

Bergen County Department of Human Services

ALTERNATIVES TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE NEWSLETTER

A MESSAGE FROM OUR DIVISION DIRECTOR

Empowerment Through Community!

October served as Domestic Violence Awareness Month, a time to recognize and combat the pervasive impact of domestic violence within our communities. Domestic violence remains a critical issue affecting individuals across all demographics, with young people exposed to such environments facing increased risks of perpetuating or falling victim to violence themselves.

This year, our theme, "Many Voices, One Mission," emphasized the diverse challenges that survivors encountered, particularly those with intersecting identities that compounded their trauma. Our commitment to addressing these issues through an intersectional framework remained steadfast, ensuring that all survivors, regardless of their background, received the support they needed. We were proud to highlight the Bergen County Wear Purple Day Ceremony, which brought together leaders and advocates to stand in solidarity with survivors and to address systemic barriers to safety and justice. We invite you to join our team and explore opportunities to volunteer or learn more about how we can all take action to ensure a future where every individual feels safe, valued, and heard.

Marisa Heluk, M. Ed.
ADV Division Director

Threads of Pride: Weaving Together History, Activism, and Community

In honor of Pride History Month, ADV celebrated the LGBTQ+ community's history in Bergen County with an educational exhibit. It showcased a visual timeline of significant milestones from activists and groups that influenced LGBTQ+ services. Visitors contributed messages of solidarity on a tapestry and took photos.



OCTOBER 2024 IN REVIEW 9TH EDITION HIGHLIGHTS

- ◆ [When Multiple Forms of Violence Intersect](#)
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WHEN MULTIPLE FORMS OF VIOLENCE INTERSECT

Domestic violence impacts individuals differently, with survivors from marginalized identities facing compounded harm and trauma. Intersectionality, a concept introduced by Kimberlé Crenshaw, explains how overlapping social identities—such as race, gender, and socioeconomic status—interact to shape unique experiences of oppression.

An intersectional framework is essential for effective, survivor-centered, equity-focused work. It enables practitioners to recognize the diverse realities of survivors, allowing for tailored interventions that address specific needs. For example, a Latina survivor may experience not only violence, but also additional challenges related to cultural stigma and language barriers, complicating her path to safety and recovery.

To create effective services, organizations need to focus on equity by listening to the voices of marginalized survivors and tackling systemic barriers that prevent access to resources. This also means implementing a Coordinated Community Response (CCR) to address abuse, fixing gaps and biases in the current systems. By building stronger, more inclusive support networks that recognize the diverse experiences of all survivors, we can create a better framework for support. This will ensure safety and healing for everyone affected by domestic violence.

EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH

Patrick Lovaglio, LSW

Patrick serves as the Abuse Intervention Program (AIP) Supervisor. With over a decade of experience in domestic violence intervention across various settings in New York and New Jersey—including probation and substance abuse—he is dedicated to advancing innovative models of justice.



At ADV, Patrick expertly leads AIP group sessions and collaborates with mandating entities and treatment providers. He also spearheads community education initiatives focusing on coercive control and offender accountability. He has received training from forensic psychologist Dr. Matthew Campbell and has worked with established models such as Emerge, Duluth, and DAIP. Additionally, he has specialized training in best practices for Coordinated Community Responses.

Inspired by his family and beliefs in equity, he champions healthy relationships. An avid runner and proponent of self-care, Patrick values personal well-being in his efforts to help others.

Patrick holds a Bachelor's degree in English from SUNY Fredonia and a Master's degree in Social Work from Stony Brook University.

SERVICE HIGHLIGHTS/UPDATES

Survivor Services Peer-Led Support Group

Are you looking for a way to continue the work you started in therapy and deepen your healing journey? Our peer-led support group is designed specifically for individuals who have completed counseling programs for domestic violence and are eager to build upon their progress within a network of motivated, empowered survivors.

In this supportive community, the peer-led groups provide a safe and nurturing space where members can connect with others who share similar experiences and goals for the future. The group is organized and run by other survivors who have navigated their journeys of healing, and as survivors themselves, understand the unique challenges and triumphs of the ongoing healing tasks that extend well beyond initial therapy or skill-building.



In fact, the group was formed by survivors in recognition that recovery is not a linear process, and that there are continual layers of growth, reflection, and new experiences that require support and encouragement long after traditional therapy has concluded. Together, the group fosters a culture of acceptance and empowerment, where each member encourages the others to take the next step in their wellness plans.

