



CASA News

Citizens Assisting and Sheltering the Abused
301.739.4990 • 24 Hour Hotline: 301.739.8975 (301.739.1012 TTY)

Spring/Summer 2018



Embrace Your Voice! Sexual Assault Awareness

1 in 2 women have experienced some type of sexual violence other than rape in their lifetime.

Sexual violence is any type of unwanted sexual contact - including sexual assault and rape. Anyone can experience sexual violence including children, teens, adults and seniors. People who sexually abuse can be family members, friends, romantic partners or other trusted individuals. They may use coercion, manipulation, threats, or force to commit sexual violence.

Victims are never to blame.

Sexual violence thrives when it is not taken seriously and victim blaming goes unchecked. Your voice is essential in setting the record straight on sexual violence. So, **Embrace Your Voice!** Don't wait for a critical moment to say the right things. The words you choose every day communicate your values. When you hear comments that blame victims or make light of sexual violence, speak up so others know you don't agree. Even if you don't have a perfect response, this shows you do not believe in stereotypes, you believe survivors, and you're a safe person to talk to. You can become an agent of change.

NSVRC.ORG

Here are some ways you can make a difference:

1. Speak up when you hear someone engaging in victim blaming.
2. Stay informed about local legislation that impacts survivors.
3. Make a donation to support survivors and help prevent future sexual violence.



2018 Legislative Priorities

Rape Survivor Family Protection Act-HB1/SB2

Current law gives rapists who cause a child to be conceived the same rights as other biological parents. Additionally, if a rapist-parent cannot be located, current law requires that the victim's name be published in the newspaper. Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault continues to support legislation to limit the parental rights of rapists when the child was conceived through rape and to increase protections for rape survivors who have a child conceived through rape.

Access to HIV Prophylaxis for Rape and Child Sexual Abuse Survivors-HB639/SB731

Maryland currently pays for medical expenses of sexual assault survivors related to the assault, but refuses reimbursement for HIV prophylaxis after the first packet of medication. This creates significant barriers for survivors.

#MeTooMaryland- Sexual Harassment- Waiver of Rights- SB1010/HB1596

Prohibiting employers from requiring employees to waive substantive or procedural rights addressing sexual harassment and making such agreements void as against public policy. Requiring larger employers to report sexual harassment settlements and the number of repeat offenders.

Middle and High School Students- Education About Boundaries and Consent- HB251/SB402

Providing age appropriate education to middle and high school students about the importance of obtaining consent before touching someone else.

mcasa.org

For more information visit NSVRC.ORG and mcasa.org.

To make a donation:

To make a donation to CASA, Inc. to help support services to victims of sexual and domestic violence you can use the enclosed envelope or send a check to CASA, Inc., 116 W. Baltimore Street, Hagerstown, MD 21740 or make a donation online using PayPal at: www.casainc.org (click **Get Involved**).



Like our Facebook page for up to date information on ways to support our agency, news and articles relating to domestic violence and sexual assault, and upcoming events. Find us at www.facebook.com/casawashco.

SURVIVOR'S INPUT

An Open Letter To My Sisters:

I was involved in a relationship-no, wait a minute— an abusive situation in which he strove to ridicule, degrade, strip me of any and all of my dignity. And I took it. Accepted it. Made excuses to justify his damnation of myself. By doing this, my inner...outer...other self took over and I no longer knew me. This cover-up made my appearance versus reality an accurate description of my life. It became the essence of my existence. The slow suffocation by this man— this beast— prevented me from knowing myself and from knowing a true man.

His actions made me leery of all other men because I believed that they also held fast to being the dominant figure in a relationship. Oh, he played the role all too well. Be nice until you know that she loves you, then demean her beyond belief to stifle her independence. For a self-thinking woman is a threat to his manhood.

Like a zombie I wandered aimlessly. In a daze. Filled with confusion. All hope lost. Until a sister, my sister, rescued me. She told me that my confidence, strong will, and pride of self were characteristics that she once admired. Once admired? Wait! No! Stop! This can not be. How did this happen? How could a woman who once held steadfast to her beliefs....her dreams...allow herself to slowly wither into a helpless, hopeless soul? There had to be a way out of this house with no windows; these rooms with no doors. A hole. A crack. Any opening to set me free so that I may breathe again.

My sister pounded from the outside and she encouraged me to do the same from within. Finally, after months, weeks, days, hours, minutes, and seconds of hard work, a hole took shape. A beam of light came shining through. My first sure sign of hope. And as we continued the opening grew and grew until it was large enough for me to break through.

Ah, such a feeling when I stepped out from under his controlling hands. My sorrows dissipated and the weight of the world was no longer mine. But my first steps towards freedom were taken slowly and feebly for I was not yet sure of myself. Hesitantly, I move toward the light and away from the darkness that had once stolen my spirit. Though I must admit that at times steps were taken backwards, my hopes for a better life saved me from a complete return. I was able to stop in my tracks; regain my self-composure, self-control, and self-confidence to proceed forward with even more vigor.

And now I am strong enough to bare the burdens of my sisters. And so I plead to those of you who are still trapped within those hellish walls to please join me. I reach out my hand to you. Grab hold. Embrace me. And please, do not let go!

