



Wabanaki Women's Coalition

October 2021 Newsletter

Kwey Relatives...

October Is Domestic Violence

Awareness Month

The 5 Wabanaki Domestic and Sexual Violence Advocacy Centers will be recognizing Domestic Violence Awareness Month by organizing several activities throughout each community. One of the events is the Annual Tree Lighting Ceremony. Due to Covid-19 and the need to protect the safety of community members, each center decided to hold its event again this year by going Live on Facebook as staff members welcomed attendees virtually. This event was an opportunity to reflect on the history of DVAM and its purpose to mourn those we have lost to domestic violence, recognize and honor survivors, promote education and awareness of the issue of domestic violence, and pledge to end domestic violence in our communities.

Along with each Center's staff members providing welcoming messages of hope and healing, each Center included drummers from

each community to sing an Honor Song. Prayers and smudging were also included (whether on camera or prior to the event being broadcasted). We thank each of the 5 Wabanaki Advocacy Centers, their participants, attendees, and Tribal Leaders for standing in solidarity to end violence in our communities. To view a recording of the Virtual Tree Lighting Ceremonies, please visit the FaceBook pages for the Wabanaki Women's Coalition and each of the 5 Wabanaki Advocacy Centers.

Maliseet Advocacy Center's DVAM Event

(Left to Right):

- Allison Sabattis,
- Chief Clarissa Sabattis,
- Tanya Raymond,
- Tawoma Martinez



Domestic Violence Awareness Events

* The Micmac Domestic and Sexual Violence Advocacy Center will be participating in their community's Drive Thru Health Fair scheduled for October 14th (in case of rain, the event will be held October 28th).

* The Maliseet Domestic and Sexual Violence Advocacy Center will be holding a DVAM Drive Thru event scheduled for October 16th.

* The Indian Township Domestic and Sexual Violence Advocacy Center will be holding a DVAM Drive Thru event scheduled for October 14th.

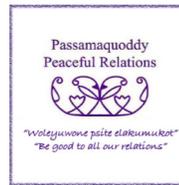
* The Penobscot Nation Domestic and Sexual Violence Advocacy Center will be holding a community smudge and caravan in collaboration with Wabanaki Public Health and Wellness on October 21st.

* Passamaquoddy Peaceful Relations began the "Purple Light in the Window" campaign on October 1st. Many homes and Tribal office buildings have a purple candle in the window to reflect the light of support for survivors.

* Please visit each Wabanaki Domestic and Sexual Violence Advocacy Center's Facebook page for any additional information regarding these events or any others that may be scheduled for the remainder of October.



Serving Our Partners



Maliseet Domestic and Sexual Violence Advocacy Center

Indian Township Passamaquoddy Domestic and Sexual Violence Advocacy Center

Penobscot Nation Domestic and Sexual Violence Advocacy Center

Passamaquoddy Peaceful Relations Domestic and Sexual Violence Advocacy Center

Micmac Domestic and Sexual Violence Advocacy Center

Office: 207-532-3000
24 Hour Hotline:
207-532-6401

Office: 207-796-6106
24 Hour Hotline:
207-214-1917

Office: 207-817-7446
24 Hour Hotline:
207-631-4886

Office: 207-853-0092/0093
24 Hour Toll Free Hotline:
1-877-853-2613

Office: 207-760-0570
24 Hour Hotline:
207-551-3639

Domestic Violence Awareness Events

Indian Township Advocacy Center
207-214-1917

PURPLE THURSDAYS



October 6, 2021

Call our office and request one our Domestic Violence Awareness T-shirts.

Show your support for survivors by wearing purple every Thursday this month.

Show your support all month by placing a purple electric candlestick light in your window. The lights in the window symbolize support of survivors, remembrance of those we have lost to domestic violence, and unity in the mission to end domestic violence in the community. Purple lights are available upon request.

Domestic Violence Awareness Month

Post your picture wearing purple to your Facebook account using hashtags #PurpleThursday #DVAM2021 and tag Indian Township Domestic & Sexual Violence Advocacy Center page.

