



Kwey Relatives...

April is Sexual Assault Awareness Month

Now more than ever, screens and technology connect us with romantic partners, friends and family, co-workers, and strangers alike. For too long, harassment, cyberbullying, sexual abuse, and exploitation have come to be expected as typical and unavoidable behaviors online.

Last year, the national Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM) campaign uplifted the message that “We Can Build Safe Online Spaces,” calling on audiences to practice digital consent, intervene when we see harmful content and behaviors, and promote online communities that value safety and respect. **This April, the SAAM 2022 campaign continues to build on this vision with a call to action: “Building Safe Online Spaces Together.”**

We know that we *can build* and *are building* online communities centered on respect, inclusion, and safety — where harassment,

assault, and abuse are taken seriously. Not only do we believe that together we can build a safer online world, but **we also believe that these values, skills, and actions will create communities that thrive online and offline.**

Together we can make a difference to build inclusive, safe, and respectful online spaces. We invite you to join us this April in making respect the norm everywhere, taking action to promote the safety of others, and showing survivors they are believed and supported.

Source: National Sexual Violence Resource Center, www.nsvrc.org.

Ways To Get Involved

- * Attend any SAAM events that are organized in your community;
- * Share information on social media and make your voices heard;
- * Consider donating to your local Advocacy Center that provides services to survivors of sexual assault.

Creating Safe Online Communities

IMPLEMENTING COMMUNITY-LEVEL PREVENTION IN ONLINE SPACES:

Just like in in-person spaces, online communities can develop their own policies and rules that promote respect and discourage harmful behaviors.

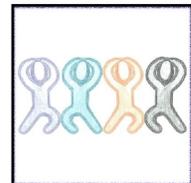
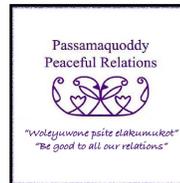
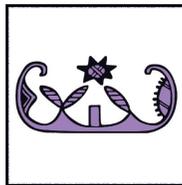
Whether you're taking part in an online classroom, workspace, or social space, you can take steps to ensure the safety of yourself and others. Leaders who are facilitating the space can:

- Create community agreements with participants so the expectations around respectful communications are clear to everyone involved. Rather than issuing a zero-tolerance policy around sexual harassment, name specific behaviors that will not be tolerated and how those who do harm will be asked to take accountability.

- Provide a way that victims can report harassment or abuse if another group member's behavior is making them uncomfortable.

- Establish community norms around appropriate ways for group members to communicate with one another. For instance, this might mean identifying which hours of the day group members can contact one another, on what apps or platforms, etc.

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

Office: 207-214-1917

Office: 207-817-7446

Office: 207-853-0092

Office: 207-760-0570

24 Hour Hotline:

24 Hour Hotline:

24 Hour Hotline:

24 Hour Toll Free Hotline:

24 Hour Hotline:

207-532-6401

207-214-1917

207-631-4886

1-877-853-2613

207-551-3639

Creating Safe Online Communities Continued

KEEP PARTICIPANTS SAFE BY MAKING SURE THE PLATFORMS YOU USE ARE SECURE AND THAT SECURITY SETTINGS PROTECT USERS' PRIVACY, PERSONAL INFORMATION, AND LOCATION:

Safe online communities take action—Behaviors or actions like sexist jokes or victim-blaming comments may seem like they're not that big of a deal, but they contribute to the same way of thinking that fuels violence. Although they only reflect the point of view of the person making them, their public visibility normalizes not taking sexual abuse seriously. In other cases, they may cause harm by retraumatizing victims of abuse or assault who read them.

RECOGNIZING VICTIM-BLAMING OR MINIMIZING LANGUAGE - VICTIM BLAMING COMMENTS MAY INCLUDE:

- Comments that question the victim's actions before or after an assault — for instance, wondering why someone didn't make a police report immediately or questioning why they never reported.
- Comments that minimize what happened to a victim. For instance, a journalist may use terms like “forced sex,” “sexual encounter,” or “underage sex” when they really mean sexual assault or statutory rape.