*Keeping You Forever In My Prayers,
Survivor*



The Light Within

I have been walking around in a daze
Going through daily in a maze
Getting nowhere; my light within slowly dimming
Treading waters; no longer swimming
Too tired-so tired— I can endure no more.
I must break free. This I know for sure
There has to be a plan so clear and succinct
How can I be free? Think, Self, think.
Develop a plan. It must not be done in haste.
When it is time to execute there will be no time to waste.
You must regain your light within. Do not let it die.
For darkness is the reason why you stay in sadness and cry.

WHY DO WOMEN STAY ?

It is often a question asked by many who hear of a woman in a domestic violence relationship. There are so many reasons why a woman might stay however, it may seem difficult to understand when the danger level would seemingly outweigh any reason. When faced with physical and emotional violence one might think that you just pack up everything and leave. When thinking of the enormity of packing up one's entire life, and possibly children and all of their belongings and moving someplace new it can be very daunting. Overwhelming. The children may be reluctant or even adamant that they don't want to move. There is the issue of attempting to save money to pay for a security deposit and first month's rent. In an abusive relationship, the abusive partner generally controls the finances. So it may be almost impossible to put aside enough money to even pay for the rental application to be approved for a new home. Often it can be a struggle to find help with the physical moving of furniture and belongings. Having someone with a vehicle to transport items, lift heavy items, and be willing to get involved in what could potentially be a dangerous situation may prove to be unmanageable. Many victims have issues with low self-esteem and don't feel comfortable asking for help or think that they don't deserve any help. Moving to a new location doesn't necessarily mean that one is now safe from violence. Even moving a great distance and taking all precautions, there is still the possibility that the abusive partner will find the new address. This is a major concern as abuse can increase in severity when one is attempting to leave or once they have left. When making the decision to leave there are a number of other considerations, including religious and family pressures, loyalty to the relationship, and love for the abusive partner. Turning off feelings for a partner who can be very loving and caring, at times, is not easy. These relationships are not generally abusive all the time and when it is good it is often very good. The abusive partner may lavish the victim with gifts and kindness at times. Abusive relationships are not always physically abusive and may be more emotionally controlling. These relationships are also dangerous and damaging. They may be even harder to leave due to the fact that there is no physical component that may involve police or medical personnel which could be the opening needed to assist a victim wanting to leave. This is only a portion of the concerns one may have when considering leaving an abusive relationship. There may be language barriers, citizenship, disabilities, medical concerns, lack of transportation, and the inability to access services to consider.

Making the decision to leave an abusive relationship is not easy. And so some women stay...for reasons that others may not understand. Our goal is to provide supportive and emotional counseling, safety planning, education and referrals for individuals who are in a domestic violence situation. For assistance in safety planning please visit casainc.org or contact us at 301-739-8975.

UPCOMING EVENT

Please join us for the **13th Annual run, jane, run Golf Tournament** on Monday, June 4, 2018 at the Black Rock Golf Course. Registration opens at 11:30 and the Shotgun Start is at 1 PM. Mulligans and Raffles available. Entry fee includes driving range, greens fee, cart, lunch (by Outback), beverages, dinner (by Rik's Café), awards, and door prize for each player. Please contact our office at 301.739.4990 or JoAnne Papa at 301.991.8839 to register or for more information regarding this event! Come enjoy a fun day of golf and support CASA, Inc. Thank you to our sponsors: Middletown Valley Bank, Rust-oleum, CertainTeed, Hadley Farms, Wright-Gardner Insurance, Capital Women's Care, Twigg Cycles, Funkstown Tavern, Washington County Teacher's Federal Credit Union, Bowman Hospitality, Buffalo Wild Wings, Outback Steakhouse and Rik's Café.



LEGAL UPDATES

SB170/HB388 Criminal Procedure-Violation of Conditions of Release

This bill gives the State an additional tool to enforce court orders related to pre-trial and post-trial release of those charged with criminal offenses. This bill expands the application of this crime to include not only those persons charged with a sexual offense against a minor, but to those persons charged with a crime of violence as defined in the Public Safety Article or a crime against a victim who is a person eligible for relief as defined in the Family Law Article (the Civil Protective Order Statute).

SB491/HB1303 Family Law– Domestic Violence– Permanent Protective Order

This bill modifies Maryland's permanent protective order statute to make it easier for victims of severe domestic violence to remain separated from their abusers.

For more information about the 2018 Legislative Agenda, visit mnadv.org.

Wish List



We are in need of the following items:

Disposable diapers (size 4,5,6)

New sweat pants and shirts (all sizes)

Pre-teen boys pajamas and robes

Inexpensive alarm clocks



Umbrellas

New socks, underwear and flip flops of all sizes

Canned goods (SpaghettiOs, juice, tuna), peanut butter and jelly, other non-perishable food items

Paper products

Twin size sheets, blankets and pillow cases

Gift cards for clothing/grocery/gas



Donate



If you are looking to donate to CASA, Inc., to help victims of domestic violence and sexual assault, there are several options.

- You can use the enclosed envelope and send in a check or money order.

- You can donate online using PayPal at www.casainc.org (click on *Get Involved*)

- During your estate planning and or creating or modifying your will, please keep CASA in mind.

- To find out how CASA can help you turn your highly appreciated assets into a charitable donation to CASA without capital gain tax burden, please call us today at 301.739.4990 or email us at casa5@myactv.net.

A donation of any amount can help someone in need.

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An Equal Opportunity Affirmative Action Employer. CASA, Inc. does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, sex, disabilities, or age in the provision of services.

Let the Healing Begin.

