



## March 2026 enCourage Newsletter

Dear Friends and Supporters,

At 2 AM on a Saturday, one of our advocates received a call from a Hastings Police Department officer. A woman — I'll call her M — had just watched her husband be taken to jail after he'd beaten her in front of their children. He was in custody. She was terrified.

When her advocate called, M was already doing the math. The fight had started over money — he'd lied about paying rent, and when she confronted him, he'd become violent. Now she didn't know how she was going to keep a roof over her children's heads. She'd tried leaving twice before and gone back both times. His voice was already in her head: *you can't make it on your own.*

Our advocate's job, starting that night, was to make that voice wrong.

On Monday, M came in, and they got to work — not on one problem, but on all of them. Housing. Legal paperwork. Transportation. Financial independence. Each barrier identified, each one methodically addressed. When a need fell outside what enCourage could provide alone, her advocate reached out to community partners who helped fill the gap.

M had tried to leave twice before. This time, she hasn't gone back.

Leaving an abusive relationship is rarely a single decision. It's a process that fails when the obstacles feel insurmountable — when someone can't pay rent, can't get to work, can't navigate a court system alone. Abuse creates those obstacles deliberately. Our advocates' job is to dismantle them, one by one, so that staying is no longer the only option that makes sense.

That's what this work actually is.

Jo Bair, MSW

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**DISCUSS THE ROLE OF THE  
MEDIA IN SHAPING  
BYSTANDER BEHAVIOR**

**HOW CAN WE COMBAT  
NEGATIVE INFLUENCES?**

 **greendot** 

### Your Words Can Change a Moment

Bystander intervention isn't always physical; it starts with words. Green Dot encourages you to use your voice to prevent harm. Challenging jokes, speaking up in uncomfortable situations, or supporting someone who seems isolated can interrupt harmful patterns. Words can diffuse tension, create accountability, and show others they're not alone. This month, focus on verbal interventions. Practice phrases that are safe, non-confrontational, and clear. Each respectful word can shift a moment from potential harm to safety. By choosing your words carefully and confidently, you reinforce that community members have a responsibility to act and protect one another.

For questions or to schedule a Green Dot Training at your business or organization, email [greendot@encouragecenter.org](mailto:greendot@encouragecenter.org)



### Weather or Climate?

Yesterday, Nebraska had an earthquake.

A 4-point-something. A couple of smaller aftershocks. Many people felt it. Many didn't. Everyone talked about it.

We don't do earthquake drills here. We drill for fire, tornadoes, and — heartbreakingly — active shooters. But not earthquakes. Because earthquakes in Nebraska are anomalies. Strange, disorienting, occasionally scary — but rare enough that we don't build our safety plans around them. We don't anticipate them. We recover, we shake our heads, and we move on.

That distinction matters more than it might seem.

Attachment researchers and domestic violence experts sometimes use the difference between weather and climate to help people understand what they're actually living with. A single storm — even a bad one — is weather. Frightening, damaging, worth taking seriously. But if the skies clear and stay clear, if repair is possible and safety returns, that's different from a place where the storms keep coming. Predictably. Reliably. Not if, but when.

Climate is pattern. Climate is what you can count on happening again.

A relationship where one partner occasionally says something hurtful, recognizes it, repairs it genuinely, and doesn't repeat it — that may be weather. Imperfect, human, worth addressing — but not the same as a relationship where intimidation, control, or violence is the climate. Where the question is never whether another incident will happen, but when. Where the damage accumulates faster than repair is possible. Where safety planning isn't an overreaction — it's a necessity.

If you're trying to figure out whether you're dealing with weather or climate — in your own behavior or in what you're living with — enCourage can help you find clarity. Call us at (402) 463-5860.



- Wanting to volunteer at enCourage? If interested in volunteering, please call 402-463-5810 and ask for Shawna.
- We also always accept donations of clothing, household items, gently used toys, kitchen items, toiletries, size 3 and up diapers, laundry detergent, and unlocked, working cellphones.
- We are currently looking for individuals who would be available to foster pets for survivors fleeing violence. If interested, please call 402-463-5810 and ask for Shawna.



Each Tuesday from 4:30 to 6 pm, enCourage hosts a peer support group. This group provides attendees with an opportunity to connect with other survivors. In this half-hour, we discuss current life happenings and identify ways to help one another. Then we switch gears from 5 - 6 pm into an educational group called Healthy Healing. Through this group, we discuss and practice new skills that help attendees recover and thrive after violence. We discuss what healthy relationships look and feel like. Learn healthy ways to manage obstacles and overcome the insecurities that develop from trauma and end the cycle of violence. Email [jazmin@encouragecenter.org](mailto:jazmin@encouragecenter.org) for questions or to let her know you would like to attend groups.



- Every Tuesday from 4:30 - 6 pm, we offer a Support Group at enCourage Advocacy Center and a Healthy Healing Educational Group from 5 - 6 pm.
- Each month on the 3rd Wednesday of the month from 1 - 3 pm, the Nebraska Aids Project will be at enCourage Advocacy Center providing Free and Confidential HIV and STI Testing. Contact Heather for an appointment by emailing [HeatherB@nap.org](mailto:HeatherB@nap.org). Walk-ins are also welcome.