Group members will engage in rich discussions about topics such as managing triggers, establishing healthy boundaries, practicing effective self-care, and embracing the journey that lies ahead. By building on the foundation laid in therapy, members help each other reinforce the tools and skills acquired during those important sessions. As individuals share experiences and insights, the group creates a collective wisdom that empowers each participant to reclaim their voice and step confidently into their future.

If you're ready to be part of a motivated and engaged group of survivors—where healing is not just an individual journey but a shared experience—we invite you to join a peer-led group or to pass it forward to other survivors in your circle!



How can I get involved or learn more?

To learn more about the peer-led support group, contact ADV's Survivor Services' Clinical Director, Mariah Springer by calling 201-336-7587.

To request a workshop, presentation, or our presence at your next resource fair, complete our [online request form](#) or contact adv@co.bergen.nj.us with any questions.

GETTING INVOLVED

Are you ready to make a difference? Join us in supporting survivors of domestic violence by becoming a volunteer! Your help can provide crucial assistance to survivors calling our hotline or accompany individuals through the court process, showing them that they are not alone. Together, we can empower survivors and help rebuild their lives!

Head over to our [Get Involved page](#) to join our Volunteer Team!



SEEKING PRO-BONO ATTORNEYS!

ADV is actively recruiting volunteer attorneys to partner with us to assist domestic violence victims through our Domestic Violence Legal Advocacy Project (DVLAP).



Our volunteer attorneys receive special training and support in order to assist eligible victims of domestic violence in civil restraining order proceedings.

To learn more or to apply, contact our Legal Director, Elizabeth Ostuni at 201-336-7574 or [APPLY HERE](#).

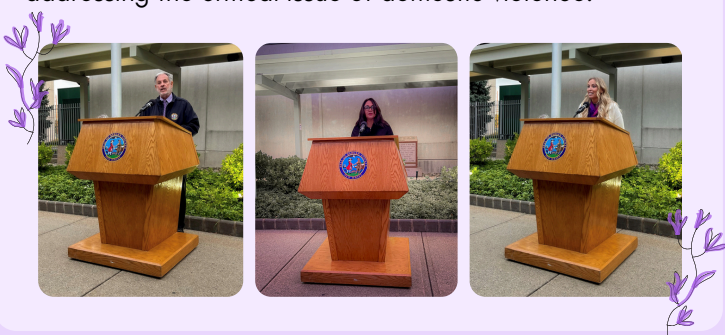
ADV'S ANNUAL WEAR PURPLE DAY CEREMONY

In recognition of Domestic Violence Awareness Month, Bergen County held a poignant Wear Purple Day Ceremony, bringing together community leaders, advocates, and supporters to stand in solidarity with survivors. This year's event theme, "Many Voices, One Mission," honored how diverse survivor individuals face complex barriers to safety depending on their identity, access to resources, or vulnerability to intersecting systems of oppression. It invited advocates and allies to reflect on the types of changes needed in our systems and organizations that can advance fairness, justice, and equity for all survivors.



The ceremony kicked off with impassioned remarks by special guests, including Bergen County Executive James Tedesco, Commissioner Chairwoman Germaine Ortiz, and Bergen County Prosecutor Mark Musella. Their presence, along with folks from key local organizations, Center for Hope and Safety, Women's Rights Information Center, Northeast New Jersey Legal Services, and YWCA Northern New Jersey, truly exemplified the community's unwavering commitment to raising awareness and addressing the critical issue of domestic violence.

This year's call to action stressed the need to understand the complex impact of violence on individuals and communities, particularly those facing compounded trauma from multiple sources. It also emphasized the connection between domestic violence and broader social issues, reminding us that the fight against injustice must address all forms of discrimination and inequality.

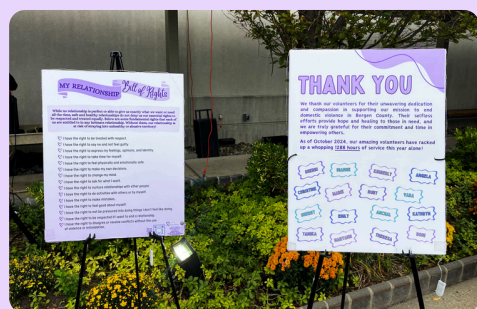


The evening also honored ADV's dedicated team of volunteers, who have put in their time to support survivors and raise awareness. After completing the 40-Hour Training Program for Domestic Violence Victim Advocates, these volunteers offer crisis support through our Domestic Violence Response Team (DVRT), 24-Hour Hotline, and by accompanying survivors to court for restraining order proceedings. Their commitment and perseverance were celebrated, highlighting the crucial role they play in this fight.

