



September 2026 enCourage Newsletter

Dear Friends and Supporters,

We are living through a true crime moment. Podcasts, documentaries, dramatized series — we can't seem to get enough stories about violence, and domestic violence shows up in a lot of them. So most of us know, in the abstract, that it exists. But abstraction plays a quiet trick on us: it lets us imagine domestic violence as something that happens *there*, to *them* — people whose lives look different from ours. It becomes content. Something we consume and then close the laptop on.

Here's what I want to ask of you this October: consider that domestic violence isn't distant. It's happening right here, in Adams, Clay, Nuckolls, and Webster counties, in relationships that look, from the outside, like everyone else's. It's happening to your coworker, your neighbor, someone in your own family. Statistically, it's happening to someone you already know — you may just not know that you know it.

That's not comfortable to sit with. It's easier to believe abuse happens to people unlike us, in situations we'd recognize immediately. The truth is less tidy. Abusive relationships often look ordinary, even enviable, from the outside. The people who cause harm are often well-liked, active in the community. That's not an accident — it's part of how abuse works. It thrives on the assumption that surely not *him*, not *her*, not in *our* community.

Awareness Month asks more of us than sharing a statistic or lighting a building purple. It asks us to let this be close — to notice when a friend seems smaller than they used to be, and to stay curious instead of looking away because it's uncomfortable to imagine violence in a life that looks like ours.

You don't have to imagine domestic violence as somewhere else, someone else, some other kind of family. It's already here. And that means you already have the power to help — by paying attention, by believing survivors, and by knowing enCourage is here, 24 hours a day, for anyone in our community who needs us.

With hope,

Jo Bair, MSW Executive Director



**Consider cultural
nuances in bystander
intervention**

**How can we be
culturally sensitive
while intervening?**



Spot Risk Before It Escalates

Some situations carry higher risks for violence or harm. Green Dot encourages vigilance and preparation. Social gatherings, workplaces, or online interactions can present opportunities for intervention. This month, pay attention to dynamics that may signal elevated risk: excessive aggression, pressure, or coercion. Preparing a plan in advance, knowing who to contact, or thinking of safe distractions can make your intervention more effective. Anticipating risk doesn't mean expecting harm; it means

empowering yourself to act thoughtfully. Your awareness helps protect both yourself and others while reinforcing a culture of safety and accountability.

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



What Am I Not Looking At?

Most people arrive at our group ready to talk about something. Drinking. A diagnosis. A childhood, a deployment, a boss, a judge. How much they've lost and how badly it hurts.

All of it is real. None of it is invented. And every bit of it can be used to avoid the one conversation that actually matters.

So we ask a different question.

When I'm talking about my drinking — what am I not talking about? Recovering from a substance is not the same as recovering from a belief system: the one that told me I was owed obedience, that my anger was someone else's doing, that love and control are the same thing.

When I'm talking about my grief over the relationship I lost — what am I not talking about? Their fear. Their pain. The pieces they're picking up that they didn't break.

When I'm talking about my trauma — what am I not talking about? The trauma I handed down. What my kids learned to listen for.

When I'm talking about my problems at work — what am I not talking about? My problems at home.

None of these is a lie. That's what makes them work. A distraction doesn't have to be false to do its job. It only has to be true enough to hold your attention.

This kind of talk feels like work. It sounds like insight. But it keeps everything exactly as it is — and everything exactly as it is what got you here.

Self-focused is not self-aware. You cannot be self-aware without awareness of your impact on the people around you.

If you're ready to stop avoiding the most important conversation of your life — the conversation about your abuse — Rebuild is where that conversation happens.

Call [\(402\) 463-5810](tel:4024635810) or email dvip@encouragecenter.org to learn about joining a group.



- 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 and pull-ups, 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



- Big G Ace Hardware in Hastings will be offering round up your purchase the entire month of October in honor of Domestic Violence Awareness and Prevention Month.
- 10/5-10/11, Allen's in Hastings will be offering round up your purchase in honor of Domestic Violence Awareness and Prevention Month.
- 10/10, there will be a Candle Making Fundraiser at enCourage Advocacy Center. Find details on the enCourage Facebook page.

- 10/15, is Purple Thursday. Wear Purple to honor victims and support survivors of domestic violence. Purple symbolizes Survival, Courage, and Peace. Post pictures of yourself wearing purple on this day.
- 10/16, What the Dickens? in Downtown Hastings will be hosting a Cookie Decorating Fundraiser with a portion of the event proceeds going to enCourage in honor of DVAPM. More details coming soon!
- 10/19, Coach's Corner will be hosting a Make a Difference Monday Gas Fundraiser for enCourage. \$0.05 per gallon of gas pumped all day long comes back to enCourage.
- 10/20, Texas Roadhouse is hosting a fundraising night for enCourage in honor of DVAPM from 3 - 10 pm on this day. Must mention that you are dining or picking up food for the fundraiser for purchase to qualify.
- 10/25, The Hearts Desire will be holding a Paint and Sip Fundraising Event at Steeple Brewing Co. More details about how to register for this event can be found on our Facebook page. \$10 per registration will be donated to enCourage.
- More events to come for Domestic Violence Awareness and Prevention Month. Watch the enCourage Facebook page and your email for more details.