

SafeCenter: Advocacy & Empowerment

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Owosso, MI—According to The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (2010-2012) “1 in 4 women and 1 in 9 men have experienced contact sexual violence, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner in their lifetime...”. The very essence of this topic is enveloped in traditional views that “family business is private business,” making it an area that has been and continues to be difficult to discuss. In addition to these views, domestic violence and sexual assault are littered with stigmas that further prevent the initiation of an open dialogue on these topics in both individual settings with helping professionals and the community as a whole. Awareness to this public health concern is important for continued community growth and prosperity, because as Martin Luther King Jr. said, “Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly.”

Fortunately, we have SafeCenter, a place I knew little about before starting my internship in August. As I began my first day I was greeted by an office full of advocates who are overflowing with a passion for advocacy and empowerment. I had discovered a place right here in our community where these uncomfortable conversations and stigmas are approached with knowledge, care and a safe nonjudgmental environment. SafeCenter serves both Shiawassee and Clinton counties and offers a variety of services such as emergency shelter, 24-hour crisis line, individual counseling and advocacy for men, women and children, legal advocacy, prevention and education programs, and housing programs just to name a few. October is domestic violence awareness month and the celebration of the 25th anniversary of promoting awareness through the Michigan Coalition to End Domestic and Sexual Violence. The theme this year is “Create and Engage.” So, I challenge you to join SafeCenter in creating comfortable spaces for conversation and engage yourself in community projects geared towards bringing awareness to domestic violence. On October 9th wear purple in support of domestic violence survivors.

SafeCenter is a non-profit agency whose vision is for all individuals to experience the right to be free from violence. Their mission is to build comprehensive and sustainable community strategies to eliminate domestic and sexual violence in Clinton and Shiawassee Counties. For more information regarding services, contact SafeCenter at 1-877-952-7283 or via email at safecenter@thesafecenter.org.