

COMMON THREADS



In this issue...



January is National Stalking Awareness month



Check out our new Learning Center!



*February is Teen Dating
Violence Awareness Month*



*Watch for **NO MORE** week in March!*



*A big Thank You for a
generous season of giving!*

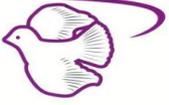
All Are Welcome



Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Services

24 Hour Helpline (814) 274-0240 or Toll free (877) 334-3136





Mission Statement

The mission of *A Way Out* is to assist and support all victims, survivors, and families of domestic violence and sexual assault through ethical, culturally competent, and compassionate services.

We advocate for social change designed to end the cycle of abuse through dedication, community involvement and education.

Thank You!

On behalf of all of us at A Way Out, I would like to thank the many businesses, community members, and volunteers who made the holidays brighter for our clients and their families.

This could not have been done without the continued support and generosity

A Way Out receives from you.

On behalf of everyone from A Way Out, we would like to wish you a very peaceful and prosperous New Year!!

David Hyde

Executive Director

Happy Holidays!



January is National Stalking Awareness Month

According to the National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey, stalking is common. 1 in 6 women and 1 in 17 men have experienced stalking in their lifetime. Like many types of abuse and violence, stalking is often perpetrated by someone the victim knows and most frequently by a current or former partner.

Stalking is a crime in Pennsylvania and a serious type of abuse. With current technologies, stalking is now more than direct, in-person encounters. Cyberstalking has become one of the most prevalent types of abuse reported to domestic violence centers across the country.

What is stalking? According to the Stalking Prevention, Awareness, and Resource Center, stalking is a course of conduct directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to feel fear.

Stalkers show up in many places and in many forms:

- Stalkers may show up at your job or school;
- Wait for you at locations they know you frequent;
- Drive by your home or place of employment;
- Frequently call you;
- Will follow you;
- Befriend your family or friends;
- Send gifts or mail;
- Contact your boss or co-workers;
- Break into your home;
- Lurk around your home, school, or place of employment;
- Leave threatening messages for you;
- Tamper with your vehicle.



Through **cyberstalking***, perpetrators may:

- Hack your social media accounts;
- Create fake accounts in an attempt to contact you;
- Threaten to publish photos of you or potentially defamatory information;
- Call, text, message you frequently;
- Change passwords to your accounts;
- Set-up cameras to monitor your activities;
- Track you by GPS through your devices;
- Place undetectable spyware on your devices;
- Publish disparaging remarks about you online;
- Send unsolicited pornography



** domesticshelters.org indicates that children and young people under the age of 25 who are victims of **cyberstalking** or **cyber harassment** are more than twice as likely to self-harm and enact suicidal behaviors.*

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO DEFEND YOURSELF AGAINST STALKING

If you are being threatened or are fearful, **call 911 immediately**.

Tell the individual ONCE (through a safe platform) that you don't want to see them or be contacted by them. Indicate that you will contact law enforcement if any future contact is made;

BLOCK the individual on all social media, texting and messaging platforms, phones, etc. Download the **TECH SAFETY** app from your app store. This app contains information that can help someone identify technology-facilitated harassment, stalking, or abuse and includes tips on what can be done. **AVOID SOCIAL MEDIA** or stay off altogether. If you share, be careful what you share on social media where friends of the stalker may be able to track your activities;

DO NOT respond to messages or communicate through a third party such as the stalker's friends or family; Let your children know that they are not to talk to or interact with the individual and to seek help immediately if the individual approaches them or contacts them;

KEEP A WRITTEN RECORD of every time the individual contacts you including date, time of day, how they contacted you and what they said. Save or screen shot any telephone or electronic communications. This may be considered as evidence in legal proceedings. (Find a stalking incident behavior log at: www.stalkingawareness.com).

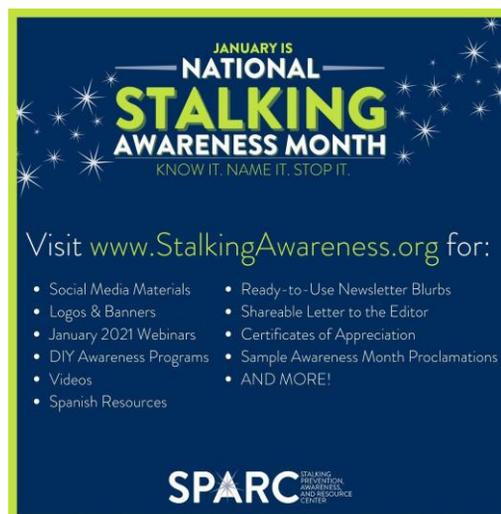
FILE A POLICE REPORT, every time the individual contacts you, even if it seems like they aren't doing anything about it. The police report creates an official record that can be used as evidence in legal proceedings.

