

The HOPE Connection

~a quarterly publication from Hands of Hope Resource Center
~SUMMER 2022~



A message from the director ~

Hands of Hope Resource Center is excited to announce that we are one of 15 recipients of the Transformative Funding for Nonprofits program which is a collaboration between the Initiative Foundation and Otto Bremer Trust. This grant will allow us to hire and train a bilingual, Spanish-speaking advocate for our Long Prairie office who will assist in providing advocacy services and outreach to our growing Spanish-speaking community.

An additional grant through the Minnesota Department of Public Safety Office of Justice Programs will allow us to be able to assist victims with their out of pocket expenses associated with mental health counseling as well as immediate safety needs.

Staff advocates within each office are trained to thoroughly screen individuals for their circumstances and offer a wide array of services depending on a victim's individual, self-determined needs. If you or someone you know or work with are in need of services, please direct them to one of our two offices.

Wishing you a safe and fun-filled summer,

~ *Stephanie Och*

988 Mental Health Crisis Number to Launch July 16, 2022

by Barb Goodrich

Millions of mental health crisis calls are made every year to 911 and local crisis lines. Most communities have no option other than a law enforcement response. According to the Washington Post, 1 in 4 people who were shot and killed by police between 2015-2020 had a mental illness, and of that number, 1 in 3 were people of color. Sixty-two percent of the respondents said they would be afraid law enforcement might hurt a loved one while responding to a mental health crisis, while 46% would not feel safe calling 911 if a loved one had a mental health crisis.

With Americans deeply dissatisfied with the current state of mental health treatment, the National Alliance on Mental Health (NAMI) is launching a new nationwide three-digit number for mental health crisis and suicide prevention – 988. By creating and funding this 988 crisis response system – an alternative to 911 for mental health crisis – people in crisis can get the right care when they need it most.



The 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline will provide support for anyone experiencing mental health-related distress – whether it's thoughts of suicide, mental health or substance abuse crisis, or any other kind of emotional distress. 988 calls will be answered at 24/7 Crisis Call Center Hubs by providers trained in responding to behavioral health crises.

The 988 lifeline will be available nationwide on July 16, 2022.



Burglary/Break-in Prevention: What can folks do to keep themselves safer? *by Johanna Klinkner*

Something easy that you can do is to lock your doors and windows at night and when you're not home. Keep in mind that burglaries/break-ins can and do also happen during the day.

Make sure there are locks on your doors and windows, and if you do not have dead bolts look to getting them installed. If you're a renter, talk to your landlord first. You can use longer screws in the strike plates as this makes it harder for someone to break them. If you have sliding glass doors, a door jam or a simple 2x4 works great to prevent someone from opening them. If you have a fence, put a lock on that as well.

Don't make vacations obvious. Don't announce on social media that you'll be gone. Request that your mail be held at the post office, and have a trusted person stop in and check on your home, mow your lawn, shovel snow, or put trash out. You can undo the power to the garage door opener and padlock it. Some universal remotes can open other garage doors. When you're going to be gone for a period of time you can also let your local law enforcement agency know and ask if they can do a little extra patrol around your home.

If you can, leave lights, music or a TV on when you're not home, as this can also be a deterrent.

Keep valuables out of sight from passers-by. With your vehicles, keep valuables out of sight, roll the windows up and lock your doors.

With technology being so huge now a days, many are choosing to add security cameras to their homes, both inside and outside. This can be very useful, but if you choose this option, please make sure to research these items. Some systems can easily be hacked by criminals, and they can end up watching you in your home. If the system has sound capabilities and it gets hacked, the criminals can hear you as well. It is often the criminals who have the knowledge to hack into these systems.

Remember to securely lock everything and research when looking at purchasing security systems. You may even want to check with your local law enforcement agency to see which systems work best.

Safety Tips for Parents *by Kim Cook*

Every parent wants their children to grow up healthy and strong in the place where they deserve to feel safest: at home. The good news is that there are simple and easy steps that families can take to protect their children.

Preventing Falls

- Use approved safety gates at the tops and bottoms of stairs.
- Keep babies and young kids strapped in when using highchairs, swings, or strollers.
- Install window guards and stops to prevent window falls.

Water Safety

- Actively supervise children in and around water. Avoid any kind of distractions, such as your phone.
- Drain the tub as soon as bath time is over.

Preventing TV and Furniture Tip-overs

- Mount flat screen TVs to the wall to prevent them from falling off stands.
- Use brackets, braces, or wall straps to secure unstable or top-heavy furniture to the wall.

Choking and Strangulation

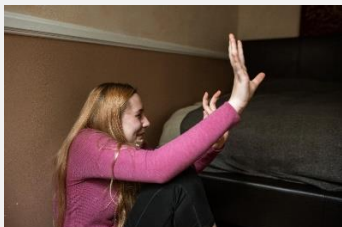
- Keep cords and strings, including those attached to window blinds, out of your child's reach. For your crawlers and climbers, move chairs, cribs, and other furniture away from windows to help prevent window falls.
- Before you've settled on the perfect toy, check to make sure there aren't any small parts or other potential choking hazards.



