

Bergen County Department of Human Services

ALTERNATIVES TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE NEWSLETTER

A MESSAGE FROM OUR DIVISION DIRECTOR

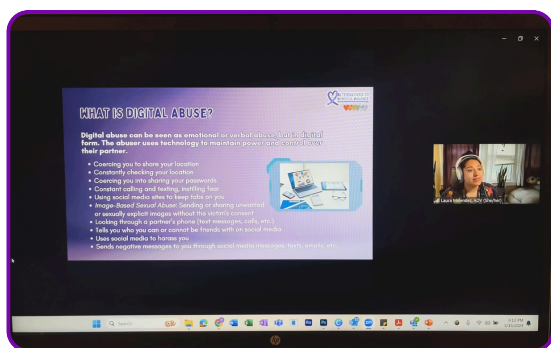
Spring Blooms, Hope Grows!

May is Mental Health Awareness Month, and at ADV, we are dedicated to supporting the mental health of domestic abuse survivors. Research shows that trauma from domestic violence often leads to mental health issues like depression, anxiety, and PTSD. Our licensed clinicians provide free, evidence-based, culturally competent care, ensuring that all survivors feel respected and understood. At the Bergen County Department of Human Services, we believe that access to mental health services is a right. If you or someone you know needs support, our team is here to help. Let's break the silence and champion together!

Marisa Heluk, M. Ed.
ADV Division Director

ADV's Digital Abuse Webinar

On May 15th, ADV's Prevention Through Education team hosted a webinar on digital abuse and technology safety in the context of intimate partner violence. They identified signs of digital abuse, cyberstalking, and Image Based Sexual Abuse (IBSA). Additionally, they provided resources for anyone experiencing digital abuse and shared how to prioritize digital safety.



If you are interested in a webinar like this one, whether for yourself or your workplace, reach out to Laura Melendez at lmelendez@co.bergen.nj.us.

MAY 2024 IN REVIEW 5TH EDITION HIGHLIGHTS

- ◆ [Invisible Wounds: Healing from Complex Trauma](#)
- ◆ [Survivor Services - Specialized Therapy Groups](#)
- ◆ [ADV's Survivors Day](#)
- ◆ [Featured Topic: Digital Abuse and Tech Safety](#)
- ◆ [New Legal Advocate Job Opening](#)
- ◆ [New Dates Added for 40-Hour Training Program for Domestic Violence Victim Advocates](#)

INVISIBLE WOUNDS: Healing from Complex Trauma

Beneath the physical injuries that we most commonly hear about in today's headlines on domestic violence, exist other types of wounds that are just as devastating.

Trauma refers to life experiences that are stressful, frightening, or overwhelming to our minds and bodies. Typically, we associate the resulting traumatic injuries with life-threatening events, such as car accidents, natural disasters, or physical assault. However, trauma can also arise from extremely unsafe or unstable emotional and physical conditions, such as experiencing infidelity, neglect or abandonment, medical illness, loss of a loved one, or contending with an abusive relationship.

These traumatic events all have the potential to alter our sense of safety and ability to detect and respond to harm in the future. In cases where trauma was pervasive, constant, or recurring, **complex trauma** develops. In response to chronic states of distress and lack of safety, a person may experience compounded and amplified responses to the danger.

Comparable to someone living in a war zone, a survivor of domestic violence is likely to present with post-traumatic stress symptoms affecting their medical, physical, occupational, and social domains.

While the invisible wounds of trauma can significantly impact a survivor's recovery, we want to spread the message that we as a community support their healing journey. Let's do our best to highlight and destigmatize the various treatment strategies to reassure one's mind and body that they are safe again.

Reference
National Sexual Violence Resource Center (NSVRC) (2010). What is sexual violence: Fact sheet.
https://www.nsvrc.org/sites/default/files/Publications_NSVRC_Factsheet_What-is-sexual-violence_1.pdf



VOLUNTEER OF THE MONTH

Kudos to Kimberly for being ADV's Volunteer of the Month! She is our bilingual volunteer who assisted local police departments working with Spanish-speaking victims.



Kimberly holds a bachelor's degree and has volunteered at Holy Name Hospital and Wallington Civic Center. Despite being a new volunteer for ADV, Kimberly assessed and successfully managed one of the most challenging crisis calls. Kimberly's empathy and knowledge was highly appreciated by the survivor seeking immediate support. We appreciate the time and effort she dedicates to helping the community.

ADV FEATURED STAFF

Dana Sabatino, LSW

Lightning doesn't strike the ocean often but when it does it can span over five miles and reach temperatures hotter than the surface of the sun. In the Fall of 2021, as an MSW intern, Dana Sabatino came through ADV with a similar force and impact. Dana is one of ADV's Abuse Intervention Specialists.

