



DIRECTIONS

DOMESTIC ABUSE/SEXUAL ASSAULT SERVICES

STEP UP AND GET INVOLVED

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Each year Domestic Abuse/ Sexual Assault Services (DASAS), along with many other agencies across the country work to increase awareness on important issues that are affecting our own communities. Since 2001, April has been nationally observed as Sexual Assault Awareness Month. During this time DASAS works to educate communities about the issues while also working to raise funds to help support victims/ survivors of sexual violence. Our biggest fundraiser during April is Denim Days, where local businesses show their support by allowing their employees to wear jeans. In return for wearing jeans employees are asked to make a \$5 donation. Participation varies as employees may wear jeans once a week, as often as they like during the month or just one time during the month all in an effort to raise funds for victims/ survivors in our own communities.

The idea of Denim Days began



in 1997 when an 18 year-old Italian girl was raped by her driving instructor, who was later convicted and sentenced to a term of incarceration. In 1999 the Italian Supreme Court overturned the rape conviction of the driving instructor based upon the evidence that the 18-year old victim had been wearing jeans.

According to the Court, "because the victim wore very, very tight jeans, she had to help the driving instructor remove them, and by removing the jeans it was no longer rape but consensual sex. The women of Italian Parliament were disgusted. They protested the verdict by wearing jeans to work. Since then Denim Days has become a symbol of international protest against rape and sexual assault.

Victims/survivors of sexual violence struggle to come forward and report an assault in fear they will not be believed,

they will be called a liar, a slut, etc. or the accusations directed at them such as - they were drunk, they shouldn't have been out, etc.

We at DASAS ask that you get involved. Show your support by wearing jeans or a teal ribbon during the month of April. Help bring awareness to our communities. Actions speak louder than words. Everyone can help to make a difference. If you already wear jeans to work you can still make a contribution to show your support in taking a stand against sexual violence.

You can use the contribution certificate on page 4 to show your participation and make your individual contribution. We greatly appreciate all the support the community has shown DASAS in the past and we look forward to continuing our work throughout Southwest, Nebraska.

If you have any questions or need additional information please contact an advocate at DASAS at (308) 345-1612.



DASAS MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission is to provide free, confidential and empowering services to victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault and stalking while raising awareness and prevention efforts throughout our communities.

Perceptions on Sexual Violence

Overcoming the stereotypes and labeling of sexual violence has been no easy road. In fact many individuals today still hold the mentality that rape occurs only when a stranger attacks an adult woman using overwhelming force. Accepting this definition results in the idea that children, teens, adult males, etc. can't be raped. It also creates an impression that no one can be raped by someone they know.^[3] Perception of sexual violence has constantly held narrow perspectives on this issue. Victims were only believed to be "real" rape victims only when overpowering force was used and perpetrators were viewed as psychologically disturbed men who preyed on women and children. What we know and understand about sexual assault today is that it discriminates against no one. Victims and perpetrators of sexual assault vary in age, gender, sexual orientation, race, religion, economic status, etc.

Public understanding and acknowledgment that sexual violence was an issue did not occur until the 1960s and 1970s.^[1] Prior to this time the legal definition of rape was generally a common law definition used throughout the United States that defined rape as "A carnal knowledge of a woman not one's wife by force or against her will."^[3] By 1962 the United States Model Penal Code had been developed which defined rape as "A man who has sexual intercourse with a female not his wife is guilty of rape if...he compels her to submit by force or threat of force or threat of imminent death serious bodily injury, extreme pain, or kidnapping."^[4] Although early laws protected women against stranger rape there were many limitations to what defined rape. Laws in early years did not

acknowledge rape within marriages or in co-habiting relationships, it did not address concerns regarding force and consent, and limited the definition of rape to a woman.

"They were asking for it"

Since this time, much progress has been made in reforming laws to better protect victims of sexual violence. The Nebraska State Statute 28-319 defines sexual assault in the first degree as:

(1) Any person who subjects another person to sexual penetration (a) without the consent of the victim, (b) who knew or should have known that the victim was mentally or physically incapable of resisting or appraising the nature of his or her conduct, or (c) when the actor is nineteen years of age or older and the victim is at least twelve but less than sixteen years of age is guilty.

Nebraska State Statute 28-320 defines sexual assault in the second or third degree as:

(1) Any person who subjects another person to sexual contact (a) without consent of the victim, or (b) who knew or should have known that the victim was physically or mentally incapable of resisting or appraising the nature of his or her conduct is guilty.

