

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS MONTH.

October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month. I would like to take this opportunity to talk to you about the correlation between substance use disorder and domestic violence (DV).

Substance use significantly increases the occurrence of domestic violence: 80% of domestic violence crimes are related to the use of substances. 40-60% of domestic violence cases involve substance use disorders. Most domestic violence goes unreported by the victims.

Understanding domestic violence.

Domestic violence can happen to anyone regardless of gender, race, socioeconomic class, age, or relationship with the perpetrator.

DV is an act of abuse or violence committed by one or more people to one or more people within an identified family unit. These acts are not necessarily physical violence. Domestic violence can be physical, sexual, emotional, economic, psychological, or technological actions, threats of actions, or other patterns of coercive behavior that influence another person within a relationship. Domestic violence is never the fault of the victim and is usually about exerting power over someone else.

DV does not just occur between intimate partners. In its broadest sense, domestic violence also involves violence against children, parents, or the elderly.

Often the perpetrator of DV will use minimization, intellectualization, rationalization, excuse-making, and distraction to justify their actions. Some victims believe at the time that the act was a one-time occurrence, or they may be completely unaware that what happened is considered domestic violence until they look back and reflect on the harmful incident.

It can be difficult for the victims of DV to leave the situation. Reasons people cite for not getting out right away include: Fear of being judged, marginalized, or blamed by others; not having access to funds; lack of family support; and having nowhere else to go.

The impact of domestic violence.

Family members of those who are struggling with substance use disorder are unaware that they could be victims of abuse by their children, spouses, friends, etc. When people have been abused and subsequently realize what has occurred, they may feel shock and disbelief, followed by a period of mourning over what has been done to them and what they falsely believed the other person was like.

Survivors of domestic violence may suffer physical or emotional conditions because of the abuse. These may include PTSD, depression, anxiety, and even a substance use disorder. Getting assistance from someone trained in EMDR, CBT skills, or psychotherapy can be immensely helpful in alleviating the symptoms of these conditions.

Reaching out for help.

If you or someone you know is experiencing domestic violence, please know that you are not alone – there is hope. Always remember that help is available to you, offering a path to safety and healing:

- National Domestic Violence Helpline: 1.800.799.7233
- Susan B Anthony Project: 1.860.482.7133
- National Resource Center on Domestic Violence: 1.800.537.2238
- [Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence ctcadv.org](http://ConnecticutCoalitionAgainstDomesticViolence.org)

As McCall's Family Recovery Coach, I can help you to begin the healing process, recognize patterns, set boundaries, safely plan for your exit, and connect you to resources if you feel you may be or have been the victim of domestic violence.



McCall's Family Recovery Coach Program is grant funded and provided at no-cost to all participants.

For more information contact:

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Family Recovery Coach

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Resources

McCall Behavioral Health Network
860.496.2100
mccallbhn.org

McCall's Recovering Together Group
Meets every Wednesday,
5:30PM via Zoom.
For more info, email:
leann.mitchell@mccallbhn.org

NAMI CT, Waterbury
Paul Brainerd
860.882.8674 or 860.310.4055
pbrainerd@namict.org

Sound Community Services
New London
Amy Faenza
860.439.6443
amy.faenza@soundct.org

Clifford Beers Clinic
New Haven
Christine Montgomery
203.915.4074
cmontgomery@cliffordbeers.org

Community Renewal Team
Hartford and Middletown
Casie DeRosier
860.549.3350
derosierc@crtct.org

TriCircle, Hope and Support Groups
Hope After Loss Groups
Ana Gopoian
860.349.7074
ana@tricycle.or