Upon completion of her MSW, Dana joined ADV as an Abuse Intervention Specialist. For those that encounter her, instantly find a welcoming, engaging dynamic professional who is quick; quick in her pace, her responsivity, and her wit. While those qualities are admirable alone, they are only an aspect of professional aptitude.



Through her involvement in our Coordinated Community Response team for Domestic and Sexual Violence (CCR-DSV), development of the Non-Violence Program, and her work with individuals who have used reactive aggression, Dana demonstrates a depth of knowledge of coercive control and domestic violence. She is an innovative professional who is an astute critical thinker and intentional listener. If you were to compare professional footprints, you might say she is reminiscent of Derek Jeter in 1996, but if you asked Dana she might say she's more like Breanna Stewart in 2016.

JOB & VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Full-time Legal Advocate



Looking for a rewarding volunteer opportunity this summer? Join the team!

Go to our [Get Involved](#) page to learn more or to apply for a position!

SERVICE HIGHLIGHTS/UPDATES

Survivor Services Program - Specialized Therapy

DIALECTICAL BEHAVIOR THERAPY (DBT)

Trauma can impact our ability to connect to the moment, to our environments, emotional responses, and sense of boundaries in our interactions with others. DBT aims to empower individuals with the skills and strategies necessary to effectively regulate and manage overwhelming emotions, navigate difficult situations, and build stronger, more fulfilling relationships.



In this group, we have the opportunity to explore ways to grow in our mindfulness, distress tolerance, emotion regulation, and interpersonal effectiveness skills.

This group is a 28-week-skill-learning group that meets on a weekly basis. For more information, contact our 24-hour hotline 201-336-7575

EYE MOVEMENT DESENSITIZATION AND REPROCESSING (EMDR)

A process using bilateral stimulation (BLS), eye movements, self-tapping, or auditory tones to accelerate the brain's capacity to process and heal a troubling memory. BLS, which occurs naturally during dream sleep, causes the two brain parts to work together to reintegrate the memory.

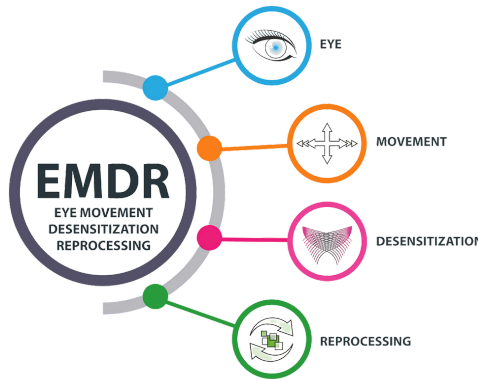


EMDR is effective in alleviating trauma-related symptoms, whether the traumatic event occurred many years ago or yesterday. It gives desired results - with little talking, without using drugs, and requires no "homework" between sessions.

Benefits of EMDR:

The memory is remembered but the painful emotions, physical sensations, disturbing images and thoughts are no longer present. EMDR helps the brain reintegrate the memory and store it in a more appropriate place in the brain. The brain reintegrates the memory and does the healing.

For more information, contact our 24-hour hotline 201-336-7575



ADV's Survivors Day



Would you like to show your support for survivors of domestic violence? Get involved in ADV's Survivors Day!

This is an intimate event for ADV staff and clients to celebrate and support survivors of abuse on their journeys towards healing and empowerment.

Your time and contributions can help us make this a truly memorable and impactful event!

If you would like to be involved, reach out to Sophia Traphagen at straphagen@co.bergen.nj.us

DIGITAL ABUSE & TECH SAFETY

WHAT IS DIGITAL ABUSE?

Digital abuse can be seen as emotional or verbal abuse, but in digital form. The abuser uses technology to maintain power and control over their partner. Here are examples of what digital abuse may look like:

- Coercing you to share your location
- Constantly checking your location
- Coercing you into sharing your passwords
- Constant calling and texting, instilling fear
- Using social media sites to keep tabs on you
- Image-Based Sexual Abuse: sending or sharing unwanted or sexually explicit images without the victim's consent
- Looking through a partner's phone (text messages, calls, etc.)
- Tells you who you can or cannot be friends with on social media
- Uses social media to harass you
- Sends negative messages to you through social media messages, texts, emails, etc.

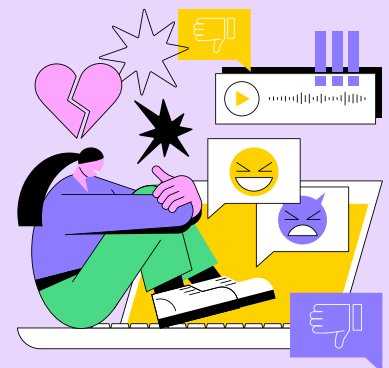
DANGERS OF DIGITAL ABUSE

There are three ways digital abuse can present itself:

- 1** DA is used as another form of control. It is grounded in intent to gain/maintain power and control. It extends beyond face-to-face interaction, leading to constant access to their victim
- 2** DA amplifies the level of fear. The abuser presents as omnipresent, which means they are present everywhere at the same time due to the constant digital access. The abuser crafts their messages to appear benign to others, but threatening to the victim
- 3** Recruiting others in the digital abuse. This is when the abuser engages others to attack, defame, and/or incite violence against the victim. The abuser may gather information on the victim from willing/unwilling 3rd parties to threaten the victim.

