

Kwey Relatives...

October Is Domestic Violence

Awareness Month

All five *Wabanaki Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Advocacy Centers* hosted events throughout the month of October, honoring survivors of Domestic Violence and bringing awareness to how prevalent it is in our communities.

Even though October is over we would like to continue to bring awareness to what is reported on the national level, here are some alarming statistics that truly show how hard Indian Country, as a whole, is affected by Domestic Violence.

- 80% of American Indian and Alaska Native women will experience Violence in their lifetime.
- 50% of American Indian and Alaska Native Men have endured physical violence from their partner.
- 66% of Indigenous Women have experienced psychological aggression by an intimate partner.
- 75% of Indigenous Men have experienced psychological aggression by an intimate partner.



It is also important to point out the extreme violence the *LGBTQ +2 Spirit* Community experiences at a disproportionate rate. Reported data provides:

- 61% of Bisexual Women and 43% of Lesbian Women, will in their lifetime, experience rape, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner.
- 37% of Bisexual Men and 26 % of Gay Men, will in their lifetime, experience rape, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner.

Sources:

NIWRC. www.NIRWC.org

Walters, M.L., Chen J., & Breiding, M.J. (2013). The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey

(NISVS): 2010 Findings on Victimization by Sexual Orientation. Atlanta, GA: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/nisvs_sofindings.pdf

Wabanaki Domestic Violence Awareness Month Tree Lighting Events



Mi'kmaq Nation Advocacy Center's DV Remembrance Tree

Passamaquoddy Peaceful Relations DVAM Event

Maliseet Advocacy Center Staff: Amanda, Cathy (Director), Tawoma, Allison and Victoria

Sewing Our Partners



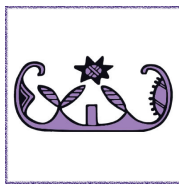
Maliseet Domestic and Sexual Violence Advocacy Center

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



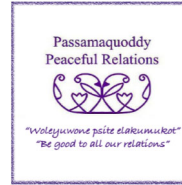
Indian Township Passamaquoddy Domestic and Sexual Violence Advocacy Center

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



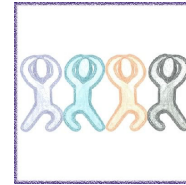
Penobscot Nation Domestic and Sexual Violence Advocacy Center

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



Passamaquoddy Peaceful Relations Domestic and Sexual Violence Advocacy Center

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



Micmac Domestic and Sexual Violence Advocacy Center

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

Domestic Violence Awareness Month Events

Annual Walk to End Domestic Violence

SAVE THE DATE!!!

Hosted by the Mi'kmaq Advocacy Center

Where:
Wellness Center Gym
56 Micmac Drive, Presque Isle
October 20th, 2023
5:00 PM



#BeAWarrior
#respect&protect
October is National Domestic Violence Awareness Month

This project was supported by Grant No.35J0WV-22-6G-03362-TRB awarded by the Office on Violence Against Women, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. Points of view in this document are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

Domestic Violence Awareness Rock Hunt

We have hidden 12 painted rocks that were donated to our program around public recreational areas at Peter Dana Point and the "Strip."

If you find one of the following rocks, bring it in for a prize. You can contact us by phone 207-214-1917 or you can send us a message.



Indian Township Advocacy Center



2023 October
Domestic Violence Awareness Month
BECAUSE IT TAKES A COMMUNITY TO END DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

October 5, Thursday, 6:00 p.m.
Purple Tree Lighting
Veteran Park on top of hill
Everyone Invited
Purple candoliers will be signed out.

October 28, Saturday, 10:00 a.m.
WALK To Raise Awareness
10a.m. sign in at 11 Passamaquoddy Road
Peaceful Relations Advocacy Center
Everyone is Invited
T-shirts will be available

October Nights 1—31
Purple Light In The Window Project
NUCI-IHKALKET
Candoliers with purple bulbs will light Sipayik each night in October throughout all the neighborhoods of Sipayik! Pick yours up on October 5 at the Tree Lighting event. The lights are to be displayed on your window sill at home each night. We'll light up Sipayik in purple light during the 31 nights of October to show that each of us is a person "nuci-ihkalket" who protects our loved ones from domestic violence.

Maliseet Advocacy Center
October 2023
Calendar of Events

October 2: Tree Lighting Ceremony-6:30pm
@Advocacy Center, 690 Foxcroft Rd
*Drumming
*Light refreshments will be served.

