

## Domestic Abuse/Sexual Assault Services

Domestic Violence Awareness Month (DVAM) is a national campaign dedicated to raising awareness about domestic violence. Every October, organizations and individuals unite across the country for a national effort to uplift the needs, voices, and experiences of survivors. Congress declared the month of October to be Domestic Violence Awareness Month in 1989.

For DVAM 2025, the Domestic Violence Awareness Project introduced the theme, **With Survivors, Always**. This theme allows us to explore what it means to be in partnership with survivors toward *safety, support, and solidarity*. It is a call to action for those committed to advocating for survivor's needs and rights.

DVAM is a time to listen, learn, remember, and recommit. It is an opportunity to walk alongside survivors, to honor those who have been lost, and to work toward safety and justice for all.

### DVAM HELPS US

- **Raise awareness** about the realities of domestic violence
- **Support survivors** as they continue their healing journeys
- **Educate the community** on warning signs and available resources
- **Engage in conversations** that move us closer to prevention
- **Stand together** in hope and solidarity

Anyone can be a survivor of domestic violence. There is NO "typical survivor." Survivors of domestic violence come from all walks of life, varying age groups, all backgrounds, all communities, all education levels, all economic levels, all cultures, all ethnicities, all religions, all abilities, and all lifestyles.

Survivors of domestic violence do not bring violence upon themselves; they do not always lack self-confidence, nor are they just as abusive as the abuser. Violence in relationships occurs when one person feels entitled to power and control over their partner and chooses to use abuse to gain and maintain that control.

Domestic violence affects all aspects of a survivor's life. When survivors are able to safely escape and remain free from their abuser, they often struggle with long-lasting and sometimes permanent effects on their mental and physical health, relationships with friends, family, and children, their career, and their economic well-being.

Survivors deserve safety. Survivors deserve support. Survivors deserve solidarity. For DVAM 2025 and beyond, we commit to showing up for survivors, always.



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*with survivors.*  
**ALWAYS** 

Source: [dvaweb.org](http://dvaweb.org)

### Domestic Abuse/Sexual Assault Services Mission Statement

*Our mission is to provide free, confidential and empowering services to victims of domestic violence, dating violence, human trafficking, sexual assault and stalking while raising awareness and prevention efforts throughout our communities.*

# Domestic Violence

Domestic violence is a pervasive social issue affecting individuals across all cultures, ages, genders, and socioeconomic backgrounds. It encompasses a range of abusive behaviors used by one person in a relationship to gain or maintain control over another. Despite growing awareness, domestic violence often remains hidden due to fear, stigma, and a lack of resources or support.

Domestic violence extends beyond physical harm and can include various types of abuse:

1. **Physical Abuse:** Hitting, slapping, punching, choking, or using weapons to cause harm
2. **Emotional and Psychological Abuse:** Verbal insults, threats, manipulation, intimidation, and isolating the victim from family and friends
3. **Sexual Abuse:** Coercion or forced sexual activity without consent
4. **Financial Abuse:** Controlling finances, withholding money, or preventing the victim from working
5. **Digital Abuse:** Using technology to stalk, harass, or control a partner through phones, social media, or tracking apps

## Causes and Contributing Factors

While domestic violence is ultimately a choice made by the abuser, several factors can contribute to the risk of abuse:

- **Cultural norms** that promote male dominance or justify violence
- **Childhood exposure** to family violence
- **Substance abuse**, particularly alcohol and drugs
- **Mental health issues**, such as personality disorders or untreated trauma
- **Lack of accountability** and weak legal systems

It's crucial to understand that these are not excuses but risk factors. Abusers are responsible for their actions regardless of underlying circumstances.

## The Impact of Domestic Violence

The consequences of domestic violence are profound and long-lasting:

- **Physical injuries** ranging from bruises to life-threatening trauma
- **Mental health issues** such as depression, anxiety, PTSD, and suicidal thoughts
- **Economic consequences** including job loss and poverty due to control or absenteeism
- **Effects on children** who witness violence, often leading to emotional trauma and the potential perpetuation of the cycle of abuse

## Breaking the Silence: Support and Prevention

Ending domestic violence requires a multi-pronged approach:

1. **Awareness and Education:** Public campaigns and school programs can teach healthy relationship skills and challenge cultural myths
2. **Legal Protection:** Strong laws, protection orders, and strict enforcement are essential to protect survivors
3. **Support Services:** Shelters, counseling, hotlines, and advocacy groups provide critical lifelines
4. **Community Involvement:** Friends, family, and neighbors can help by listening, believing survivors and encouraging them to seek help
5. **Empowerment of Survivors:** Access to education, employment, and emotional support helps survivors rebuild their lives

Source: [domesticshelter.org](http://domesticshelter.org)

# You Can Stop Apologizing Now

Heartfelt apologies can go a long way. *“I’m sorry what I said hurt your feelings.”* Polite apologies make us decent human beings. *“I’m sorry I was late to our meeting!”* But repetitive, nearly constant apologies for every little thing—or, what Psychologist Paige Carambio, PsyD calls, “apologizing for existing”—can actually be an after-effect of trauma, a self-preservation technique survivors may think they still need to utilize in order to protect themselves.

