

## **TAKE ACTION!**

Want to celebrate the 30<sup>th</sup> Year of Domestic Violence Awareness Month (DVAM) this October? Here are some ideas for you to consider in helping raise awareness about violence against Native women and children in your community.

### **Four Direction Walk**

The Four Direction Walk is a way tribal domestic violence programs and shelters bring together community members. Participants are asked to begin the walk coming from one of four directions—north, south, east and west—to ultimately meet in the center of the town or village. Recruit youth to help create messages on poster boards. Once there a candlelight vigil can be performed along with offerings of stories and prayer. This can be followed by a community feed and give-away.

### **Candlelight Vigil**



Candlelight Vigils are an effective and power way to involve community members and to bring attention to victim's rights and remember victims of domestic violence. Pick a date and location for your vigil, crate a Facebook event page and invite your community, create flyers and post around town and email out. Pick a planning date to buy and assemble materials. There are different ways a vigil can be conducted. One way is similar to a Talking Circle. Everyone is given a candle. The first person to speak lights their candle

before they speak. Participants can speak the names of family members, friends who have died as a result of domestic violence, or who have survived domestic violence or who are still living in violent situations. They can read a woman's story or even tell their own story. When they are finished they will light the candle of the person next to them and so on around the circle. The circle can be closed with a prayer and an invitation to everyone to speak and share in the movement to end domestic violence. A drum or music is appropriate, along with a community feed and/or give-away following the ceremony.

### **Clothesline Project**

The Clothesline Project is a survivor project. It is a clothesline hung with shirts that are decorated by a survivor or by someone who has helped the survivor. The shirts can be different colors and sizes representing people's difference experiences including those of children who are impacted by domestic violence. They can be hung in a public place so to remind others that domestic violence does occur in our community, remember to get permission before you hang them. It is not only a great public awareness activity, but it can also be a healing activity for survivors and the advocates who help them.

### **Walk a Mile in Her Shoes**

Walk a Mile in Her Shoes is based on an old saying, “you can’t really understand another person’s experience until you’ve walked a mile in their shoes.” This activity engages men to walk a mile in a women’s shoes. This activity was created by the International Men's March to Stop Rape, Sexual Assault & Gender Violence and it is a great way for men to raise awareness in their community about the serious causes and effects of men's sexualized violence against women. It is also a great opportunity for men to show their support for domestic violence victims and remind all of us that these victims are our mothers, sisters, daughters, aunts and grandmas. In this activity, men walk a mile in women’s high heels. Another fun version of this can be at a pow wow, where the men dance in high heels. It’s a lot of fun and it gets communities talking about gender relations and violence against women. It’s also a powerful demonstration that men are willing and able to be courageous partners with women in making the world a safer place.

### **Silent Witness Boards**

The Silent Witness display is an exhibit containing life-size purple cutouts of women who have been murdered as a result of domestic violence. You can also print a survivor’s story and attach it to the cutout. They are brought to the forefront of a community event to remind us of the deadly consequences of silence about domestic violence. This exhibit can be moved from location to location, such as council chambers, schools, businesses (such as laundromats and grocery stores), religious institutions, and even powwows, throughout the month of October to bring awareness about the impact of domestic violence on our families and community.

### **Wear purple/purple ribbon**

The color purple and the purple ribbon are a symbol for domestic violence awareness month. Be creative and incorporate the color purple into your community! Past tribal communities have had purple lights at their casino, office staff wear purple, etc.

### **Morning Run**



Wear orange and organize a group for a morning run to greet the sun, on Wednesday, October 25<sup>th</sup>. Follow *UNite to End Violence: Native Women’s Empowerment* group who organize a morning run every 25<sup>th</sup> of the month while wearing orange, using #UNitetoendviolence & #NIWRCStrongHearts on social media.



### **Cup Message**

You will need lots of plastic cups and a chain-link fence in your community that has high traffic of people passing by. Messages you create and be “#DVAM”, “NO To Domestic Violence!”, “Women Are Sacred”, “Healthy NativeLove” or any short message you want. Take it a step further and spell out your message by utilizing your tribal language!

You can also tie purple ribbon on the fence instead of using cups.

### **Sidewalk Chalk**



Involve your youth to help share DVAM statistics or messages or use as a way to announce your DVAM community events! Remember to get permission before using sidewalk locations.

### **USE SOCIAL MEDIA**

Take photos at our pre-planning and community events and use the #DVAM #NativeDAVM and post what you’re up to on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter to raise awareness of domestic violence in your community.

Want help promoting your activities? Send your DVAM event activities to [predcorn@niwrc.org](mailto:predcorn@niwrc.org) and we will post on our social media channels!