The reality is that the digital world is not separate from in-person spaces. They both make up the world we live in, and the impact of our actions can be just the same. If you wouldn't say something to someone in person, then you shouldn't say it to them online.

We can do something when we observe harmful behaviors online:

- **Report inappropriate content.** If you see personal or violent content on a social media platform, you can report it to the platform it was shared on (Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, etc.) in order to have it flagged or removed. Different platforms have their own guidelines on what counts as inappropriate and what actions they will take, but that process starts with you making a report.
- **Respond when you see harmful comments.** When you see comments that blame victims for what happened to them, you can respond by refocusing accountability on the perpetrator. While you might not change the mind of the person who left the comment, others will see that not everyone agrees with them.
- **Show your support to victims of online harassment.** Check in with the person that comments have been directed at to show your support. You can also consider volunteering to be a moderator in certain contexts to help prevent future harassment..

When all of us see our role in keeping others safe online, we can create an environment where this type of content cannot thrive. Source: National Sexual Violence Resource Center, www.nsvrc.org

Creating Online Spaces With Consent

From messaging apps to online dating websites, there are many ways people are connecting online. Although you aren't talking face-to-face with someone, you still need to get and give consent along the way. You should always consider how your actions might make another person feel and ask questions if you don't know.

Unlike in-person interactions, digital conversations can have less clear cues like body language, eye contact, posture, or tone of voice that can indicate how someone is really feeling. So when we communicate online, it's important to develop new ways to recognize others' boundaries and give them the space to recognize our boundaries as well. If we shift from making assumptions to clearly communicating our boundaries and asking questions when we're not sure, we can create a pathway to more respectful online spaces.

Consent occurs when someone gives permission for something to happen or agrees to do something.

When you ask someone for consent, they need to know specifically what they're agreeing to, so make sure what you're asking is clear. For example, "Want to FaceTime tonight at six?" is a more specific way to ask than "Are you free to talk?" Consent also needs to be voluntary, so those who are agreeing should be doing so freely and 100% by their own choosing, without pressure, guilt, or coercion from the person asking.

CONSENT IN ONLINE CONTEXTS AND SITUATIONS

When it comes to sexual activities that take place through screens — such as sexting, sending nude photos, or connecting for in-person sex — digital consent is a baseline for moving forward.

Digital consent is a way to refer to sexual consent that happens through screens.

Just like in-person sexual encounters, consent should be an ongoing conversation when you're communicating digitally. Although you aren't talking in person, you should always consider how your actions might make another person feel and ask questions if you don't know.

We can practice digital consent by:

- Asking permission before sending explicit messages or texts.
- Respecting the decisions of others once you ask. It's never okay to coerce or pressure someone to send photos or record sexual acts. If someone says no after you ask for digital consent, respect their choice and move on.
- Understanding that everyone has boundaries around meeting up in real life. If you've met online or on an app, make sure you both agree on the next steps and feel safe and comfortable with meeting up in person. Regardless of what others expect, everyone has the right to decide what is best for them and to act on those values.
- Asking each time. Getting digital consent is important every time. Even if your partner agreed to something sexual before, they are not obligated to agree to do it again.

Consent isn't only important when it comes to sex — there are everyday ways that we negotiate our needs with the needs of others.

Everyday consent means we communicate our boundaries and ask others for their perspective before taking actions that impact them. Source: National Sexual Violence Resource Center, www.nsvrc.org.