October 12: DV Awareness Point & Sip-5pm
@Maliseet Community Center, 568 Foxcroft Rd
*Adults only. RSVP required-Only 25 spots available
*5pm-meal provided
*5:30pm-Painting begins

October 18: 26th Annual Candlelight Vigil and Walk-6pm
@Maliseet Community Center, 568 Foxcroft Rd
*Giveaways including t-shirts including purple lightbulb
*Meal provided.

October 21: Children's DV Awareness Point and Sip-Noon
@Maliseet Community Center, 568 Foxcroft Rd
*Youth-11+ Must have parent/guardian accompany
*12pm-Meal provided
*12:30pm-Painting begins
*Be entered for a door prize

When posting pics to social media, please use **#WabanakiTogetherWeCan**

For more information or to RSVP, please contact Advocacy Staff at 207-532-4401

October 2023

Penobscot Nation DV/SA Support Line: (207) 631-4886

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month! #EveryKnowsSome
The Penobscot Nation Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Program has many events planned for the whole month to bring awareness to this important issue.
Oct 2- Join us for the annual Tree Lighting Ceremony located at the Pavilion. Meet at the PN Health Center at 5:00 PM and we will walk to the Pavilion for the tree lighting ceremony.
Oct 11- The DV Team will hide painted rocks around the community. If you find one return to the DV office located at the PN Health Center for a PRIZE!
Oct 18- Join us for make and take cupcakes between 10-1 at the DV office located at the PN Health Center.
Oct 28- Join us for a self-defense training taught by Clara Porter from Prevention, Action, Change from 10-1. Light snacks will be provided. All are welcome but spots are limited. Please register for the class by calling (207) 631-4886. Children under the age of 16 will need to be accompanied by an adult.
In the United States, an estimated 10 million people experience domestic violence every year. According to the National Center Against Domestic Violence, about 20 people per minute are physically abused by an intimate partner. About 1 in 4 women and 1 in 9 men experience severe intimate partner physical violence, sexual violence, and/or partner stalking with injury. PTSD, contraction of STDs, etc.



Annual OVW Government-to-Government Tribal Consultation

The Annual OVW Government to Government Tribal Consultation was held August 7-10, 2023 in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

Donna Brown, Executive Director at Wabanaki Women's Coalition, 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 of Wabanaki Women's Coalition, *Tribal Designee*

Aroostook Band of Micmac Indians - **Edward Peter Paul**, *Tribal Chief*

Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians - **Clarissa Sabbatis**, *Tribal Chief*

Passamaquoddy Tribe at Indian Township - **William J. Nicholas Sr.**, *Tribal Chief*

Passamaquoddy Tribe at Pleasant Point - **Rena Newell**, *Tribal Chief*

Penobscot Indian Nation - **Kirk Francis**, *Tribal Chief*

OVW Framing Paper Question, "OVW has, in the past, explored distributing OVW Grants to Indian Tribal Government Program funds through a formula. Should this method be revisited?"

I am providing testimony to say that we are not in favor of formula funding if that base funding is not adequate enough to meet the needs of all tribes regardless of the size of the tribe. As I mentioned earlier, our Wabanaki tribes make up a total population of 7,718 tribal citizens. During the 2022 calendar year alone, our Wabanaki Advocacy Centers provided direct services and support to a total of 334 survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, stalking and sex trafficking. These stats do not include victims of other crimes in our communities. It is also important to note that our Advocacy Centers are not operating with a large staff. The majority of our tribal government programs operate with only 2 to 3 Advocates. We take great pride in referring to our tribal government programs as small but mighty. If formula funding were to be implemented, this would result in a great loss of staff as well as crucial direct services to survivors. It hurts my heart to fathom the idea that this could very likely cause our tribal government programs to cease to exist. Quite frankly, it is impossible to provide the services I mentioned earlier with just one full time Advocate with all of the administrative responsibilities of grant writing, grant reporting, direct services and a 24-hour support line. Something has to give somewhere. What we predict is that with a loss of services in our community, survivors would be less likely to leave their abusers, and there will be increased rates of abuse as the perpetrators will know that their victims will have less formal and informal supports. We anticipate other crimes would increase as well as rates of homelessness, mental health and substance use disorders. And here we are, nations gathered at this Consultation, with larger tribes advocating for formula funding (understandably so) and us smaller tribes advocating to retain the amount that our programs have relied on to exist for the past 10 to 20 years, all funding that has been used to invest in the training and development of our Advocates that serve our communities. To lose valuable resources such as staffing would be a great loss to our communities. It is in fact stressful to think that programs' funding cut be cut. While formula funding may work for some tribes, it certainly does not work for all. We propose noncompetitive funding and if a base rate is ever proposed, we recommend that it includes sufficient funds and well thought out planning to ensure that all programs will be able to provide the necessary services. Better yet, we propose that these programs have enough funding to provide quality care that you would not hesitate to send your own relatives to them if they were victims of such crimes. It is imperative that funding is adequate and sustainable especially since we face the highest rates of violence in the United States, and that the federal government upholds its trust responsibility regarding the health, safety and justice for all tribal citizens.

