face many challenges such as worrying about homelessness, hunger, being stalked by their abuser, or the well-being of their household pet. "Abusers want to manipulate and control their victims. Sometimes the controlling

behavior is physical, but it can also be sexual, psychological, or financial. It is also common for abusers to threaten to harm or kill household pets when they feel like they are losing control. That is why it is so important for the public to show support of survivors by reiterating that domestic abuse is a crime, they are not alone, and Victim Services has free resources available to help them in their specific situation."

Victim Services promoted their programs and advocated on behalf of survivors through public events and campaigns. Dark purple, a prominent component of all of their activities, is the symbolic color of Domestic Violence Awareness Month.

On October 3, the agency hosted their first-ever Pets Against Violence Awareness Event at Patton Park in Macomb. The event focused on potential barriers that victims with pets may face. Attendees and their pets were invited to take a pledge to end the cycle of domestic violence. Purple leashes, donated by Farm King and Pets Supplies Plus of Macomb, were available for a suggested donation of \$5.00. In addition, Farm King generously donated pooper-scoopers and dog treats. Additional outreach materials about domestic violence and Victim Services' programs were also distributed.

To raise awareness about financial abuse, Victim Services offered a free one-hour financial abuse training seminar for banks and other financial institutions. Victim Services counselors / advocates who have first-hand experience assisting

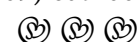
survivors of financial abuse taught each seminar that was available virtually or in-person with social distancing guidelines being followed.

Multiple local small businesses, churches, and schools showed their support by displaying signs that stated, "Every home should be a safe home." Members of the public were encouraged to wear purple, wear a purple pin-on ribbon, or install a purple light bulb on their porch light. Pin-on ribbons, signs, and lights were available from Victim Services for a suggested \$1 donation.

Victim Services also collaborated with local governments and law enforcement agencies through their purple bow and ribbon campaign, including the Macomb Police Department; Macomb Downtown Square; Macomb City Hall; Hancock County Courthouse; Hancock County Jail; Hancock County Sheriff's Office; Henderson County Sheriff's Office; Henderson County Courthouse; Warren County Courthouse; and Warren County Sheriff's Office. Employees and officers at many of those locations also wore pin-on ribbons to show their support.

The annual Take Back the Night March and Rally, hosted in collaboration with Western Illinois University was postponed until Spring 2021 due to the ongoing pandemic.

For more information, call (309) 837-6622. If you have experienced abuse at any point in your life, call Victim Services' 24-hour free and confidential crisis hotline at (309) 837-5555.



FREE SEMINAR DISCUSSES HOW STRANGULATION CAN LEAD TO HOMICIDE

Strangulation is a serious and sometimes deadly form of domestic violence. Abusers who strangle their victims are more likely to escalate their violent behavior and potentially kill their victim(s) or law enforcement officers. As part of their awareness campaign, Victim Services is now offering critical strangulation training to local law enforcement officers and other interested organizations.

Domestic Violence Program Coordinator Kerrie, who teaches each seminar, said that the signs of strangulation are not always visible by bruising on the neck. "On average, only 50% of strangulation victims have visible injuries," said Kerrie. "Internal symptoms of non-fatal strangulation can include a sore throat, nausea, headaches, seizures, and/or memory loss, to name a few. A victim who survives strangulation is at a much higher risk of being killed by their abuser, and that risk also goes up for law enforcement officers who respond to domestic violence calls."

The seminar highlights the relationship between strangulation and domestic violence; the difference between choking and strangulation; the signs and symptoms of strangulation; injuries caused by strangulation; victim reporting; free services offered by Victim Services; statistics; and resources. Each seminar lasts approximately one hour with allotted time for questions and discussion. Multiple sessions with different departments can be scheduled, if requested.

To schedule a free strangulation training seminar, call Victim Services' business line at (309) 837-6622.

For more information about Victim Services' free programs and services, visit <http://wirpc.org/victim-services/>, find them on social media, or call their business line.