A Proclamation on Sexual Assault Awareness Month, 2022

MARCH 31, 2022 - PRESIDENTIAL ACTIONS

I was raised to believe that one of the greatest sins is the abuse of power -- whether it is economic, psychological, or physical. The cruel fact is that people of every age, ability, race, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, national origin, socioeconomic background, and religion suffer the pain and trauma of the abuse of power that is sexual assault. Sexual violence can occur anywhere -- and millions of assaults occur each year at the workplace, in the home, at school, and online. These assaults are an intolerable affront to our shared humanity. During National Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month, we renew our commitment to ensuring that every person can live a life free from sexual violence. We continue in our commitment to stand with survivors, hold perpetrators accountable, and dismantle a culture that is complicit in allowing sexual violence to continue.

Sexual assault is also a public health crisis. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, nearly 1 in 5 women in America experiences a rape or attempted rape, and nearly 44 percent of women and about 25 percent of all men experience some form of sexual violence in their lifetime. Tragically, many of those assaulted are young, and research shows that these assaults can have lifelong effects on health and are linked to chronic illnesses. Too often, this trauma is compounded by lost productivity, the challenge of seeking accountability, and the ensuing costs of medical and mental health care...

Ending violence against women and eliminating sexual assault has been a priority for me throughout my life. It is why I wrote and championed the original Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), a law that has transformed how we respond to sexual assault and which I count as one of my proudest legislative accomplishments. I am proud to have recently signed into law the reauthorization of VAWA, which expands prevention efforts and protections for survivors of sexual assault and other forms of gender-based violence. The law will provide increased resources and training so that our law enforcement and our judicial systems are better able to appropriately handle these cases. It includes a new focus on addressing technology-facilitated abuse and establishes a Federal civil cause of action for victims of non-consensual distribution of intimate images. The Act will strengthen rape prevention and education efforts, support rape crisis centers, improve the training of sexual assault forensic examiners, reduce the backlog of untested DNA kits, and broaden access to legal services for all survivors. It will also expand recognition of the special criminal jurisdiction of Tribal courts to cover non-Native perpetrators of sexual assault, sex trafficking, child abuse, and stalking.

This month, we honor the bravery and leadership of survivors by rededicating ourselves to eliminating sexual violence. It will require care and commitment from each of us to realize an America where everyone is free from the threat and impact of sexual violence.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, JOSEPH R. BIDEN JR., President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim April 2022 as National Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month. I urge all Americans to support sexual assault survivors including when survivors reach out and disclose abuse.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this thirty-first day of March, in the year of our Lord two thousand twenty-two, and of the Independence of the United States of America the wo hundred and forty-sixth.

JOSEPH R. BIDEN JR.

