FEBRUARY IS TEEN DATING VIOLENCE AWARENESS MONTH
Know the Warning Signs and How to Help

FOR PARENTS

Dating can be a strange transition for teens (and their parents!) About 81% of parents believe that dating abuse is not a problem. However, one in three teens will experience some form of dating abuse by the time they graduate high school.

Start talking with your children, when they’re young, about what healthy, happy relationships look like. Make the most of “teachable moments”. From TV shows to current events, point out which relationships are healthy and which are not, and take a clear stance so your children know how you feel about disrespect. Teach your children how to stand up for themselves and don't wait! Even if they’re not dating yet, start these conversations early and be consistent.

What can you do if you know or suspect your teen is in an unhealthy relationship? The most important thing is something:

- Take the situation seriously. Tell your child you support them and believe them.
- Help them develop a safety plan. However, you must always respect their decision. If you forbid them to see their partner, they may ultimately stay with them and hide it from you, putting them in greater danger.
- Encourage them to seek professional help or counseling or contact your local domestic violence agency.

FOR TEENS

No one is alone — abuse can happen to anyone, regardless of age, race, gender, or sexual orientation. Dating abuse can take many forms, from physical, verbal, emotional, sexual, digital, academic, financial, or any combination of these. Whether you’re looking to help a friend or are questioning your own relationship, always know that there are resources available.

What can you do to help a friend?

- Don’t be afraid to reach out to them. Tell them that you’re concerned about their safety. Focus on your friend, not the abuser, while being supportive and believing them.
- Try to connect them to community resources and counselors.
- Most importantly, always be respectful of your friend’s decisions.

Even when you feel like there is nothing you can do, know that by caring and supporting them, you’re already doing a lot!

If you (or a friend) are leaving an abusive relationship, always remember to never confront the abuser alone. Make a safety plan and identify support systems. Don’t be afraid to ask for help. Everyone deserves to be treated with respect and kindness.
Notes from Nicole’s Place

Happy New Year from Nicole’s Place!

At the end of 2018, we celebrated being open for one year! In our first year, we were able to support fifty new clients, implement a case management program, increase our counselor’s availability to full-time, and add a counseling intern to serve even more people in the community. Our easily-accessed public location in a shopping center allows us to promote a drop-in model where we can provide immediate crisis intervention and support for survivors of domestic violence. We can also answer general inquiries about our work and accept donations for Laurel House’s other programs throughout the county.

Program Highlight: Support Group

Nicole’s Place counselor, Shannon, runs a support group each week, providing clients with an opportunity to share their feelings and experiences with other members. Group can be incredibly validating and is complimentary to the work done in individual sessions. Group members report that they enjoy the sense of community that has been built. The members are friendly, welcoming, nurturing, and challenge each other to grow. (Also, they have chocolate!) If you or someone you know might benefit from this group, please contact Shannon at 267-699-0200 x102.

We look forward to developing new programs and providing support to more individuals and families in our community this year!

Nicole’s Place Staff (L-R) Denise, Samantha, Sarah, and Shannon

Office Hours

Mondays: 10 am – 3 pm
Tuesdays - Saturdays: 10 am – 6 pm
Counseling hours by appointment.

STAFF EXCELLENCE

In November of 2018, Director of Counseling Minna Davis received Pennsylvania Counseling Association's Lifetime Achievement award.

CONGRATULATIONS, MINNA!

Children’s Advocate Melodye Jemmott was honored in October of 2018 by PA’s Education for Children & Youth Experiencing Homelessness as a Regional Homeless Advocate Award recipient.

WAY TO GO, MELODYE!

SPOTTSTOWN PROGRESS

Laurel House’s satellite office in Pottstown is thriving! Former Medical Advocate, Ashley, has transitioned into the role of full-time counselor. We’ve also welcomed master level counseling intern, Shariel! Currently, over 15 clients are actively receiving counseling and/or support group services. Earlier this month, Ashley was invited to attend the Pottstown Business Leader’s Breakfast. She presented to area business and community leaders on the topic of domestic violence and services offered by Laurel House. The presentation was well-received and provided an excellent opportunity for Laurel House to meet members of the Pottstown community!

If you’d like to learn more about our Pottstown office, please call 610-277-1860
HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN A VOLUNTEER?
Since 2017!

FAVORITE VOLUNTEER ACTIVITY?
Helping with child care at the shelter or working events like The Gala, or Walk a Mile in Her Shoes®.

WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR POTENTIAL VOLUNTEERS?
Do you want to give back? Do you want to help people? I would recommend volunteering here. You’ll know you will be having a positive impact on women and their children affected by domestic violence and at Laurel House you always know how appreciated you are.

415+ HOLIDAY GIFTS WERE GIVEN OUT TO KIDS THROUGHOUT DECEMBER
70 FAMILIES RECEIVED GIFTS THROUGH OUR HOLIDAY ADOPT-A-FAMILY PROGRAM
OVER 75 WISH LIST DRIVES WERE ORGANIZED THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

“The abundance of donations that you have provided helped to make this holiday season much brighter for our families. The special holiday gifts for the children and their parents have been distributed, and are much appreciated. The financial contributions and Wish List items you have generously given will help to ensure that we will be able to meet the needs of the people who turn to us for help long after the holidays are over... Thank you.” -Beth Sturman, Executive Director
FIRST YOU WALK THE WALK... THEN YOU TALK THE TALK...

“You can’t really understand another person’s experience until you’ve walked a mile in their shoes.” Walk a Mile in Her Shoes® asks men to literally walk one mile in women’s high-heeled shoes. Not just a great time, it also gets our community talking about something difficult to talk about: domestic violence.

JOIN US ON MAY 4TH AT 10 AM FOR OUR ANNUAL WALK A MILE IN HER SHOES® EVENT IN COLLEGEVILLE. FIND OUT MORE INFO: LAUREL-HOUSE.ORG • SPONSORSHIPS AVAILABLE!

BAGS & BASKETS BINGO

SUNDAY, MARCH 17TH
DOORS OPEN AT NOON • BINGO STARTS AT 1PM

$30 for 20 games SPACE IS LIMITED—REGISTER EARLY!

Black Rock Volunteer Fire Co.
260 Green Tree Road • Oaks, PA

Designer Handbags & Longaberger Baskets
Raffles, 50/50, Door Prizes, and more!

Hosted by the volunteers of
MARIAN’S ATTIC
For more information, please call Marian’s Attic
610-337-3068

NEVER FEEL ALONE AGAIN • 1-800-642-3150
LAUREL HOUSE’S HOTLINE IS AN ENTRY POINT FOR ALL VICTIMS AND SURVIVORS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE WHO ARE SEEKING HELP. WHEN YOU ARE READY TO TALK, WE ARE HERE TO LISTEN. OUR CONFIDENTIAL HOTLINE OPERATES 24/7.

Laurel House is a not-for-profit, tax-exempt, charitable organization as defined under the Internal Revenue Service code section 501c (3). Tax-exemption entity ID: 23-2172743. The official registration and financial information of Laurel House may be obtained from the PA Department of State by calling toll free within Pennsylvania 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.