With much effort and support from men and women across the country laws have reformed to better protect victims of sexual violence. Today the issue has gained additional visibility and acknowledgement across the nation through community awareness efforts. Victims of sexual violence now have the opportunity to reach out and access sup-

port and assistance through direct services from advocates and agencies. What was once expected to be kept silent has now empowered victims to stand up and speak out.

Victim Blaming

A number of organizations across the country have worked to support victims of sexual violence and have educated communities about the impact of such crimes. The issue remains that many individuals do not or chose not to understand the cause of sexual assaults. Sexual assault is not about the uncontrollable sexual urges; it is about power and control over a victim. Too often victims are blamed for the cause of the sexual violence. In many cases victims have been questioned about their whereabouts, actions, behavior, and style of dressing prior to the attack. How often have we heard the phrases "she/he was asking for it" "they were out in a bad neighborhood late at night so what did they expect to happen", "she/he provoked them", "she/he was drunk", and many more.

In having this mindset people think that the victim played a role in being raped. What is important to remember is that it is never the victim's fault for the unwanted and unconsented sexual assault.

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Placing blame on the victim not only makes it difficult for them to come forward and report the abuse^[2], but it also avoids the real problem, holding perpetrators accountable for their actions.

In order to stop these crimes from occurring, we as a community must take a stand and let perpetrators know that these behaviors and actions will not be tolerated.

Sources:

1. McMahan, Sarah. (2011, October). Changing Perceptions of Sexual Violence Over Time. Harrisburg, PA: VAWnet, a project of the National Resource Center on Domestic Violence. Retrieved from: <http://www.vawnet.org>
2. Avoiding Victim Blaming. (2015). Retrieved from <http://stoprelationshipabuse.org/educated/avoiding-victim-blaming/>
3. Kilpatrick, D. (2000). Rape and Sexual Assault. Retrieved from <https://mainweb-v.musc.edu/vawprevention/research/sa.shtml>
4. Sexual Assault in the United States. (2009). Retrieved from <http://www.stopvaw.org/a6200a22-49cf-4680-a01b-e862d23ccfb6>

Supporting Victims of Sexual Assault

Becoming a victim of sexual violence is something we would never wish to happen to a family or friend, but what if it did? Do you understand enough about the issue to help support your friend/family member? Understanding what a victim/survivor goes through and the effects that occur after the assault is important to helping one heal. Even if you do not know or understand what has happened or what the victim/survivor is going through, know who to reach out to in order to find additional resources and information.

As loved ones of those who experience such traumatic events, we can only wish that there was a quick and easy fix to the issue but reality is that healing takes time. Every victim/survivor will be different. They will experience different events and they will handle it in their own ways. What is important to remember is that ***it will take time***.

Be Understanding

While supporting the victim/survivor you may find yourself having a difficult time understanding what has happened and why things are taking so long to progress. This can be an emotional rollercoaster for secondary victims—a parent, friend or partner of a survivor of sexual assault—so ensure that you are able to assist and support the victim/survivor without letting your own

feelings and opinions interfere. Often times family/friends feel at a loss for words or actions. This is okay. Having all the answers is not required. All you need to do is be there and support the victims/survivors. Let them know you believe them and that they are not to blame for the assault.

Effects of Sexual Assault

Going back to a normal life style can be difficult for many victims/survivors of sexual assault. Everyday following the traumatic event victim/survivors are faced with multiple emotions some of which may include¹:

- Self-blame and guilt.
- Being very alert and watchful.
- Humiliation and shame.
- Feeling dirty or contaminated.
- Emotional numbness.
- Nightmares.
- Confusion/loss of memory.
- Flashbacks.
- Having difficulty concentrating.
- Increased fear and anxiety.
- Becoming withdrawn from family, friends, spouses, children, etc.
- Increase in substance abuse to help with the healing process.
- Behaving as if rape did not occur.
- Depression/suicidal.

