

PRESS RELEASE

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Friends & Family are First Responders to Domestic Violence

New resource on how to help someone experiencing abuse and how to support teens to have healthy relationships

February 5, 2019 - The Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence (WSCADV) released a new [Friends & Family Guide](#) today to help people support a loved one they are concerned about. WSCADV's research on domestic violence fatalities found that nearly all (92%) of the victims in homicides studied reached out to family and friends for help before their death. Victims turned to these informal support systems earlier and more often than the police (52%) or the courts for a Protection Order (31%).

"Friends and family are often the first line of support for survivors of abuse and their children, especially in communities of color, LGBTQ people, and among immigrants where community support is so important," said Judy Chen, Acting Executive Director of WSCADV. "We often hear that people want to be helpful to their loved ones, but just don't know how." The [Friends & Family Guide](#) is an online resource that covers how to help someone who is experiencing abuse, as well as how to talk to someone who is harming or abusing their partner.

The guide also includes a section on [how to support teens](#) to have healthy relationships. Teen dating violence is [incredibly prevalent](#), and February is Teen Dating Violence Action Month. Nearly 1.5 million high school students nationwide experience physical abuse from a dating partner in a single year. Girls and young women between the ages of 16 and 24 experience the highest rate of intimate partner violence. Only 33% of teens who were in an abusive relationship ever told anyone about the abuse, making evident the need to routinely start the conversation rather than waiting for someone to express a need for help.

"Domestic violence is 100% preventable," said Ilene Stohl, WSCADV's Prevention Coordinator. "We believe that everyone deserves happy, healthy relationships, and routinely talking about expectations is a key strategy for stopping this violence before it starts." The guide includes tips and tools for starting those conversations, as well as resources for teens to call, text, or chat online for support.

About the Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence

Founded in 1990 by survivors of domestic violence and their allies, the Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence (WSCADV) is a non-profit network of nearly 70 domestic violence advocacy programs across the state of Washington. WSCADV improves how communities respond to domestic violence and works to create a world where all people can live and love freely without fear. WSCADV's work includes research, training and technical assistance, producing educational tools, engaging the public to prevent domestic violence, and policy advocacy. To learn more, please visit wscadv.org.

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