Wabanaki Advocacy Center Staff Announcements

KRISTA STEVENS

DIRECTOR

MICMAC DOMESTIC AND
SEXUAL VIOLENCE
ADVOCACY CENTER



ALDENE (DEE) SAUCIER

DIRECTOR

MALISEET DOMESTIC AND
SEXUAL VIOLENCE
ADVOCACY CENTER



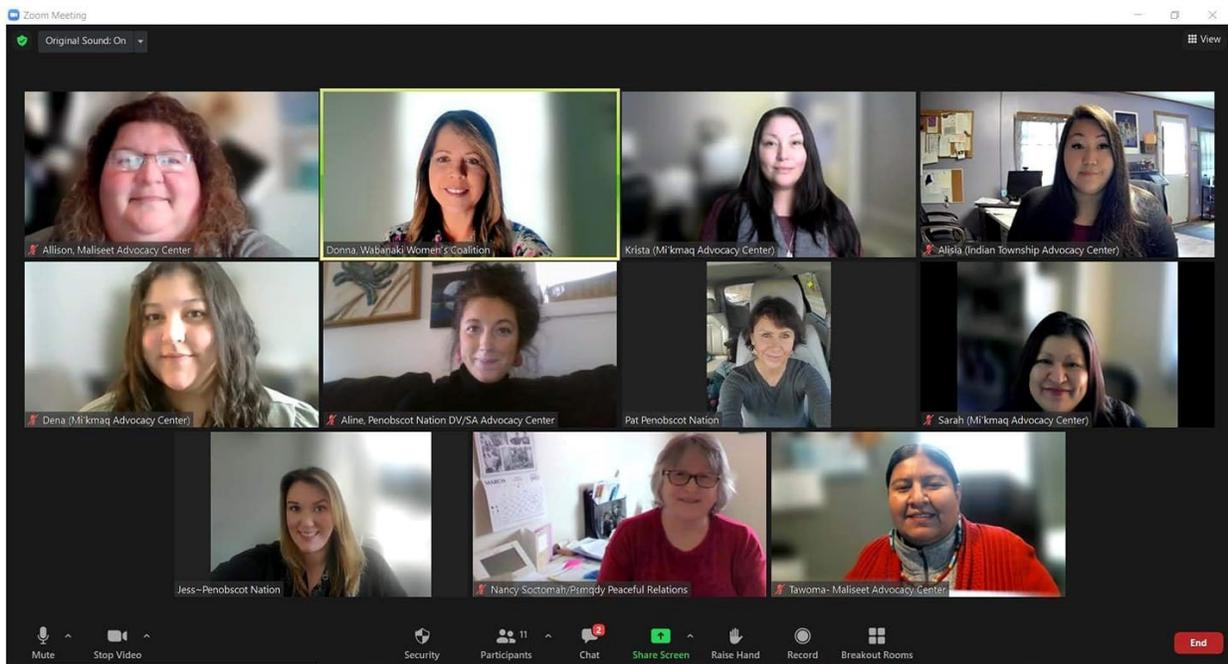
Celebrating International Women's Day on March 8th

March 8th was recognized as International Women's Day. On behalf of the Wabanaki Women's Coalition and our 5 tribal domestic and sexual violence advocacy centers, we celebrated this day in honor of all women, past and present, as well as our girls, the future women and leaders of our communities.

The first women's day was observed in 1909 when 15,000 women marched in New York City for better working conditions (pay and shorter hours) as well as voting rights. Every year, March 8th is celebrated as International Women's Day around the globe. While Women's Day traces its history to feminist movements in Europe and America in the early 1900s, the day became mainstream after it was adopted by the United Nations in 1977.

This year, the theme was "Changing Climates: Equality today for a sustainable tomorrow," a theme that recognizes the contribution of women and girls around the world, who are working to change the climate of gender equality and build a sustainable future.

This year's campaign was represented by the [#BreakTheBias](#) hashtag and called on people to work towards a world that is equitable, inclusive, and free from bias and discrimination so the playing field is leveled for women moving forward. Together, we can all make a difference.



Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month, February 2022

Wear Orange February 8th for National Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month

24/7 Hotlines | Maliseet Advocacy Center 207-532-6401 | Micmac Advocacy Center 207-551-3639 | Penobscot Nation Advocacy Center 207-631-4886
Passamaquoddy Peaceful Relations 877-853-2513 | Indian Township Passamaquoddy Advocacy Center 207-214-1917

 PAT, Penobscot Nation Advocacy Center	 DESIREE, Indian Township Advocacy Center	 NANCY, Passamaquoddy Peaceful Relations	 TANYA, Maliseet Advocacy Center	 KRISTA, Micmac Advocacy Center
 ALINE, Penobscot Nation Advocacy Center	 ALISIA, Indian Township Advocacy Center	 DONNA, Wabanaki Women's Coalition	 ALLISON, Maliseet Advocacy Center	 SARAH, Micmac Advocacy Center
 JESS, Penobscot Nation Advocacy Center	 JESSICA, Penobscot Nation Advocacy Center	 DARLENE, Indian Township Advocacy Center	 TAWOMA, Maliseet Advocacy Center	 SARAH, Micmac Advocacy Center

Decorative icons at the bottom of the graphic include several stylized Native American symbols and a central circular logo with a sun and water.

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PLEASE
PLACE
STAMP
HERE