While most survivors will experience many of these symptoms, some survivors may only experience a few or some may experience none at all. We must be careful not to judge whether someone has been raped by the number of symptoms that they display. Because most survivors are afraid to tell anyone that they have been raped it is often not easy to observe their reaction, or recognize them without the survivor's own account.¹

Recovery

No two victims/survivors of sexual assault will recover in the same manner. Recovery is a slow process that will come with emotional, mental, and physical pain. Do not attempt to rush the time in which a victim/survivor is attempting to heal. Recovery is not a race, and can't be given a set time limit. In helping someone to heal it is important to remember that days may vary. One day the victim/survivor can seem fine and the next they are devastated, angry, numb, etc. Understand that these reactions and behaviors are normal. Recovery doesn't erase the trauma as if it had never happened, it just makes it easier to deal with.

Who To Contact

Advocates are available at DASAS for free and confidential assistance at 345-5534 or 877-345-5534.

Sources:

1. Rape Trauma Syndrome. (2015). Retrieved from <http://rapecrisis.org.za/information-for-survivors/rape-trauma-syndrome/>
2. Post Traumatic Stress Disorder in Rape Survivors. (2014). Retrieved from <http://www.aaets.org/article178.htm>

MEET OUR NEW ADVOCATES!

"Hello! My name is Summer. My family and I have recently located to the McCook area. I am excited to part of this amazing DASAS team. I look forward to serving the people throughout the seven counties DASAS serves.

~Summer
DASAS Community Educator

"My name is Sandy. I joined the team at DASAS in March as the Outreach Advocate. My family and I are rooted in this community and are proud to call it our home. I came to DASAS with experience from the medical and legal fields. I am looking forward to using that experience to make an impact in the lives of the clients I will be working with from McCook and our surrounding areas."

~Sandy
DASAS Outreach Advocate

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

DASAS would like to thank everyone who made a donation to our organization since our last issue. We would also like to thank our anonymous donors. We apologize if we have inadvertently missed anyone.

Bev Smith	First Congregational Women's Fellowship
Lanessa Wickizer	Trinity United Methodist Church of Cambridge
Mark and Linda Graff	Culbertson United Methodist Women
Myrna Harper	Dollar General in Oberlin
McCook Christian Church	United Methodist Church of Indianola
	Alpha Delta Kappa—Education Sorority

Wish List

*Baby Wipes & Diapers—Size 4	Dish Sets	*Cleaning Supplies
*New Pots and Pans	Silverware	Trash Bags— kitchen size
*New Skillets	*Paper Towels	Brooms, Dust pans, Mops,
Pizza Pans	*Toilet Paper	Shower Curtains/Hooks
Cookie Sheets	*Laundry Detergent	Bottled Water
*Cooking Utensils	*Liquid Hand Soap	Copy Paper
Toasters	Ziploc bags	Forever Postage Stamps
Mixers	*Dryer Sheets	Non-Perishable Foods (check expiration dates)

* Items that currently are most in need.

Heartfelt THANKS TO OUR VOLUNTEERS!

Volunteers are just ordinary people with extraordinary hearts.

They offer the gift of their time to teach, to listen, to help, to inspire, to build, to grow, and to learn.

They expect no pay, yet the value of their work knows no limit...

They've known the unexpected joy of a simple hug.

They've planted tiny seeds of love in countless lives.

Volunteers are just ordinary people who reach out and take a hand and together make a difference that lasts a lifetime.



DENIM DAYS

CONTRIBUTION CERTIFICATE

My donation of \$ _____ is enclosed.

Name: _____

Organization: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____



DASAS is a 501(C)(3) nonprofit organization. Donations are tax deductible.

Thank you for your support!!

Check here if you DO NOT want your name to appear in the Newsletter.

Please return this certificate and your contribution to DASAS at P.O. Box 714, McCook, NE 69001.

GO GREEN & HELP US SAVE!

During these tough economic times we are making every effort to conserve. For those of you that utilize email, we are asking that you supply us with your email address so we can send you an electronic copy of our newsletter. This will help the environment by reducing the amount of paper used as well as assist us in lowering both our printing and postage costs. Just send an email to das@dasas.net with the subject line of "Newsletter" and we will get you added to the email list. Thank you for helping us GO GREEN!



Child Abuse Prevention: How can you help?

As we look at the children among our communities we see the future. What has grown to become a concern is the safety and wellness of children. Every year more than 3 million reports of child abuse are made in the United States. When children are abused or neglected they are in a constant state of stress which can have a negative impact on how those children develop. Children need a nurturing environment with supportive relations and interaction in order to thrive.¹ If we expect our children to create a great future parents must first produce a community where the children have the opportunity to grow into contributing, caring, and healthy adults.