I feel it is important that you hear directly from Advocates themselves, the ones that are boots on the ground serving victims of domestic and sexual violence, stalking, dating violence and sex trafficking. One states, "The bottom line is that formula funding would be detrimental to our Centers. There really isn't enough funding out there to cover the number of services we provide. Are Wabanaki Tribes sending back money? It's doubtful. We NEVER have. So that is evidence right there we need these funds. We have 3 staff, and have a need to hire another to ensure we had enough for direct services, indirect services, and enough to pay fair, adequate salaries."

Another states, "The government is saying the lowest numbers in a tribe nationwide is 13,000. The government is not getting all data for an effective formula, this will hurt all low member Tribal programs.... Which would not get the amount effectively needed to make changes/help tribal communities. My program may possibly be allowed employment for one advocate, the director. We go by 40-hour work weeks and 40 hours cannot cover advocacy, administrative work, after hour emergency calls by one person, etc. This will result in a high rate of burnout for one trained advocate... Abuse would likely spike and could even be lethal. We do not want to give abusers the idea that they can abuse their partner and know they won't have anyone to help them to effectively leave and be safe."

Another Advocate provided this in-depth reflection:

"Everyone talks about the generational trauma within Indian Country, not one person I know can come up with a grandmother, auntie, sister or cousin who had not been sexually assaulted or experienced domestic violence."

Tribal Consultation Continued...

Throughout my 8 years as an Advocate, I have seen the change a program can make. I have seen generational healing take place. I have seen our future generations be surrounded and uplifted by parents who are cared for and supported when creating a new life free from violence. I have seen mothers, grandmothers, aunts and sisters gain their voices and speak their truths. The advocacy center has played a crucial role in supporting survivors in doing so. The funding from OVW has provided safe places for survivors and their children to rest their heads at night so that they could get sleep, promoting health and healing. It also allows for survivors to work on gaining or maintain meaningful employment without the fear of being locked out of the house or potentially held hostage at gun point, all stories that still live with me to this day.

I have seen elders who have been removed from their community and in a domestic violence situation for so long find the support and courage to come forward to the advocacy program. They fled their abuser and were able to reconnect with their culture and community, they were able to speak their language not in secrecy anymore because their abuser had forbidden it. These elders felt love again, the love of their people and the community as they embraced and healed from the 20+ years of Domestic Violence that they had endured.

I have seen and been an advocate who attends court alongside survivors who are filing protection from abuse orders to ensure the safety of themselves and their children. I have stood and advocated for survivor's voices to be heard when filing for parental rights so that their children will no longer have to live in a violent home.

I have seen and been an advocate who attends court alongside survivors who are filing protection from abuse orders to ensure the safety of themselves and their children. I have stood and advocated for survivor's voices to be heard when filing for parental rights so that their children will no longer have to live in a violent home.

I have seen men come forward being no longer afraid to challenge their abusers who were once esteemed professionals from outside the community who took advantage and malevolently preyed on them as youth. These men were supported and assisted when ready to speak their truths by the advocacy center. They were given a safe space to heal and to ensure that the future generations of young boys and men could see that sexual assault was never the way within our tribal communities.

I have seen the money that is provided for advocacy centers ensure the transportation and support for survivors sexually assaulted by a stranger in a parking lot who had a fetish for "Indian women." The money allowed us to ensure her transportation, safe shelter from this person who continued to stalk her after this incident, and proper medical treatment by local SANE and SAFE staff. Although this horrific event happened, the support from the advocates allowed this person to slowly gain trust again and gain their footing to speak their truth and find safe housing far from this abuser.