“It goes back to the first stage of being with an abuser, when the abuser is doing everything he or she can to tear the person down and make them feel completely worthless,” says Carambio. She says that hearing verbal derogation day-in and day-out can cause you to internalize those messages. What carries over, even after leaving the abuser, is this feeling that you need to apologize for every little thing, especially with a new partner, says Carambio.

## Using Sorry as Your Shield

Saying, “I’m sorry” at the drop of a hat can mean you have more healing to do, suggests Carambio. “Survivors may have used this as a protective behavior to avoid negative responses from a partner in the past. It can be an automatic thing, to try and avoid triggering a harmful response [from an abuser].”

In women specifically, Carambio says she sees a need to over-apologize even when they weren’t abused. She says there’s a cultural notion that women shouldn’t speak up and say what they’re feeling, so they apologize for sharing their thoughts after they speak.

“There are different expectations for women. Women are encouraged to always be aware of other people’s feelings and to try to manage others’ responses. This [over-apologizing] comes from a more submissive and lower-power kind of place. Things are very much changing for the better, but there are hundreds of years of cultural notions to diffuse.”

## How to Cut Back on the Apologizing

**Seek Support.** Survivors shouldn’t feel like expressing their thoughts needs a disclaimer. If you find yourself over-apologizing, it’s worth exploring a way to continue healing from your past. Carambio suggests talking to a domestic violence advocate or other survivors in your area. “That loss of self-esteem is so toxic to a survivor’s health and well-being,” says Carambio.

**Self-Pep Talks.** When you find yourself utilizing the “I’m sorry” for the tenth time in one day, you may want to try repeating some positive affirmations in your head, says Carambio. “Even something as simple as, ‘I’m worthy. I’m deserving of love and I don’t have to apologize.’ Just acknowledging that it happened may mean you won’t be so quick to jump to the ‘sorry’ next time because you’ll start to believe you’re a good person.”

## What to Say to the Apologizer

“It’s really important not to get frustrated as a partner, friend or family member of someone who over-apologizes,” says Carambio. Telling them repeatedly, “Don’t apologize,” may actually make a survivor feel more frustrated.

Instead, she suggests, “Encourage them, maybe not in reaction to them apologizing, but at other times. Have an open and honest conversation about how much that person means to you and how important they are in your life can help build up their self-esteem.”

Source: [domesticshelter.org](http://domesticshelter.org)



# Three Stages of Trauma

For those who have lived through the trauma of an abusive or violent partner, they may expect an instant sense of relief once they've escaped, a calming peace after they shut the door on that chapter of their lives.

Instead, what they can experience is sometimes completely different. Instead of tranquility, they may feel anxious. Instead of joy, they may feel guilt. Or, they may feel nothing at all. Trauma looks different for everyone.

## The Three Stages Might Look Like This:

**Phase One: Safety and Stabilization.** Trauma survivors tend to feel unsafe in their bodies and in relationships with others. They may struggle with regulating their everyday emotions, which they may not associate directly with the trauma. It may take months or even years to regain a sense of safety.

**Phase Two: Remembrance and Mourning.** This is when survivors may begin to process the trauma, assigning words and emotions to it to help make meaning of it. This process is best undertaken with a trained counselor or therapist. It's important to mourn the losses associated with the trauma and give oneself space to grieve and express emotions.

**Phase Three: Reconnection and Integration.** Here, survivors recognize the impact of the victimization they experienced, yet begin to believe that trauma is no longer a defining principle in their life. They begin to redefine themselves in the context of meaningful relationships, create a new sense of self and create a new future. In some instances, they may find a mission through which they can heal and grow, such as mentoring or becoming an advocate for others.

## Recovery Takes Time

Unfortunately, healing from trauma—no matter if the abuse lasted a few months or a few decades—is not an overnight process. In fact, "getting over it" may never be a part of a survivor's recovery. Abuse can have a lifelong impact, but the severity of its effects can be lessened by getting help.