Local artist Imani Graham graced the event with a captivating performance of her new single, "Tunnel Vision," delivering a powerful message that meaningful change can emerge through shared resilience and advocacy.



With many resources available for those interested in advocacy, Bergen County continues to foster a community of support, reminding everyone that no one has to face their struggles alone. Together we can all play a part in creating a safer, more supportive environment for all.



RECAP: NJCEDV'S STATEWIDE ANNUAL CONFERENCE

ADV is proud to highlight our involvement in the New Jersey Coalition to End Domestic Violence (NJCEDV)'s recent Statewide Conference, "Audacious Advocacy." The event was an inspiring gathering, bringing together advocates and community leaders committed to ending domestic violence.

Our very own Laura Melendez, LCSW and Sophia Trahagen, MSW, represented us with their impactful presentation titled, "Audacious Resistance Strategies: What Survivors Can Teach Us About Dynamics Resistance, Intentional Adaptation, and Transformative Advocacy in Anti-Violence Movements." This workshop focused on the resilience and wisdom of survivors, emphasizing the importance of empowering their resistance strategies against abuse.

The session explored key themes such as adaptation, consciousness-raising, and interconnectedness in survivors' narratives. It also discussed the significance of adopting decolonized language, implementing conscientious healing practices, and fostering survivor-centered policies to enhance agency support for survivor resistance.

We thank the NJCEDV for organizing such a meaningful event and look forward to continuing our work in advocating for survivors and strengthening our anti-violence movements!



Did you miss it? Laura and Sophia's presentation, "Audacious Resistance Strategies," is coming to Bergen County on January 22, 2025! Go to our [News & Events](#) page for more information.

SURVIVOR RESOURCE SPOTLIGHT



BERGEN COUNTY OFFICE OF FOOD SECURITY

As of August 2020, 1 in every 9 people in Bergen County do not have sufficient access to enough nutritious food; 30% of which are children. Bergen County Office of Food Security is dedicated to spreading awareness about the ongoing levels of need in Bergen County while ensuring that all residents have access to the resources that they need. Office of Food Security supplements food pantries in the county through donations they receive.

The Bergen County Office of Food Security include ensuring households are fed with healthy option, keeping local pantries and food distribution efforts stocked, creating a network amongst the local food providers to increase cooperation, track the levels of food insecurity across Bergen County and connect our food insecure population to a wider array of social services. The Office of Food Security provide multiple resources such as:

- Food Pantry Finder
- Lunch and Learn Series
- Community/ Municipal Gardens
- NJ Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- Special Supplemental Nutrition for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)
- Senior Citizen Lunch
- Farmer's Markets

One Bergen County Plaza, 2nd Floor,
Hackensack, NJ 07601,
(201) 498-9247
<https://bergenfighthunger.org/>
OfficeOfFoodSecurity@co.bergen.nj.us

If you are a Food Provider and in need of supplies, please email OfficeOfFoodSecurity@co.bergen.nj.us or reach out to Patrick Fallon at pfallon@co.bergen.nj.us.

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.



ADV'S OCTOBER PHOTOREEL



The exhibit "Many Voices, One Mission: Domestic Violence Through an Intersectional Lens" showcased the complex nature of abuse affecting individuals across all races, genders, sexualities, abilities, and socioeconomic statuses. Through survivor statistics and a focus on interconnected struggles, it aimed to deepen understanding and encourage support for those impacted by domestic violence.

YOU ARE SAFE WITH ME CAMPAIGN



Laura Melendez, Mariah Springer, Sophia Traphagen, and Patrick Lovaglio paneling a domestic violence symposium at Fairleigh Dickinson University, aimed at educating students on domestic violence and how they can participate in efforts to combat it.



This year, we hosted our first ever **Lunch and Learn Series** for Domestic Violence Awareness Month! Our staff hosted three lively workshops on the topics of domestic violence terminology, teen dating abuse, and the power of bystander intervention. Thank you to everyone who was able to tune in virtually or in-person!



Our team celebrating Pride History Month at Pride at the Zoo! We had an incredible time sharing our resources with everyone who visited our table and engaging in our Pride spirit with sparkly rainbow temporary tattoos!



The ADV PTE team had a blast this month, tabling at various community events to share resources while having fun educating everyone!



New Milford's 6th Annual Domestic Violence Awareness Symposium moderated by New Milford Councilman Matthew Seymour and Guest Speaker Alexis Ruhlen