If OVW decided to enact formula funding, our Wabanaki Advocacy Centers would see significant cuts which would impact their ability to provide support for survivors. These cuts would only allow for one advocate to run the entire program. It is not possible to provide a 24/7 365 days a year support line with just one person. Currently it is shared amongst three staff who respond to the call day or night. It is not an answering service it is a real live person on the other line. This has been mentioned by survivors to feel the most supportive. They can hear the person that will be doing an intake or meeting up with them for a hospital accompaniment. This has provided a much smoother experience for survivors instead of having to rely on a name given by an answering service or even waiting for a call back. Several survivors suggested if they had to wait for a call back that they would not have utilized this service and it could have posed safety risks. Shelter Advocacy alone requires thoughtful and meaningful presence to ensure that the shelter is a safe place, and that the survivor has adequate care so that they may work on their own goals and plans for the future. The number of cases would dwindle and eventually become nonexistent not for lack of domestic violence and sexual assault happening within our communities, but because it is impossible for one person to operate a program and provide the service and care that survivors need. Providing quality of care is crucial to establishing trust with a survivor. If a survivor feels rushed or that someone is not present, they can internalize this and feel that they are not important or valued, or that their problem is too much for others to deal with.

If this funding stream changes and we experience a decrease in funding, it will silence generations of voices once again. This will also impact surrounding communities. When we have survivors who come forward and are met with advocates who have time and resources to create relationships with the surrounding government systems survivors are able to create new trust and relationships within those systems as well. And are much more likely to reach out or use the system for its intended purpose because they are able to witness the trust and the conversations first hand. When that process isn't there it can be extremely taxing and difficult on other already swamped systems who have verbally expressed their great appreciation whenever our advocates are involved."

In closing, I hope and I pray for the safety and wellbeing of relatives, but hope and prayers are not enough. Simply put, we need direct, non-competitive funding that is flexible, adequate, and sustainable. I thank you for this opportunity to speak against formula funding in the way that it is suggested in this framing paper for such base funding would be detrimental for our Wabanaki communities. We are not opposed to other options, as long as it would not impede the health and safety of our people nor risk the loss of staff, and allow us to operate our programs at our current capacity.

I would like to thank our Wabanaki Women's Coalition Outreach Coordinator, Aline Pardilla, the Directors of the Wabanaki Advocacy Centers - Desiree Tyrrell, Victoria Neptune, Krista Stevens, Cathy St. John, and Jessica Ward and the Advocates that work within our communities and for providing valuable input regarding this testimony. I would like to thank our Tribal Chiefs who continue to put the health, safety and well-being of our Wabanaki Nations at the forefront of their efforts - Chief Rena Newell, Chief Clarissa Sabattis, Chief Edward Peter Paul, Chief William Nicholas and Chief Kirk Francis. I would also like to thank all of you today who have dedicated your valuable time to listening to our testimony.

Thank you/Woliwoni,

Donna L. Brown
Executive Director
Wabanaki Women's Coalition



WWC Survivors' Retreat September 2023



The Wabanaki Women's Coalition held its Annual Survivors' Retreat in September. Advocates and Survivors gathered for a time of healing, ceremony, relaxation and support. We were able to bead, make shawls, hold talking circles, and hike/spend time in nature.

And for a first time ever, Wabanaki Women's Coalition was able to provide by generous donation pontoon boat rides on the water near our sacred Mount Katahdin. Survivors' reflections and favorite parts of their time together included: very empowering & accomplishing, meeting new people who understand what I have been through, the fellowship the feeling of safety surrounded by other tribal women, connecting with other survivors, stories of strength, and LOVE as well as the grounding in our traditions. Nothing compares to the time we spend in this sacred space. We are thankful for all that attended.



Tori Neptune (Director, Passamaquoddy Peaceful Relations), Allison Sabattis (Advocate) and Cathy St. John (Director) for the Maliseet Domestic and Sexual Violence Advocacy Center



Desiree Tyrrell (Director) and Alisia Morin (Advocate) for Indian Township Domestic and Sexual Violence Advocacy Center



Krista Stevens (Director) and Sarah DeWitt (Advocate) for Mi'kmaq Nation Domestic and Sexual Violence Advocacy Center

Transgender/Two-Spirit Survivors and Access to Shelter

"Talking Points for Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Service Providers on Anti-LGBTQ+2 Rhetoric"