Source: [domesticshelter.org](http://domesticshelter.org)

# Ways to Show Support during DVAM

- Purple – the color of DVAM, purple is a symbol of peace, courage, survival, honor and dedication to ending violence. During the month of October, use this as a way to tell others that ending domestic violence is important to you. Wear purple. Tie a purple ribbon to your car's antenna. Change your porch light to purple or hang purple lights in your windows. Set out purple pumpkins for a conversation starter.
- Conduct a Denim Days campaign where your employees/staff can make a small donation for DASAS to wear jeans certain days during the month.
- Organize a food and/or donation drive for items on our wish list (pg. 5) that are needed by those we serve.
- Organize a garage sale/bake sale or host a fundraiser to raise funds to help victims.
- Make a monetary donation to DASAS in honor of the people in your life who have been impacted by domestic violence. Your donation can go further by making it on **BIG GIVE day, November 6th**.
- Get educated about domestic violence. Spread the word and talk with others about domestic violence.
- Collect and donate old cell phones.
- Ask your faith leader to offer a prayer or preach a sermon on ending domestic violence.
- Contact your representatives to let them know why federal programs such as VAWA, FVPSA, and VOCA are important for survivors.



Get creative, the possibilities are endless, and each of these individual actions has value as we work together to create the world we want to live in. October is the perfect opportunity for you to stand up and say lets STOP DOMESTIC VIOLENCE!

# Wishlist

Kleenex  
**Paper Towels, Toilet Paper**  
Laundry Soap & Dryer Sheets  
Spray & Wash/Shout  
Hand & Body Lotion  
Liquid Hand Soap  
Lysol/Clorox Wipes  
All Purpose Cleaner  
Window/Glass Cleaner  
Lysol/Disinfectant Spray  
Bathroom/Toilet Bowl Cleaner  
Kitchen Size 13 gal. Trash Bags  
Saran wrap/Aluminum Foil  
**Ziplock bags - sandwich/quart/gallon**  
Kitchen Towels/Pot Holders  
Cookware/Baking Pans/Cookie Sheets  
Diapers—Size 6

Boxed & canned foods  
Snack items  
**(check expirations dates, please)**  
Bottled water  
Batteries—AA and AAA  
Copy Paper  
Old Cell Phones  
Forever Postage Stamps  
Phone Cards/Gift Cards

**\*Please, new items only. Donate used items to local  
thrift stores on behalf of DASAS.**

**\*Items need the most are printed in bold.**

## November 6, 2025 BIG GIVE

We need your help to make Big Give a **BIG  
SUCCESS** for survivors of violence!

Funds raised are used to assist survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, and human trafficking as they recover from such traumatizing crimes.

Needs vary with every situation, but without your support through these local dollars many needs would go unmet.

### 3 easy ways to GIVE:

- Visit [swnebiggive.org](http://swnebiggive.org) on November 6th and make a contribution to Domestic Abuse/Sexual Assault Services.
- Give in person at one of the giving stations or at the Domestic Abuse/Sexual Assault Services office at 407 West 5th in McCook from 9 am - 4 pm
- Write out your check, date it November 6th and get it in the mail so that it arrives to our office by November 6th.

Your support is needed!

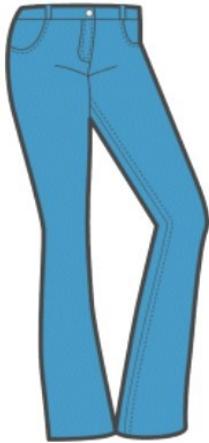
Every dollar matters!

Will you help make a difference?



**SOUTHWEST NEBRASKA**  
**Big Give**

**NOVEMBER 6th, 2025**



# Denim Days



Wear Jeans for \$5 a day & Show Your Support!!

Return form to: DASAS, 407 W 5th St, McCook, NE 69001

E-Mail: das@dasas.net, Fax: 308-345-4177,

Thank you for joining us in the fight to end domestic violence.

Your continued support is greatly appreciated!

For any questions please call us at 345-1612.

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### Denim Days Participation Form

Organization Name/Contact: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Days:  One day each week in October

Twice in October

One day in October

Other: Please Specify \_\_\_\_\_



Can't wear jeans? You can still make a contribution and show your support.

As a business owner, show your support by matching the funds raised by your employees or make a contribution on behalf of your organization.

Every dollar counts!



*Together we can help end violence and support victims!*





# Thank you for your Support !

DASAS would like to thank everyone who made a donation to our organization since our last issue. We would also like to thank our anonymous donors. We apologize if we inadvertently missed anyone.