You can submit one Purple Thursday picture each week for multiple entries into our raffle at the end of the month.

PENOBSCOT NATION DV/SA
IN COORDINATION WITH WABANAKI PUBLIC HEALTH AND WELLNES

IS HOSTING A

CANDLELIGHT VIGIL AND COMMUNITY SMUDGE EVENT

Thursday October 21st at 5:15

The event will be virtually streamed on the Wabanaki Public Health and Wellness Facebook page



IN REMEMBRANCE OF ALL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SURVIVORS

Please join us in remembering our domestic violence survivors. There will be a drive by smudging and drumming event. Families are welcome to stand safely in their yard and light a candle for a survivor that is close to your heart.



#WabanakiTogetherWeCan—Wabanaki Advocates and WWC Staff

 Doreen	 Dena	 Angel	 Desiree	 Jane
 Patti	 Nancy	OCTOBER IS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS MONTH	 Alicia	 Darlene
 Jessica	 Aline	 Sarah	 Tawona	 Tanya

 www.WabanakiWomensCoalition.org 

Annual OVW Government-to-Government Tribal Consultation

The Annual OVW Government to Government Tribal Consultation was held August 17-20, 2021. Due to Covid-19, the event was held virtually again this year. Donna Brown, Executive Director, was authorized by all five (5) Wabanaki Chiefs to provide written and oral testimony on behalf of the Tribes. Below is a portion of the testimony.

Testimony of the Wabanaki Tribes of Maine

Donna Brown, Executive Director
Wabanaki Women's Coalition, Tribal Designee
Aroostook Band of Micmac Indians - Edward Peter Paul, Tribal Chief
Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians - Clarissa Sabattis, Tribal Chief
Passamaquoddy Tribe at Indian Township - William J. Nicholas Sr., Tribal Chief
Passamaquoddy Tribe at Pleasant Point - Elizabeth (Maggie) Dana, Tribal Chief
Penobscot Indian Nation – Kirk Francis, Tribal Chief

Greetings OVW Acting Director Allison Randall; Deputy Director of Tribal Affairs for OVW Sherriann Moore; distinguished Tribal leaders and representatives from across Indian Country and Alaska; distinguished federal partners; and all attendees today.

I am Donna Brown, citizen of the Penobscot Nation in Maine and the Algonquin First Nation of Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg in Maniwaki, Quebec. I am the Executive Director of the Wabanaki Women's Coalition – a Tribal domestic and sexual violence coalition in Maine that serves its 5 tribal communities. I come before you today as the Designee for our five Wabanaki Tribal Chiefs: Chief Edward Peter Paul from the Aroostook Band of Micmac Indians; Chief Clarissa Sabattis from the Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians; Chief William Nicholas Sr. from the Passamaquoddy Tribe at Indian Township; Chief Elizabeth Dana from the Passamaquoddy Tribe at Pleasant Point; and Chief Kirk Francis from the Penobscot Indian Nation.

As we continue to work toward the next reauthorization of VAWA, we ask for the continued support of our Tribal brothers and sisters as well as our non-native allies whose support to date has helped to get the inclusion of the Tribes in Maine and Alaska specifically named in H.R. 1620, Section 903 which passed in the House of Representatives in March 2021. The need to advocate for the inclusion of Maine and Alaska Tribes is not over; however, since no bill has been reintroduced in the Senate as of yet.

Tribal Consultation Continued...

Regarding Special Domestic Violence Criminal Jurisdiction, VAWA 2013 included the inherent sovereign authority of Indian tribal governments to exercise criminal jurisdiction over non-Indians who violate qualifying protection orders or commit crimes of domestic violence or dating violence against Indian victims on tribal lands. H.R. 1620 expands the list of crimes to include child abuse, sexual assault, stalking, sex trafficking, assault on law enforcement officers and obstruction of justice. We ask that the House version receive continued full support from our allies and Tribal sisters and brothers, and that a Senate version which will include the same provisions, and inclusion of Maine and Alaskan Tribes be supported as well.