- Cut food for toddlers into tiny pieces. Children under 5 should not eat small, round, or hard foods, including pieces of hot dogs, cheese sticks or chunks, hard candy, nuts, grapes, marshmallows, or popcorn.

Driveway Safety

- Accompany little kids when they get in and out of a vehicle. Hold their hand while walking near moving vehicles, in driveways, parking lots or on sidewalks.
- We know you're often in a hurry, but before you get in the car, take a few seconds to walk all the way around your parked car to check for children.
- Designate a safe spot for children to wait when nearby vehicles are about to move and make sure the drivers can see them.



Sexual Assault Prevention by Lyndsey Dimateo

Did you know that every 68 seconds an American is sexually assaulted--every 9 minutes that American is a child--and only 25 out of every 1,000 rapists goes to prison? Sexual violence has decreased by 50% over the last 20 years, however, it is still very prevalent today. 1 in 6 women and 1 in 33 men will experience rape or attempted rape in their lifetime.

Sexual violence does not discriminate. Native American women are 2x more likely to experience sexual violence than any other race. Within the LGBTQIA+ community, transgender and bisexual women face the most risk; 47% of transgender people and 61% of bisexual women are assaulted at some point in their life. And people with disabilities are 3x more likely than nondisabled people to experience serious violent crimes.

While sexual assault can occur at *any* age, younger people are at the greatest risk. Statistically, ages 12-34 are at the greatest risk of experiencing sexual violence. The most unnerving part is that every 8 out of 10 rapes are committed by someone known to the victim. According to RAINN, out of all "sexual abuse cases reported to law enforcement, 93% of juvenile victims knew the perpetrator: 59% were acquaintances, 34% were family members, and 7% were strangers to the victim."

Knowledge is power! Knowing ways to keep yourself safe can reduce the risk of ever experiencing sexual violence. The biggest thing is to trust your gut! If something feels off or you're feeling uneasy, you are most likely right. If you ever feel uncomfortable or threatened, get out of that situation immediately. Make up any excuse, if needed, to get out of there. Fake a phone call or text a friend to call you and pretend there is an emergency, and you need to leave. If for whatever reason your judgement was off, you can explain later. It is always better to be safe than sorry. It is always important to communicate your limits early and discuss what consent looks like for you. Let your friends, partners, acquaintances, etc. know your boundaries. Be assertive and direct by telling someone what you do and don't want. Stay firm and do not allow anyone to violate your boundaries.

Try to avoid hazardous situations. Use the buddy system. Never walk alone. If you are alone, do not have headphones in or be distracted by looking at your phone. Being distracted increases your risk and is prime time for someone to attack and catch you off guard. Be aware of your surroundings, and again, trust your instincts! If you're feeling uneasy or uncomfortable, trust that feeling. If you are walking alone and feel alarmed, make noise. Set off the alarm on your car, scream or yell loudly, blow a whistle, anything to draw attention to yourself. Loud noises and drawing attention to yourself will reduce the risk of someone attacking in that moment. If you are alone in a crowd and are being pursued by someone or someone is making you uncomfortable, find someone or a group of people to pretend to be your friends/family or walk you to safety.

If you are going out and consuming alcohol, never go alone. Or, if you are at home drinking, it is better to be in a group than one on one with someone. Keep a close eye on your drink, have it covered, and never look away. It only takes seconds for someone to spike a drink, alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages. Have a plan of action before consuming alcohol—what is your cut off number of drinks for the night, how will you get home, who will you be leaving with, who is your emergency contact person, inform someone of your plans/ when you plan to be home and text or call that person when you arrive to your safe location, have a designated driver/sober friend to overlook anything that may be missed while under the influence. Share your location with a trusted friend or family member in case anything was to ever go wrong.

Fighting back and making it difficult for the attacker may decrease the chances of their assault being successful. Be loud and draw attention to the situation. Scratch, bite, put your saliva on them, obtain pieces of their hair, leave your hair behind on them, etc. Having DNA evidence can increase the likelihood of holding a perpetrator accountable. By scratching, their DNA will be under your fingernails. After an assault or attempted assault, do not shower or rinse the DNA off. Report it to police and/or go to the hospital for testing.

Tips to keep yourself safe in different settings:

AT HOME

- Make sure all windows and doors in your home can be locked securely, particularly sliding glass doors. Use the locks. Keep entrances well lighted.
- Check the identification of any sales or service person before letting them in.
- If you live in an apartment, avoid being in the laundry room or garage by yourself, especially at night.
- If you come home alone and find a door or window open or signs of forced entry, don't go in. Go to the nearest phone and call the police.

WHILE WALKING

- Be alert to your surroundings and the people around you.
- Stay in well-lighted areas as much as possible.
- Walk confidently at a steady pace on the side of the street facing traffic.
- Walk close to the curb. Avoid doorways, bushes, and alleys.
- If you are in trouble, attract help any way you can. Scream, yell for help, or yell "Fire!"
- If you feel you're being followed, walk into a store or knock on a house door.

