



August 2026 enCourage Newsletter

Dear Friends and Supporters,

I have a three-month-old boy and a fourteen-year-old boy. This summer, I've found myself thinking about what happens between those two ages, and what we do to boys along the way.

Right now, my baby is held and soothed every time he cries. He is comforted without condition. Somewhere between his age and his brother's, that changes. Boys learn through what we say and what we don't say, through teasing and the quiet withdrawal of affection, that vulnerability is a liability. That real men don't need help.

Research confirms what many of us sense: boys and girls show similar emotional expressiveness in early childhood. By adolescence, boys become significantly less expressive, not because they feel less, but because they've learned that feeling openly is dangerous. Researchers call the rigid set of rules governing "real" manhood the Man Box. Studies across thousands of men find that those who most strongly align with these norms have significantly higher rates of bullying, depression, and perpetrating violence against intimate partners. The Man Box doesn't just harm the people around these men. It harms the men themselves.

So this month, I want to invite you to think about the boys and young men in your life. Tell them you're proud of them for something other than toughness. Sit with them when they're sad without rushing to fix it. Notice when they're kind, or careful, or honest about being scared, and name those things out loud.

Boys deserve more than the box we've built for them.

With hope,

Jo Bair, MSW



**Diversity in
approaches enhances
the effectiveness of
bystander
intervention**



Master the Green Dot Strategies

Green Dot teaches three primary strategies: direct, delegate, and distract. Direct interventions address the behavior, delegate seeks help from someone with authority, and distract redirects the situation safely. This month, review these strategies and practice applying them in hypothetical scenarios. Knowing your options reduces hesitation and increases confidence. Each strategy can be adapted to your comfort level and the situation's risk. By understanding and practicing these methods, you prepare yourself to act safely and

effectively. Remember, prevention isn't passive; your informed intervention can stop harm before it escalates.

For questions or to schedule a Green Dot Training at your business or organization, email greendot@encouragecenter.org



Ten Seconds

Even though my main work at enCourage is facilitating domestic violence intervention programming, I have — like a lot of people — "other duties as assigned." One of those is routine outreach to our broader service area, specifically Nuckolls and Webster counties. (Other staff cover Clay and Adams. Don't worry, we haven't forgotten you.) I make the circuit from Blue Hill to Red Cloud to Superior to Nelson and back, stopping in at businesses and public gathering spaces to tell people, or remind them, that no one is alone and help is available. For a couple of years now I've been tinkering with the elevator pitch, trying to cram the most important information into the fewest possible words. I think I've landed on something pretty good.

If someone is hurting you or you feel scared in your relationship, enCourage can help. Just call or visit. Advocacy services are free and confidential.

I timed myself-ten seconds, spoken clearly, without rushing. What I like about it isn't only that it saves me from rebuilding the pitch at every stop — it's that it's short enough to stick. Memorable, repeatable, portable. Which means you can carry it too, dear reader, and have it when you need it most. And the sad fact is you may well need it. The odds that you or someone close to you will

experience dating or domestic violence, harassment, sexual assault, or stalking somewhere along the way are uncomfortably high. When that moment comes, tunnel vision is typical. It gets very hard to remember that you have friends and allies, resources and support — that you are not alone and that help is available. So I want this lodged somewhere you can find it under pressure. IF hurt or scared, THEN call or visit enCourage. IF hurt or scared, THEN call or visit enCourage.

There's a second version of the pitch, and I don't use it nearly as often as I should. If you're the one people in your house are afraid of, enCourage can help with that too. Ask about Rebuild: same door, same number. Everyone deserves a life free from violence, and getting there means helping people give up the belief that fear is an acceptable tool for getting your way.

Thanks for reading. And remember — IF hurt or scared, THEN call (402) 463-5810._



- 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 4 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 4-5 pm (new time) enCourage hosts a peer support group. This group gives attendees time to connect with other survivors and 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 shawna@encouragecenter.org for questions.



- 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. Walk-ins are also welcome.
- If you are looking for a volunteer opportunity that is flexible and allows you to use your time and talents to support local survivors of violence, then look no further than the enCourage Auxiliary Group. As an Auxiliary member, you'll be an active force for good in our community. Your involvement will include:
 - Organizing and supporting fundraising events that generate critical operating revenue
 - Leading or participating in community drives (hygiene kits, clothing, household goods, gift cards) that directly benefit survivors
 - Engaging your personal and professional networks to grow our donor and volunteer base
 - Collaborating with enCourage staff on strategic initiatives and special projects
 - Attending regular Auxiliary meetings to share ideas, celebrate wins, and plan what's next

You don't need to be an expert in domestic violence or trauma. You just need a willing heart, a generous spirit, and a desire to do something that truly matters. Contact Shawna at 402-463-5810 or shawna@encouragecenter.org to find out more about how to join the enCourage Auxiliary.

Join enCourage Auxiliary

Giving Time, Sharing Talents, Building Hope