Child abuse, like any other violent crimes, is not the fault of the individuals, nor is it their sole issue. Abuse is a community problem that must be addressed by the community to stop such actions from occurring. Children need a voice to stand up for them and say that child abuse will not be accepted in our communities. The month of April has been dedicated to raising awareness on child abuse. Though this is a great time to learn more about the issue, it is also important to remember that child abuse is not only limited to the month of April. As a community we must constantly work together to ensure the healthy development of children in our towns.



What can you do?²



Neighbors:

- Compliment a parent—even if it is someone you don't know—when you see something positive they are doing with their children. Children can be a challenge at times and a small compliment can help parents know that they are doing a good job.
- Offer to babysit for the child of a friend, family member, or neighbor. All parents need help sometimes — even if it is just to rest or “recharge” for an hour or two.
- Mentor a young parent you may know in developing and growing their relationship with their children.



Community:

- Do volunteer work for a youth or family service organization in your community. Some families just need a little help from time to time, and community organizations are designed to do just that.
- Introduce yourself to your neighbors. Caring and connected neighborhoods can be powerful in reducing neighborhood violence and supporting struggling parents.
- Create a “Safe Children Zone” in your neighborhood. Host a community meeting with your neighbors to talk about what each of you can do to help create a sense of safety for the children in your neighborhood.
- Ask organizations in your community about donations — even small ones — that can help support families in need. Some families need help providing for their children's basic needs.



- **If you have reason to believe a child may be at risk of harm in their home, call the child abuse hotline (1-800-652-1999 available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.). Anyone who is worried about the well-being of a child can call to report their concerns.**

Whether you are a parent, teacher, coach, neighbor, or family member, you can help. Caring adults can support the healthy growth and development of children who have experienced abuse by trusting them and helping them recognize it's not their fault.³ Hearing about a child's experience is not easy. If you are an adult who has been trusted by a child to share their story it is important that you stay calm and listen. It is also crucial that you:⁴

- Believe what the child is telling you.
- Do not pressure the child for more information.
- Reassure the child that he or she did nothing wrong. Abuse is never a child's fault.
- Remember that the people who harm children are often people whom children love.
- Avoid negative comments. Encourage the child, saying that he or she did the right thing by telling and that it was brave to tell.”

If you suspect that a child is being abused please do not hesitate to help them. For more information please contact an advocate at DASAS at 345-5534 or 877-345-5534.

Sources:

1. Recognize Child Abuse Prevention Month. (2015). Retrieved from <http://www.preventchildabusenc.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=cms.page&id=1041>
2. Child Abuse Prevention Month. (2013). Retrieved from <http://www.americanhumane.org/children/programs/child-abuse-neglect-prevention/child-abuse-prevention-month.html>
3. Schafer, K. (2014). April is both National Child Abuse Prevention Month and Sexual Assault Awareness Month. Retrieved from <http://www.ed.gov/blog/2014/04/april-is-both-national-child-abuse-prevention-month-and-sexual-assault-awareness-month/>

**DOMESTIC ABUSE SEXUAL
ASSAULT SERVICES**

407 W. 5th Street
P.O. Box 714
McCook, NE 69001

Business Phone: (308) 345-1612
24 Hr. Crisis Line: 345-5534
or 1-877-345-5534
www.dasas.net

PEACE IN THE WORLD...



...BEGINS AT HOME

DASAS Staff

Donna Goad — Executive Director,
Email: dgoad@dasas.net

Kathy— Office Manager/Victim Advocate,
Email: das@dasas.net

Nyssa—Criminal Justice Advocate,
Email: nyssa@dasas.net

Summer — Community Educator

Sandy—Community Outreach

DASAS Board of Directors

Geraldine Brown—President

Cathy McDowell—Vice President

Peg Smith—Secretary/ Treasurer

Karen Van Kooten-Wall

Pat Weskamp

Peg Smalley

Tracy Flaska

Help is available 24 hours a day!

All services are free and confidential!

- * 24-Hour Crisis Line
- * Crisis Support
- * Medical Advocacy
- * Economic Advocacy
- * Legal Advocacy
- * Emergency Shelter & Food
- * Emergency Transportation
- * Community Education/
Prevention Programs
- * Information & Referrals

**For services in Chase, Dundy, Frontier, Furnas, Hayes,
Hitchcock and Red Willow counties**

**Call: 345-5534 or
877-345-5534**