Regarding transitional housing, we have provided testimony on several occasions regarding the problematic issues of its policies. The current OVW policy on transitional housing assistance requires the victim to leave her (and her children's) home and relocate in order to qualify for this assistance. This is counter to best practice which would be that the victim be able to stay in their housing (rental) and the abuser be removed. A statutory change needs to be made to remove 'relocate' from the wording. Our Wabanaki Advocacy Centers remind us constantly of the barrier this presents to victims with the limited amount of housing on reservations and high cost of rent in surrounding areas.

In closing, I would like to thank the staff from the Wabanaki Advocacy Centers who provide direct services to survivors (our relatives) within each of our respective communities, our Tribal Chiefs who continue to put the sovereignty of our Nations and the protection of our people at the forefront of their efforts, and to all of you today who have dedicated your valuable time to listening to our testimony and helping to ensure that Maine Tribes are included in VAWA legislation moving forward.

All My Relations,

Thank you/Woliwoni/Kichi Migwech

Donna L. Brown

Executive Director

Wabanaki Women's Coalition

10 Tips To Have An Informed Conversation About Domestic Violence

1. NEVER VICTIM BLAME.

Abuse is never the victim's fault. As a society, we continue to place blame on victims by asking, "What did she do to deserve that?" or "What was she wearing?" or "Why was she there?" Yet we do not ask these questions to victims of other crimes. We must stop asking these questions of domestic violence and sexual assault survivors. **ASK:** How can we shift the culture away from blaming the victim, and instead blame the perpetrator? Why does the abuser choose the abuse? **RESPOND:** Believe, support, and trust survivors. Instead of second guessing their experiences; let's rightfully place the responsibility on abusers and perpetrators to end the abuse. Domestic violence is rooted in power and control.

2. HOLD OFFENDERS ACCOUNTABLE.

Holding offenders accountable can take many forms. If it is safe to do so, call offenders out on their abusive actions and impose social consequences, like telling them they're not welcome for family dinner or to hang out until the abusive behavior stops. Stop excusing behavior with "boys will be boys" or "[the perpetrator] would never do something like that." Community accountability can make a significant impact. **ASK:** How can we hold offenders accountable and support survivors? **RESPOND:** Tell the perpetrator that their behavior is abusive. Healthy relationships are rooted in equality, respect, and nonviolence.

3. CHALLENGE WIDELY-HELD PERCEPTIONS ABOUT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE.

Unfortunately, misconceptions about domestic violence persist – such as the notions that survivors can "just leave;" that heterosexual, cisgender women are the only victims; that domestic violence only includes physical violence; or that domestic violence is a "private, family matter." Each one of these myths persists, despite our work to challenge these perceptions. **ASK:** Why can't survivors "just leave?" Other than physical violence, what other forms of abuse can domestic violence take? **RESPOND:** Survivors must think about their own physical safety, financial security, the safety and welfare of their children and pets, potential housing and where they can "just leave" to, among myriad other issues. Domestic violence can include physical, financial, emotional, psychological, sexual, cultural or spiritual abuse.

4. VOICE THAT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IS AN INTERSECTIONAL ISSUE.

Domestic violence does not happen in a vacuum. Survivors experiencing domestic violence often experience other "–isms" (e.g., sexism, racism, classism, heteronormativity, etc.), compounding negative impacts on victims. Collectively, these –isms play a devastating role in perpetuating gender-based violence. **ASK:** How do you think different oppressions and privileges affect survivors' experiences? **RESPOND:** When coupled with other –isms, victims face additional barriers to safety.

5. UNDERSTAND THAT ABUSE IS ROOTED IN POWER AND CONTROL.

Abuse is intentional. It is a myth that someone who abuses their partner is "out of control;" in fact, they are in good control (*How often do they "lose control" at work? With a friend? With other family members?*) and purposely choose tactics to control their partner. Power is hard to give up or share, and abusive actions are purposeful with the goal of gaining power and control over a partner. **ASK:** What do you think are common ways that offenders use power and control over victims? **RESPOND:** Strategically isolating victims is a common tactic to gain power and control over a victim. Perpetrators may trap their partners by withholding, lying about, or hiding financial assets, a form of financial abuse.