TELL YOUR FRIENDS, FAMILY, EMPLOYER, NEIGHBORS, etc., that you are being stalked or harassed and provide a picture or physical description of the individual; Ask your employer to assign someone to walk you to and from your car or ask for a parking space that is well-lit and close to the entrance/exit.

- Trust your instincts;
- Be aware of your surroundings;
- Keep your cell phone charged and with you at all times;
- Change your passwords frequently;
- If the stalking is online – report it to the site administrator;
- Changing your normal driving routes and/or times of travel;
- Install extra lighting or a security system at your home;
- Keep windows and doors locked, and curtains closed;

If the individual is a family member or a current or past intimate partner, contact **A Way Out** about filing a **Protection From Abuse (PFA)** order.

A Way Out provides domestic violence and sexual assault services in Potter County and can assist you in filing a PFA. They can also assist you with resources and support.





A Way Out welcomes our new Legal Advocate, ***Chelle Wilhelm***. Chelle joined the team in September and lives here in Potter County with her husband and children.

Chelle has spent the last 25 years as a curriculum-based childcare provider. She is an active volunteer in many community organizations and is always happy to lend-a-hand.

Chelle is looking to grow her advocacy skills in the fields of domestic violence and sexual assault and to provide victims, survivors, and their families with legal advocacy and other services to help on their journey.

Launching in January...

A Way Out's Learning Center!

In mid January, we will be adding a new page to our website at www.myawayout.org that will offer online courses for the public and for our partner organizations.

These short courses are designed to provide a basic understanding of topics that can help individuals make decisions about their welfare and that of their family. For example:

- **Custody 101**
- **Divorce 101**
- **Protection From Abuse 101**

We will also be offering ~~KNOWLEDGE~~ **KNOWLEDGE** ~~NETS~~ **NETS**. These will be short “mini-courses” offered for our partners throughout the county.

New courses will be added as they are developed and requested. If there's a topic you would like to suggest, we would love to hear from you! Feel free to give us a call at 814-274-0368, message us via our Facebook page or email your ideas to awayoutlucinda@gmail.com.

Be sure to check out the website each month for “**What's Up This Month**” activities as well as the links on the “**SURVIVOR ONLINE SUPPORT**” page.

February is National Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month

We strongly encourage you to help the teens in your life understand the difference in healthy vs. unhealthy relationships.

A healthy relationship is a relationship that feels safe, both physically and emotionally. The following is what a healthy relationship should look and feel like.

Supportive: Helping your partner with a problem/challenge without judgment and possibly offering assistance.

Mutual respect: Treating each other in a way that is caring, thoughtful, kind and understanding.

Respecting Boundaries: Limits around how we want our partner to behave with us.

Empathizing: Imagining how your partner may be feeling in a situation.

Communication: Sharing ideas and feelings with one another

Taking responsibility: Owning one's own behavior and actions.

Understanding Non-verbal communication: Messages expressed through body language, tone of voice, facial expressions and gestures.

Consent: A mutual agreement between two people.

Trust: The ability to rely on your partner by having the confidence that they will not hurt you or violate you or your personal boundaries.

Equality: Each person in your relationship should be treated fairly by both parties respecting each others interests and desires

Unhealthy relationship: A relationship which one or more people treat another person (or other people) in disrespectful ways.

Red flags of an unhealthy relationship may include:

- Excessive jealousy or insecurity;
- Invasions of your privacy;
- Unexpected bouts of anger or rage;
- Unusual moodiness;
- Pressuring a partner into unwanted sexual activity;
- Blaming you for problems in the relationship and not taking any responsibility for the same;
- Controlling tendencies;
- Explosive temper;
- Preventing you from going out with or talking to other people;
- Constantly monitoring your whereabouts and checking in to see what you are doing and who you are with;
- Falsely accusing you of things;
- Vandalizing or ruining your personal property;
- Taunting or bullying; or
- Threatening or causing physical violence.

If you or someone you know is in an unhealthy relationship, seek guidance from a safe, trusted adult.

Believe the victim and acknowledge their feelings. Let them know they are not alone.

Make a safety plan to escape if need be.

Don't gossip about the victim, talk to them in private and only share their story if they give you permission.