WHILE DRIVING

- Keep your car in good working order and the gas tank at least half full.
- Park in well-lighted areas and lock the doors, even if you'll only be gone a short time.
- When you return to your car, have the key ready and check the front and rear seats and floor before getting in.
- Drive with all the doors locked.
- Never pick up hitchhikers.
- If you have a flat tire, drive on it until you reach a safe well-lighted and well-traveled area.
- Exercise extra caution when using underground and enclosed parking garages. Try not to go alone.
- If you are being followed, don't drive home. Go to the nearest police or fire station and honk your horn. Or drive to an open gas station or other business where you can safely call the police. Don't leave your car unless you are certain you can get inside the building safely. Try to obtain the license plate number and description of the car following you.

Sexual violence can occur in any situation and it's important to know that it is never your fault. There are many other tips and ways to keep yourself safe that were not discussed in this article. Do your research and have a safety plan that best suits you.

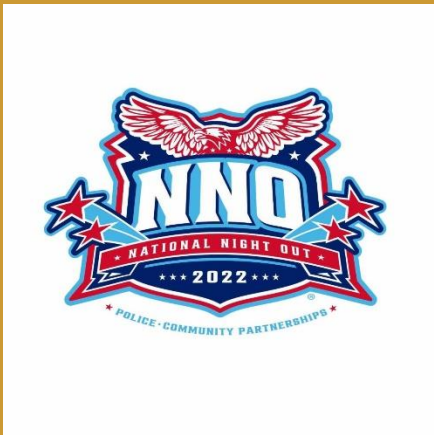
Just Leave!! by *Connie Nelson*

Two words often said to domestic violence victims, along with, "Why does she stay?" For onlookers, it is often difficult to understand why someone that is being abused stays in that relationship. Even more difficult to comprehend is the victim that goes back to an abuser once they have left. It all seems like a no brainer, right? Sad truth is that it is much easier said than done.



Persons leaving a violent relationship have many hurdles to overcome. Victims of abuse often feel ashamed that they have stayed in that relationship as long as they have and are very sensitive to the judgement they will get from others. The victim hasn't stayed because they want to or because they enjoy the abuse. These victims most often love the abuser, or have loved that person, she/he just wants the violence to stop, there are often children involved which in turn can bring up custody issues or child protection issues. She/he is most likely financially dependent on the abuser, has been isolated from friends and family and has no support system. Finally, there is the fear of retaliation. The chances of being seriously hurt or killed increase by 75% when the victim attempts to or does leave. Many times they have been told in one way or another that they will be hunted down and killed, and often times children are included in that threat.

The panic one feels when they are in the process of leaving not only their abuser, but their belongings, their home, and sometimes their children are nothing short of gut-wrenching. No matter the age of the victim, starting over is complicated and filled with challenges, seen and unforeseen. I am not discouraging anyone from leaving by any means, but I would encourage you to reach out to an advocacy agency to help with safety planning and advice and support during that process.



National Night Out

<https://natw.org/>

by Taylor Hernandez

In 1970, a volunteer, Matt Peskin, from a community watch program in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania got the idea to start a shared platform to allow communities to connect.

In 1981, the National Association of Town Watch (NATW) was founded with support from local law enforcement across the nation.

In 1984, NATW introduced National Night Out. The first annual National Night Out involved 2.5 million neighbors across 400 communities in 23 states. National Night Out grew from small gatherings at a front porch to becoming whole block parties, festivals, parades, cook outs and other community events.

According to natw.org "National Night Out is an annual community-building campaign that promotes police-community partnerships and neighborhood camaraderie to make our neighborhoods safer, more caring places to live. National Night Out enhances the relationship between neighbors and law enforcement while bringing back a true sense of community. Furthermore, it provides a great opportunity to bring police and neighbors together under positive circumstances."

For National Night Out in Little Falls, St. Francis Music Center, which is sponsored by the Franciscan Sisters, is planning an outdoor concert from 6-8 p.m. on August 2, 2022. The Little Falls Fire Department, Little Falls Police Department, and the Morrison County Sheriff's Office have all been invited. National Night Out encourages neighbors and communities to come together, get acquainted with one another, and enjoy a fun-filled, safe night that fosters neighborhood spirit and law enforcement-community partnerships.

A National Night Out event will also be taking place in Long Prairie on August 2, 2022. The time and location are unknown at this time.



1st Annual Denim Day Raffle

Thank you to all who supported our 1st Annual Denim Day Raffle by purchasing tickets, selling tickets at your business, or promoting the event in some way. Congratulations again to our winners:

\$2,500.00 -- Brianne Gould
\$1,000.00 -- Melissa Vee
\$500.00 -- Patty Foss
\$250.00 -- Jill Wilkens
\$250.00 -- Devin Cook
\$100.00 -- Gretchen Kelash
\$100.00 -- Chanda Egge
\$100.00 -- Jim Fosler
\$100.00 -- Kevin Kneisl
\$100.00 -- Matt LeBlanc

