



Domestic Violence Association of Central Kansas

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MEdia: It's Your Story—Tell It!

In a society where media is as prominent as water and air, the representations, messages, and controlling agents in media crucially influence perceptions and expectations of us and the world. Though we live in a diverse nation that is 51% female, Caucasian males remain the dominating producers of and representations in media (“The Status of Women in U.S. Media,” Women’s Media Center 2016). This exclusion of women in decision-making and prominent positions in media only reinforces biased stereotypes, allows sexist coverage and comments, and misses major stories (WMC 2016). Instead of building women up, women’s representation in popular media has only become more sexualized, objectified, and victimized (PBS.org 2013). These demeaning and powerless representations are destructive, especially for girls during their insecure and vulnerable years of adolescence and puberty. Their self-esteem plummets and they learn that their worth is based on their body. Because girls are a largely targeted and manipulated group in media, it is vital they receive media education to deconstruct the media system and empower themselves.

On January 16, DVACK’s Teen Dating Violence Coordinator, Community Outreach and Engagement Coordinator, and Campus Advocate facilitated the Girl Scout’s “MEdia: It’s Your Story—Tell It” Leadership Journey. Thirty-six Girl Scouts learned about the role media plays in their lives, unmasked media stereotypes and myths, and put the ME back into MEdia. Understanding media is a powerful tool that can educate and effect social change, the girls teamed up on a MEdia Remake Project to create media that better reflect their realities and send positive and empowering messages to girls everywhere.

The 2016 New Year brought a new team with big dreams to DVACK. In addition to DVACK’s Domestic Violence, Teen Dating Violence, Sexual Assault, and Hotline Advocates, DVACK now has a Campus Advocate to serve as a confidential resource for victims at Kansas Wesleyan University and K-State Salina, a Community Outreach and Engagement Coordinator to lead a new Collaborative Initiative in Salina to improve victim services, a Parent/Child Advocate to facilitate children’s support groups and provide resources and guidance for parents and children residing in DVACK’s safe shelter, a Rural Outreach Advocate to serve victims at DVACK’s satellite office in Concordia, and a Court Advocate to provide onsite advocacy and accompaniment to victims filing Protection Orders at the Saline County District Courthouse. With such diverse, dedicated, and powerful positions, DVACK is another step closer in fulfilling its mission to reduce the incidence of domestic and sexual offenses and to provide comfort and support to victims through crisis intervention and support services in North Central Kansas.

Community Awareness: Counties Dedicated to Advocacy

January is nationally recognized as National Stalking Awareness Month and National Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month. Last month provided an excellent opportunity for our city and county to demonstrate its support in ending stalking and modern-day slavery and to support the numerous victims among us. Moreover, it was a wonderful opportunity to educate the public on the seriousness of these crimes and the prevalence of this epidemic in our lives.



DVACK advocates and volunteers meet with Dickinson County Commissioners to proclaim January as National Stalking & Human Trafficking Awareness/Prevention Month. Photo by Kathy Hageman of The Abilene Reflector-Chronicle.

DVACK advocates and volunteers joined both Saline and Dickinson County Commissioners in proclaiming January as Stalking and Human Trafficking Awareness and Prevention Month. Commissioners agreed that laws and public policies must continually be adapted to keep pace with new tactics used by stalkers and traffickers and to hold these criminals accountable. Communities can better combat such heinous and frequent crimes by adopting multidisciplinary responses by teams of local agencies and by providing more and better victim services; thus, DVACK launched its newest initiative in January to form a strong and reliable collaborative of 11 local agencies to do just this. The Collaborative is excited and ready to improve victim services and increase community understanding of the dynamics of abuse and the needs of survivors.

LOVE . RESPECT . CONSENT . EQUALITY . TRUST . DIGNITY

Love is Respect: This February, Start Talking about Healthy Relationships

Love is in the air! Let Cupid's arrow not poke, stab, or jolt but comfort and guide you to healthy, loving relationships, all with your consent, open communication and mutual agreement. Healthy relationships are founded on communication and respect, ensuring both partners are on the same page and have similar expectations and wants. This can be done by setting healthy boundaries with each other—speaking up when something bothers you, fairly compromising on disagreements, reassuring your partner, letting them know when you need their support, and respecting your partner's wishes, values, privacy and space. You have the right to set emotional, physical, and sexual boundaries with anyone, especially your partner, and your partner must respect and abide by those boundaries. However, your partner is not a mind reader—it is your responsibility to tell them your boundaries and when they are crossing them. Creating boundaries allows a healthy and secure relationship, and creating them together allows an even deeper understanding of the relationship you both want. Healthy boundaries should never restrict your ability to go out with your friends without your partner, participate in hobbies and activities you like, keep your phone and social media passwords private, or respect each other's individual likes and needs (National Domestic Violence Hotline & Break the Cycle, 2013). Maintaining a healthy relationship takes hard work, trust, and accountability. Cupid may have led you to "the one," but you both have to be the ones to lead each to a fun, relaxing, mutually-benefiting partnership.



Dating Abuse Affects 1 in 3 Young People

Know the Warning Signs!

- Checking cell phone or email without permission
- Making false accusations
- Mood swings
- Possessiveness
- Constantly putting you down
- Isolating from family or friends
- Physically hurting in any way
- Telling you what to wear
- Telling you what to do
- Explosive temper
- Extreme jealousy or insecurity

Dating Abuse Statistics

- Nearly **1.5 million** high school students nationwide experience physical abuse from a dating partner in a single year
- Girls and young women between the ages of **16 and 24** experience the **highest** rate of intimate partner violence
- **Half** of youth who have been victims of dating violence and rape attempt suicide

-LovelsRespect.org

HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP

Cell phone he uses to tell her he loves her

His favorite place to kiss

The clothing he buys her because he is so generous



Eyes that her boyfriend looks into lovingly

Smile that he loves to see

The hand her boyfriend holds when they go for a walk

UNHEALTHY RELATIONSHIP

Fat lip from when he smacked her for smiling at someone else

The cell phone he got her so he can check up on her constantly

Clothing he allows her to wear



Eye he punched her in for smiling at a friend

Bruise where her boyfriend choked her

The wrist he grabbed when she tried to walk away from him

A strong dating relationship is based on *EQUALITY and RESPECT*, not power and control. Think about how you treat and want to be treated by someone you care about. In the strongest relationships, respect can't be beat.

"Healthy relationships are about building each other up, not putting each other down."

-LovelsRespect.org

Teen Violence Can Be...

PHYSICAL: hitting, slapping, punching, kicking

SEXUAL: any unwanted touching or forces you to have sex

FINANCIAL: controlling most or all of the money

SOCIAL: spreading rumors using religion or culture to control

VERBAL/MENTAL: threats, name calling, put downs