If you have experienced abuse at any point in your life, or if you think someone you know is being abused, call Victim Services' free and confidential crisis hotline at (309) 837-5555.☺

You are important.

You are not alone.



WIRC-CAA Food Pantry



*Open for curbside pickup during
the pandemic*

Hours of Operation:
Tuesdays, Thursdays, and
Fridays (excluding holidays)

8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

133 West Jackson Street
Macomb, Illinois

(309) 837-2997

*Customers will be instructed to
pick up the food at a table near
the office's main entrance*



THANK YOU!

With your continued
support, you are making
a difference in the lives
of people in need.





Pets Against Violence Awareness Event

Patton Park, Macomb, Illinois • October 3, 2020

Thank you to everyone who attended and took the pledge to end domestic violence!



"I pledge to make personal efforts to help end the cycle of violence and hate in my community and refuse to tolerate violence in my life."



REMOTE PREVENTION EDUCATION OPTIONS

By Debbie, Preventionist

The Preventionist at Victim Services assists in the development and coordination of “End Rape Culture” initiatives and task forces. Prevention programs are provided free-of-charge to educational organizations for students of the following grade levels: pre-kindergarten and kindergarten; elementary; middle; junior and senior high school; and college. Seminars and trainings are also offered to community organizations, and the agency conducts community awareness activities throughout the year.

Listed below are the current remote prevention education options offered by Victim Services as of February 2021:

Second Step Child Protection (Early Learning-Age 5):

This is a research-based program that includes clearly scripted, age-appropriate lessons on the various ways to detect unsafe situations and report them to a trusted adult. This information includes: Ways to Stay Safe; The Always Ask First Rule; Safe and Unsafe Touches; The Touching Rule; and Activities to Practice Staying Safe. Book readings are also presented during the virtual visits.

Shifting Boundaries (Grades 6-7):

The Shifting Boundaries curriculum begins with allowing students to identify their own boundaries and recognize the boundaries of their peers through several communication-based activities. Students will then unpack common scenarios to recognize if they are safe/“no big deal” or

unsafe/“a big deal” to guide them into a discussion of the difference between sexual violence and flirting. Finally, students will collaborate to list safe and unsafe spaces within their school and identify how to report any unsafe situations to trusted adults.

Safe Dates (Grades 8-12):

The Safe Dates curriculum is a 10-session program that deals with attitudes and behaviors associated with dating abuse and violence. Each session can be completed in about 40 minutes. The curriculum can be presented over a period of days or weeks, depending on your program’s schedule.

Bystander Intervention Presentation (Grades 4-12):

The focus of this curriculum is to identify healthy and unhealthy aspects of relationships, identify anti-bullying techniques, build relationships, and brainstorm intervention strategies when witnessing unsafe situations. This curriculum can be hosted virtually.

Professional and Community Training Opportunities:

These trainings provide in-depth education and skill building for professionals that work with sexual assault victims and include information about how to provide victim centered services within their organization. The Preventionist also works with professionals in all areas to change policy and standards or service for the whole working organization. Trainings include: Human Trafficking; Online Safety/

Grooming; Red Flags of Sexual Abuse; Sexual Violence is a Public Health Crisis; Workplace Sexual Harassment; Title IX; and First Responder Training: Considerations When Assisting Survivors. Other topics may be available upon request.

To schedule any of the free prevention education programs, contact Debbie at Victim Services at deborah@wirpc.org or call (309) 836-2148.



**24/7 Free & Confidential
Crisis Hotline:
309-837-5555**



**YOU ARE NOT
ALONE.**

**WE BELIEVE
YOU.**

**YOUR STORY
MATTERS.**

Domestic and sexual violence can happen to anyone of any age, ability, sexual orientation, income, education level, religion, gender identity, or ethnic background.

All services are free to survivors and significant others of survivors, including partners, children, family members, and friends.



24/7 Free and
Confidential Crisis
Hotline:
(309) 837-5555

Need help paying your utility bill?

Apply for LIHEAP!

Now higher income guidelines!