Let the victim make their own decision when they are ready.

Click the link to the right to see if you're in a healthy relationship by taking a short quiz >>>>>



Healthy_Relationship_Quiz.pdf

1:3

HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS ARE ABUSED BY THEIR PARTNER

Thank you to all who are supporting our work through your donations!



Pictured are Jennifer Rossman, Sexual Assault Counselor from A Way Out with 4-H Showstoppers youth members. (Photo by Sheila Gabreski)

A Way Out was honored to be the agency chosen by the **Potter County 4-H Showstoppers** to receive donations this holiday season. Members donated personal items such as toothbrushes, toothpaste, deodorant, shampoo and conditioner along with diapers, baby food, and cleaning supplies.

We also received donations from **Howard Hannah Realty Pioneers**, as well as customers of the **Dollar General** stores in Potter County who donated lots of new toys for our clients' children that were distributed during the holidays.

We also send a big **THANK YOU** to all of the members of our community who have given so generously this year. Many local businesses hosted our donation jars and put up Honor/Memory Butterflies in their businesses for Domestic Violence Awareness Month. We are also grateful to the Potter County Commissioners for designating October as DVA Month.

A Way Out assists individuals and families that may have to flee their homes due to →

DONATIONS (continued)

domestic violence. We provide safe shelter and assistance in finding safe housing.

A Way Out, through public donations such as these, provides items that clients may need during very difficult times.

If you, or a group you are associated with would like to make a donation to ***A Way Out***, please let us know. Our donation "wish list" is always changing but the following items are always needed:

- New socks
- Deodorant (male and female)
- Shampoo and Conditioner
- Baby shampoo, diapers, baby wipes
- Disinfecting wipes
- Household cleaning supplies
- Laundry detergent – small containers or pods
- Toothpaste and mouthwash
- Frozen or other microwaveable meals (for example, ramen noodles or cup o' soup)
- Canned fruits and vegetables
- Paper goods –TP, paper towels, tissues

For more information, call us at 814-274-0368.

COMING IN MARCH...

NO MORE

STAY TUNED for more information and activities to support ***NO MORE Week***, held annually in March.

NO MORE is dedicated to ending domestic violence and sexual assault by increasing awareness, inspiring action and fueling cultural change." Last year's activities included a week-long 5k to raise awareness and stand up to domestic violence and sexual assault.

Visit www.NOMORE.org for more information and resources.

FOOD BANKS:



Coudersport / Alliance Church, – 7 Alliance Ave, every Tues & Thurs, 10:30am – 1:30pm, 814-274-8661

Austin / Austin Fire Hall, 42 W Main St, every 3rd Tues, Check Austin Food Pantry FB page for time(s), 814-647-8562

Roulette / Firehall, Times TBD monthly, 814-544-7365

Ulysses / Zion Christian Assembly, 4th Thursday, 10-11am. 814-848-7407

Galeton / St. Paul Lutheran Church, 4th Friday, 10-11am. 814-435-2471

Shinglehouse / Methodist Church, 4th Saturday, 9-10am. 814-698-2144

AA MEETINGS:

TUESDAY 8pm @ Christ Episcopal Church, Coudersport

WEDNESDAY Noon @ St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Coudersport and
8 pm @ St. Eulalia's Catholic Church, Coudersport

THURSDAY *AL-ANON*, 6-7pm @ First Presbyterian Church,
Coudersport AA, 7pm @ Park United Methodist
Church, Coudersport

FRIDAY 8pm @ St. Augustine Rectory, Austin and
Noon @ First Presbyterian Church, Coudersport

SATURDAY 8pm @ Galeton Presbyterian Church

A WAY OUT



Be sure to LIKE us on Facebook and watch for upcoming events and fundraisers!



Did you know... we manage the **FREE Child Car Safety Seat Program?**



Just call and let us know the **age/weight** of the child or children that require car seats.

Then we will schedule a time for you to view the 30 minute safety video and pick up your car seat(s).

Closed Office Holidays :

January 3rd – New Years

January 17th – Martin Luther King Jr. Day

February 21st – Presidents Day

April 15th – Good Friday

May 30th – Memorial Day

July 4th – Independence Day

September 5th – Labor Day

November 11th – Veterans Day

November 24th and 25th – for Thanksgiving

December 23rd and 26th – for Christmas

December 30th and January 2nd 2023 – for New Years

If you need assistance outside of regular business hours or on a holiday, you can call the 24 hour Helpline at 814-274-0240 or toll free at 1-877-334-3136.