



COUNTY OF YOLO
OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Domestic Violence Awareness Month

(Woodland, CA) - (October 6, 2020) – October is National Domestic Violence Awareness Month. It was founded on the Day of Unity started by the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence in 1981. In October 1987, the first Domestic Violence Awareness Month was observed, and since 1989, Congress has annually recognized October as Domestic Violence Awareness Month (DVAM). This awareness was crucial because domestic violence is a serious social problem and dangerous crime that affects millions of individuals across the United States regardless of age, economic status, race, religion, or education.

In the United States alone, an average of 24 people per minute are victims of rape, physical violence, or stalking by an intimate partner. More than one in four women and one in ten men have experienced these acts at the hands of a partner within their lifetime. On average, three women are killed every day at the hands of a current or former intimate partner. Emotional, verbal, financial, and psychological abuse are harder for researchers to study, but multiple studies report at least 50% of people have experienced some form of abuse by a former or current partner, many estimate far more. Domestic violence is connected to a wide range of physical and mental health issues, and children who witness domestic violence are 15 times more likely to be physically or sexually assaulted in their lifetimes.

The goal of Domestic Violence Awareness Month is to raise awareness in the community about how common and how serious domestic violence is. It can be scary to leave an abusive relationship or to help someone in one. Some warning signs of abuse are: putting a partner down in front of other people, a partner who is extremely jealous, someone who is constantly worried about making their partner angry, someone making excuses for their partner's behavior, unexplained marks or injuries, and/or cutting off contact with friends and family. The national

domestic violence hotline recommends that the best ways to support someone experiencing abuse is to take the first step to approach them in a safe and private setting, provide non-judgmental support no matter what the person decides to do, help them come up with a safety plan, and know what local professionals are available to help.

There has been a global increase in domestic violence cases during the pandemic. So far this year, the Yolo County District Attorney's Office has received over 700 reports of domestic violence, and over 100 reports of sexual assault. Isolation and job losses have made it harder than ever for people in abusive relationships to safely leave. The Yolo County District Attorney's Office will continue to vigorously prosecute domestic violence offenders who commit these life altering crimes. And Yolo County District Attorney's Victim Services will continue to help domestic violence survivors by providing advocacy, court accompaniment, and many other needed services throughout the pandemic. During the pandemic, Victim Services advocates hosted meetings for prosecutors to listen to victims of domestic violence over video calling, helped victims navigate technological difficulties to testify in court from the safety of their own homes, and created a safe, sanitized, and quarantined room within the District Attorney's Office for victims without access to video conferencing to appear in court.

Yolo County District Attorney's Office wants the community to know there are ways to join the effort to stop domestic violence. Support your local domestic violence program by donating to Empower Yolo, the domestic violence and sexual assault center in Yolo County (<http://empoweryolo.org/upcoming-events/>). They have been providing essential legal assistance, housing, counseling, and other resources to people escaping abuse and sexual assault without pause during the pandemic. Events organized at the District Attorney's Office to raise awareness will include a clothing drive that will benefit Empower Yolo and a resolution to proclaim October as Domestic Violence Awareness Month which will be signed by Yolo County Board of Supervisors on October 20, 2020. Please contact Yolo County District Attorney's Victim Services with any questions at (530) 666-8187.

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