DIGITAL ABUSE TACTICS

- Monitoring Victim via Tech - AKA Cyberstalking
 - Asking for or hacking passwords or installing spy apps
 - Tracking phone calls, messages, activities, and/or app usage
 - Intercepting or deleting email, photos, or direct messages
 - Searching browsing history
 - Using cloud accounts to monitor devices or turn on/off features like location services
- Tracking Victim Location - Many electronic devices and apps make use of Global Positioning System (GPS) technology
 - Seemingly harmless apps, such as Life360, Find My iPhone, and Snapchat, can be used to track real-time location
 - Bluetooth trackers, such as Apple AirTags and Tile Mate trackers, can be secretly slipped into victims' vehicles, backpacks, and other personal belongings.
- Using Technology to Harass Victims
 - Cyber-harassment: any online communication meant to instill fear, humiliation, damage a victim's reputation, or threaten a victim's well-being.
 - Doxxing: publicly exposing a victim's real name, phone number, address, job, or any other identifying info, leaving victim vulnerable to cyber-harassment and security threats.
 - Image-Based Sexual Abuse: threatening to leak sexual or explicit content, images, or recordings.



ADV'S TRAINING INSTITUTE ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

ADV's Training Institute on Domestic Violence provides online and in-person training for community advocates and professionals to enhance their skills in assisting domestic violence survivors. The training aims to empower advocates to interrupt abuse and intervene effectively for survivors.

The **40-Hour Training Program** is open to all and is especially geared toward individuals and groups looking to volunteer or work directly with survivors of domestic violence at victim service agencies requiring victim privilege certification. The training provides a comprehensive overview of domestic violence topics, including in-depth exploration of abuse dynamics in intimate relationships, the effects of abuse on diverse survivor populations, and anti-oppressive perspectives on abuse intervention and healing work.

The training operates in a cohort model with both live virtual sessions and independent self-paced modules granting participants additional flexibility. We offer the training four times per year with additional offerings on request. Participants are required to participate in live virtual ZOOM sessions to receive credit.

Training Topics Include:

- Domestic Violence Dynamics
- Continuum of Abuse
- Trauma-Informed Advocacy
- Values & Ethics for Advocates
- Societal Attitudes on Violence
- Anti-Oppressive Advocacy with Diverse Survivor Populations
- Crisis Intervention & Safety Planning
- Communication & Counseling Skills
- Domestic Violence Law in NJ
- Impact on Children & Teen Dating Abuse
- Healing Work with Survivors
- Abuse Intervention Programs & Coordinated Community Responses to Violence



UPCOMING TRAININGS

40-Hour Training - Standard Fall Cycle
9/17/24 - 10/17/24

Weekly Tuesdays & Thursdays
5:30pm - 8:30pm
Virtual via ZOOM

Ready to register?
Fill out our
Online Registration Form

For more information, go to our [Training Institute for Domestic Violence](#) page.

Join the CCR-DSV Movement



The **Bergen County Coordinated Community Response to Domestic & Sexual Violence (CCR-DSV)** is a community network of individuals and organizations in the County that coordinates and supports collaborative efforts to reduce domestic and sexual violence, dating abuse, and coercive control. We accomplish this through awareness-raising, prevention, education, and advocacy.

The CCR-DSV recognizes violence as a critical community problem that poses significant threats to individuals, families, and the community. The CCR-DSV also recognizes that the power dynamics between the victim/survivor and perpetrator in domestic and sexual violence cases, when viewed through the lens of coercive control, calls for a specialized system of response.

No one individual or entity alone can end domestic violence which is why we are putting out a call to action for all of our community partners to join the Bergen County Coordinated Community Response Team.



To add your agency or organization to the team, complete our interest form or scan the QR code with any smart device.

HAVE AN IDEA TO HELP US GROW?

We are constantly looking to transform and improve our programs to benefit survivors and their loved ones in Bergen County. Do you have any **feedback, ideas, or suggestions** for ADV?



Submit your comments anonymously through our confidential form or scan the QR code with any smart device.

WANT TO STAY IN THE LOOP?

Make sure you are subscribed to **ADV's newsletter and email list** to receive more exciting updates on our agency programs, community events, professional trainings, and opportunities to get involved in the movement to end domestic violence and dating abuse in Bergen County!



Click here to sign up or scan the QR code with any smart device.