10 Tips Continued...

6. TRUST THE SURVIVOR'S PERSPECTIVE.

Survivors know their experience and story better than anyone. Taking a survivor-centered approach empowers survivors by prioritizing their needs and wants. Often, abusers deny their partners' self-determination; empowering survivors returns their control and enables them to make their own decisions. **ASK:** In what ways can we support survivors in making their own decisions about how to address abuse? **RESPOND:** Listen! Ask survivors what they need to individually be safe – there is no one-size-fits-all approach to addressing domestic violence.

7. QUESTION THE WAY THE MEDIA PORTRAYS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE.

Within the last few years there have been a number of highly publicized cases of domestic violence. While raising awareness is important, it's crucial to look at domestic violence reporting through a critical and trauma-informed lens to make sure the portrayal of domestic violence is accurately rooted in the realities of survivors' experiences. **ASK:** What have you thought about recent media coverage of celebrity domestic violence cases? **RESPOND:** Survivors in highly publicized cases deserve the same respect as any person experiencing abuse. First and foremost, we must believe survivors, continue to hold celebrity offenders accountable, and keep in mind that everyone's story is their own and unique.

8. COMMUNICATE THAT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IS NOT A “PRIVATE, FAMILY MATTER.”

1 in 3 women will be a victim of domestic or sexual violence at some point in her lifetime, and each day an average of 3 women die at the hands of someone who claimed to love them. Domestic violence affects us all; victims are our family members, neighbors, coworkers, and friends. All of us must be part of the solution. **ASK:** Do you know anyone who has been affected by domestic violence? How did you support them? **RESPOND:** Domestic violence affects each and every one of us. Violence is not the answer, and it's on us to take a stand against domestic violence.

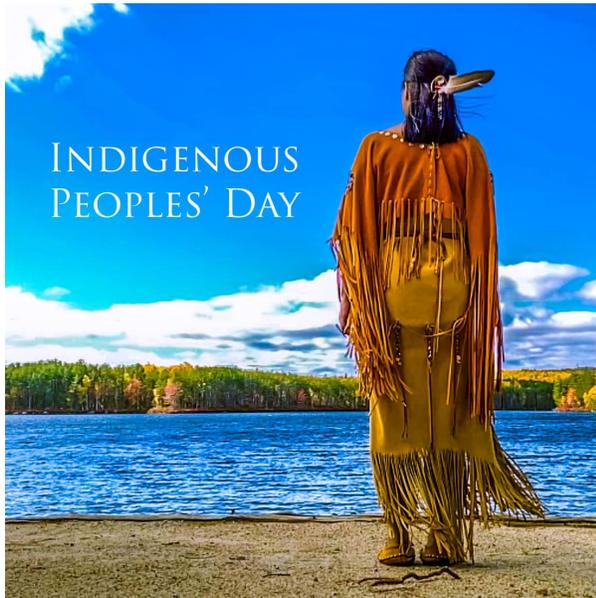
9. ROOT YOUR CONVERSATION IN EQUALITY.

One of the root causes of domestic violence is inequality. Addressing this root cause takes conscious action and significant social change. **ASK:** What role does gender inequality play in domestic violence? **RESPOND:** Many dynamics of power and control are rooted in gender roles and stereotypes. One way to combat these ingrained inequalities is through conscious action (e.g., by calling out sexism, racism, or any other –ism when you see it) and youth education.

10. REMEMBER DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AFFECTS ALL OF US, BUT WITH ACTION AND EDUCATION WE CAN END IT.

Domestic violence is everywhere, affecting millions of individuals across the United States regardless of age, economic status, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, or education. Domestic violence is not strictly physical abuse, but can include emotional, financial, verbal, psychological, sexual, and technology-facilitated abuse as well. **ASK:** What can you do to end domestic violence? **RESPOND:** There are many ways to help end domestic violence. The easiest way is to start a conversation about it with your loved ones, become more informed, participate in community events, and/or support your community by volunteering or donating to a domestic violence organization. **Source:** National Network to End Domestic Violence (nnev.org)

Celebrating Our Native American Heritage



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