

September 2021

Men As Survivors



For years Response had been known as “the women’s shelter”, and many people still think of us that way. And while it is true that our shelter is only designed to house women and children, all of our services are available to men as well as women. We offer case management,

court advocacy, support groups, and education services to all in- and out-of-shelter clients, regardless of age or gender. Safe shelter in motels is provided for male survivors. We are working hard to change the perception that domestic and sexual violence only happens to females, because men are often victims, too.

Did you know that 1 in 3 men will experience sexual violence, physical violence, or stalking by an intimate partner in their lifetime? Or that 1 in 6 men are survivors of abusive or unwanted sexual experiences during childhood?

So why do we continue to think of domestic and sexual violence as a women’s issue? Many of the reasons stem from the way that societal norms have formed our views of men and their roles. For instance, we tend to view men as bigger and stronger, more in control than females; men have been socialized to not express their feelings, or to see themselves as victims; sexual aggressiveness is seen as a masculine rather than feminine trait. The stigma and sense of shame for male survivors are huge factors in encouraging men to keep silent about their experiences.

All of these factors, and many more, work together to create roadblocks for men experiencing DV or SV, making it difficult for them to report or even to recognize abuse.

What can we do to help male survivors get the assistance that they deserve and need?

- ◆ **Improve research** - *Focusing on men as survivors helps to inform agencies and communities on the unique needs of male survivors and the most effective interventions.*
- ◆ **Increased education for law enforcement and health professionals** - *Many men fear that their abuse will be minimized by authorities. We need to make sure that all agencies are prepared to take male DV/SV seriously.*
- ◆ **Call out those making jokes or belittling male victims of abuse** - *We can all do our part to help change societal norms by holding accountable those who perpetuate these harmful standards. Gently educate others about the seriousness of male DV/SV abuse.*
- ◆ **Spread the word about our services** - *Help to educate our community members about our services. While our in-shelter housing options for men are not currently equal to those for women, we are investigating possibilities for a better solution. Meanwhile, let others know that all of our other services are available for men as well as women.*

Together we can help to improve services for these often-overlooked survivors and let them know that they are not alone.

Special Dates

- Oct. 2 - 5K—Shenandoah Co. Park 9-11am
- Candlelight Walks 7pm:
- Oct 3 - Strasburg
- Oct 10 - Woodstock
- Oct 17 - Mt Jackson
- Oct 25 - New Market

Current Needs

- Women’s/girl’s pajamas
- Ziploc qt and gal. bags
- Wood furniture polish

Survivor Story

Jim



Twenty years after getting out of an abusive relationship, Jim is still reluctant to tell his story; but he feels that coming forward with his experience will allow other men to recognize and talk about their abuse.

Jim was married quite young to a very bright, engaging woman who displayed signs of mental illness early in their relationship. Although she was never formally diagnosed, those who knew her felt that she exhibited characteristics of either a borderline personality disorder or bipolar disorder.

Jim recounts that as long as he went along with whatever his wife wanted, life was fairly calm, but if he challenged her in any way she became very verbally abusive. As they had children together, he tried to keep the arguing to a minimum, and would refuse to fight back with her; but this just caused her to get angrier to the point where she would hit him in the head and try to strangle him. In an attempt to get away from her physical abuse, Jim would pull away from her, which sometimes caused her to fall; she then would accuse him of abusing her, which became the way she interpreted their arguments.

Jim's wife was a master manipulator, using psychological tactics to keep him off balance and to isolate him from friends. A psychologist later characterized her as someone who naturally knows how to "torture, isolate, and get mind-control over people."

A deeply religious man, Jim took his wedding vows seriously and didn't see divorce as an option, so he learned to just accept his reality as he rode out the storm. It wasn't until his wife finally left that Jim was able to get the professional help that allowed him to recognize the level of abuse and to begin to heal from the trauma.

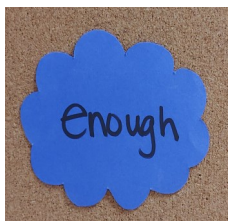
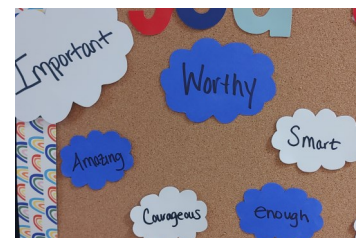
Talking about the huge amount of shame and humiliation that he has dealt with, Jim feels that he has come a long way. But he believes that only when society takes the step of acknowledging the prevalence of male abuse survivors and says, "We're willing to bear some of that burden and we're willing to correct that" can the individual victims really be truly healed.

Around the Shelter

Our August bulletin board



So often our clients who come to stay in our shelter have been beaten down by their abusers, not just physically, but also emotionally. Our August bulletin board sends a message to all of our clients that they are worthy. No matter what has happened to them, no matter what they have been told.



Upcoming Events

Celebration of Hope 5K Run/Walk

It's coming up quickly—our first ever “Celebration of Hope” 5K Run/Walk! By the time you read this, there will only be a few days to purchase tickets at the “Early Bird” price, and Sept 10 is the deadline to get your cool, free t-shirt! So head over to our website to purchase tickets, share the event with friends, or announce our event at any organizations that you belong to!

Place: Shenandoah Co. Park, Maurertown.

Time: Registration 8:15-8:45am, race starts 9am.

Tickets: Early Bird through Sept.3 - \$35/adult, \$25/youth 12 and under. Regular registration - \$45/adult. Day-of registration - \$50. Groups of 10 - \$350 and receive 2 additional tickets free. Registrants who purchase tickets by Sept. 10 will receive a fun t-shirt. Sponsorships are available and will have name/logo placed on the t-shirt.

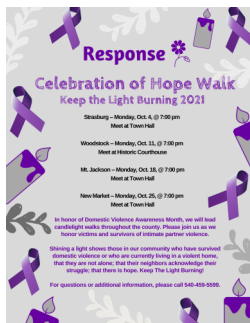
Participants may purchase tickets at <https://www.responseva.org/upcoming-events> or call the office - 540-459-5599.



FOR REGISTRATION AND EVENT DETAILS
VISIT: WWW.RESPONSEVA.ORG
Sponsorships available.
Call Stephanie Good at 540-459-5599 for details.



DVAM Candlelight Walks



Each year we recognize October as Domestic Violence Awareness Month (DVAM), and host a variety of activities to spread awareness of DV. For many years we have held a vigil or walk in Woodstock to honor survivors and victims, but for the past several years we have increased our presence throughout the rest of the county. This year again, we will host candlelight walks in four Shenandoah County towns. All walks begin at **7 pm** and will last approximately 45 minutes.

We would love to increase our reach for these events, so are asking all interested supporters and volunteers to round up some friends and neighbors and come out to one of our walks! Hope to see you there!

Oct 3 - Strasburg - Meet at Town Hall

Oct 10 - Woodstock - Meet at the historic courthouse

Oct 17 - Mt. Jackson - Meet at Town Hall

Oct 25 - New Market - Meet at Town Hall

Adopt-A-Family

Not to rush the holiday season or anything, but we will be gearing up in the next month or so to move forward with our Adopt-A-Family program. Each Christmas we match families who need some help providing gifts for their children with folks who would like to help out with this project. Our sponsors usually range from individuals, to families, to church groups, to organizations... anyone is free to sponsor a family in need! We ask our families to fill out a form that gives specific sizes, favorites, requested items, etc. The sponsor receives that form and is free to purchase whatever they would like to for their matched family. So if you think you are interested, or would like more info, please contact Jenna at 540-459-5599 or jennab@responseva.org