Mary Wilson

Dawn Callander

Olivia Johnson

River Valley E Free Church, Arapahoe

McCook Methodist Women

Night N Gals

Calvary Baptist Church, Cambridge

Piecemakers Quilt Club

River Valley E Free Church, Arapahoe

Women in Faith, Arapahoe Methodist Church

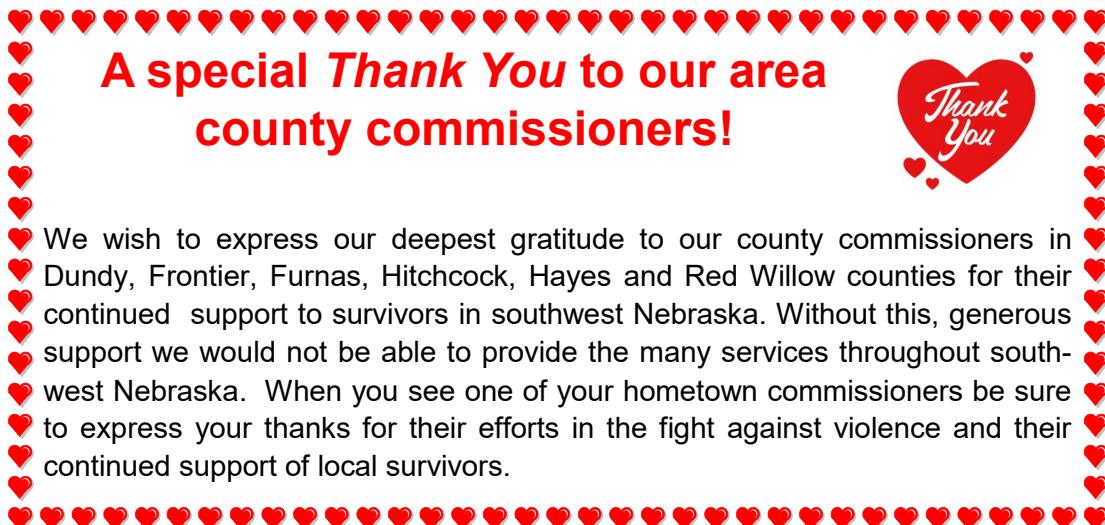
And the many **Denim Day Sponsors for Sexual Assault Awareness Month.**

## Top Fundraisers

**1st Place - Pinnacle Bank, Imperial**

**2nd Place - Dundy County Hospital, Benkelman**

**3rd Place - Southern Valley Schools, Oxford**



We wish to express our deepest gratitude to our county commissioners in Dundy, Frontier, Furnas, Hitchcock, Hayes and Red Willow counties for their continued support to survivors in southwest Nebraska. Without this, generous support we would not be able to provide the many services throughout southwest Nebraska. When you see one of your hometown commissioners be sure to express your thanks for their efforts in the fight against violence and their continued support of local survivors.

## Upcoming Awareness

### October

Domestic Violence Awareness Month

Bullying Prevention Month

### November

Bomgaars, McCook - Ladies Night Fundraiser - 2nd (5-8pm)

### BIG GIVE day - 6th

National Hunger & Homelessness Awareness Week - 16th—22nd

### December

Merry Christmas

### January

National Stalking Awareness Month

Human Trafficking Awareness Month

### February

Teen Dating Violence Awareness/Prevention Month

### April

Sexual Assault Awareness Month

Child Abuse Prevention Month

# Domestic Abuse/ Sexual Assault Services

PLEASE  
PLACE  
STAMP  
HERE

407 W. 5th Street  
McCook, NE 69001

Business Phone: (308) 345-1612  
24 Hr. Crisis Line: 345-5534  
or 1-877-345-5534  
[www.dasas.net](http://www.dasas.net)

## DASAS STAFF

Donna - Executive Director  
Email: [director@dasas.net](mailto:director@dasas.net)

Kathy - Office Manager /Advocate,  
Email: [das@dasas.net](mailto:das@dasas.net)

- Outreach Coordinator  
Email:

Lindsey - Victim Advocate  
Email: [lindsey@dasas.net](mailto:lindsey@dasas.net)

## DASAS Board of Directors

Karen Van Kooten-Wall - President  
Marla Messersmith - Vice President  
Carol Cotton - Secretary/Treasurer

Tracy Flaska

Cathy McDowell

Peg Smalley

## Help is available 24 hours a day!

All services are free and confidential!

\*24-Hour Crisis Line

\*Information & Referrals

\*Crisis Intervention and  
Ongoing Support

\*Emergency Shelter

\*Legal Advocacy - assistance  
with protection orders

\*Emergency Transportation

\*Medical Advocacy

\*Education and Prevention  
Programs

For services in Chase, Dundy, Frontier, Furnas, Hayes,  
Hitchcock and Red Willow counties

**Call: 345-5534 or (877) 345-5534**