We are already seeing attacks on shelter access for transgender survivors. Transgender survivors face disproportionate risk of domestic violence and homelessness. To further strip transgender survivors of safe and stable shelter is extremely dangerous to the wellbeing and safety of transgender survivors. Transgender individuals are at higher risk of domestic violence and sexual assault due to the disproportionate discrimination, stigma, and barriers to financial and housing security that the transgender community experiences. In a study done by the Williams Institute, 8% of transgender adults experienced homelessness in the past year, compared to 2.5% of cisgender gay, lesbian, and bisexual adults.⁵ That transgender people are more than three times more likely to experience homelessness than their LGB counterparts and eight times more likely than cisgender straight people speaks to the enormous need for shelters to be welcoming and affirming to transgender people experiencing homelessness. In 2015, the U.S. Transgender Survey reported that 42% of Black transgender respondents have experienced homelessness at some point in their lives and 22% had experienced homelessness in the past year because of anti-transgender discrimination.⁶ Limiting shelter access for transgender individuals would exacerbate this problem.

Restrictions on shelter access are a direct affront to transgender and nonbinary individuals who are already disproportionately impacted by homelessness, domestic violence, sexual violence, and unemployment, among many other social issues, by removing critical equal access protections. Legislative attacks like this are rooted in harmful and dangerous stereotypes about transgender persons, particularly transgender women. Further, legislative attacks like this invite the use of religious beliefs as justification to discriminate against transgender people. Eroding the housing rights and resources transgender survivors experiencing homelessness can access sets a dangerous and inhumane precedent.

Laws that prohibit discrimination based on gender identity have been in place for years--including specifically for VAWA programs--and there is no evidence that this has caused any problems. For example, Minneapolis has had these protections since 1975. There is no evidence that the existence of these laws has contributed to violence against women. Instead, they simply keep transgender people safe. Hundreds of organizations voiced their strong support for these protections in a National Consensus Statement of Anti-Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence Organizations in Support of Full and Equal Access for the Transgender Community issued in 2016.⁷ These leaders agree: transgender women victims being served alongside other women is appropriate and not a safety issue. In 2020, this position was reaffirmed, when the DV/SA movement rejected the sweeping-- and false--generalization that admission of transgender individuals to single-sex shelters consistent with their gender identity would pose widespread, safety, security or privacy concerns for shelter residents, including cisgender women survivors. More than 170 DV and SA organization opposed HUD rollbacks on equal access protections.

Sources:

4 "2022 National Survey on LGBTQ Youth Mental Health". Trevor Project. <https://www.thetrevorproject.org/survey-2022/>

5 Wilson, Bianca D.M., et al. "Homelessness Among LGBT Adults in the US." UCLA School of Law Williams Institute. May 2020. <https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/publications/lgbt-homelessness-us/>

6 United States Transgender Survey. "Report on the Experiences of Black Respondents." National Center for Transgender Equality. 2015. <https://www.transequality.org/sites/default/files/docs/usts/USTS-Black-Respondents-Report.pdf>

7 <http://www.4vawa.org/ntf-action-alerts-and-news/2018/4/12/national-consensus-statement-of-anti-sexual-assault-and-domestic-violence-organizations-in-support-of-full-and-equal-access-for-the-transgender-community>

Ways to Support Transgender Survivors of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault:



*Begin by believing--When family, friend, coworker, acquaintance comes forward to tell their story. Do not ask for added details meet them where they are at and believe them.

*Confidentiality--Understand that holding the person who came forward to you may not be out yet and the safety around them trusting you with information about themselves. Make sure to ask before acting on what feels most supportive to the individual.

*If you are a Domestic Violence or Sexual Assault Agency consider changing policies to support sheltering, housing and other necessary needs of trans survivors who are fleeing and in need of safe housing.

*Go to trainings and educate yourself through agencies that are compromised and work directly with Transgender survivors such as MaineTransNet or Wabanaki Two-Spirit Alliance. Facebook: The Wabanaki Two Spirit Alliance / Twitter: @W2SAlliance Instagram: @w2salliance /Email: johnrsylliboy@gmail.com

Celebrating Our Native American Heritage



*A time to celebrate the culture, traditions
and achievements*

As part of Native American Heritage Month, may we honor the residential school survivors and those who did not make it home. The vast majority of those who were forced to attend these schools experienced many forms of violence, neglect, assimilation and cultural abuse.

Many were also murdered or died as a result of starvation, illness and maltreatment.



This project was supported by Grant No. 15JOVW-22-GG-03615-MUMU awarded by the Office on Violence Against Women, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, conclusions, and recommendations expressed in this publication/program/exhibition are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S. Department of Justice

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PLEASE
PLACE
STAMP
HERE