WIRC-CAA: (309) 837-2997
helpillinoisfamilies.com



**How to help a friend who is
being abused:**

1. Believe them
2. Make sure they are safe
3. Let them know that they do not deserve to be abused
4. Encourage them to seek help



VICTIM SERVICES 2020 REPORT

AT-A-GLANCE

The department has noted an overall increase in counseling hours during the pandemic. New modes, such as virtual counseling, have increased the department's capacity to meet clients' needs.

Many services continue to be accessed through online formats, including prevention education. Social media outreach has increased due to limited in-person options during the pandemic.

Victim Services puts a focus on the following forms of domestic/sexual violence awareness activities during the year:

- January: Stalking Awareness Month
- February: Dating Violence Awareness Month
- April: Sexual Assault Awareness Month and Child Abuse Prevention Month
- October: Domestic Violence Awareness Month

Your story matters.

2020 Domestic Violence Program Totals

Hotline Calls
Received:
1,659

Clients
Receiving
Direct Services:
393

Public
Education
Participants:
1,786

2020 Sexual Violence Program Totals

Hotline Calls
Received:
437

Clients
Receiving
Direct Services:
151

Public
Education
Participants:
5,994

2020 Overall Program Totals

Hotline Calls
Received:
2,096

Clients
Receiving
Direct Services:
544

Public
Education
Participants:
7,780

WHAT DOES CONSENT LOOK & SOUND LIKE?

By Debbie, Preventionist

Consent by definition is simply permission. What does consent look and sound like? Enthusiastic consent comes from a place of enthusiasm. Rather than looking for a "no," make sure there's an *active* "Yes".

If your partner agrees but seems worried or unsure, they are not consenting. "No," "I don't know," or silence are *not* consent.

Following these guidelines can help ensure you are getting proper consent:

- A person *cannot* be incapacitated due to alcohol or drugs
- They *cannot* be asleep or unconscious
- This individual *cannot* be a minor (age of consent is 17)
- They *cannot* be incapacitated due to mental disability

In order for consent to take place, the following must happen:

- Both people need to say YES!
- Only YES is consent
- Only YES is permission
- Only IF the person is capable of saying YES!



You Can Make A Difference!

If you suspect someone you know is being abused, call Victim Services' free and confidential 24-hour crisis hotline:

(309) 837-5555

STAFF NEWS

New Team Members

The following people recently joined the Victim Services Team:

Beci*

LEP DV Advocate/Counselor

Kelsey*

DV Legal Advocate

Staff Anniversaries

Congratulations to the following staff that recently celebrated special employment anniversary milestones:

One Year

Alissa*

Sexual Assault Counselor

Kerri*

Domestic Violence Coordinator/
Advocate

**Full names of Victim Services employees are kept confidential out of concern for their safety and the safety of their clients.*

Abuse is not love

**Follow
Victim Services
on Social Media!**

Facebook:
WIRCCAAVictimServices

Instagram:
wirccaa_victim_services

Twitter:
WIRC_VS



Parents: are you tired of
teaching and need a break?

**Contact Debbie at
WIRC-CAA Victim Services!**

**Free Virtual One-on-One Lessons
for Pre-K through 2nd Grade Levels**

How to Tell Grown-ups About Sexual Abuse

Lesson 1: Play It Safe

Lesson 2: Good/Happy & Bad/Uncomfortable Touch

Lesson 3: Secret Safety



To schedule a lesson, email deborah@wirpc.org
or call (309) 836-2148, ext. 141.

WIRC-CAA Victim Services Phone Directory

Domestic Violence Services:

*Hancock, Henderson,
McDonough, and
Warren counties*

Main Office
(309) 837-6622

**24-Hour Free
and Confidential
Crisis Hotline,
All Counties**
(309) 837-5555

Sexual Assault Services:
*Fulton, Hancock, Henderson,
Knox, McDonough, and
Warren counties*

Fulton County Office
(309) 333-1934

**Hancock, Henderson,
McDonough, and
Warren County Office**
(309) 836-2148

Knox County Office
(309) 331-4716
or (309) 343-3337