Our Work During COVID

It’s been a busy few months for CCADV, Safe Connect and our 18 member organizations. The pandemic created a number of challenges for everyone, but also a surprising number of opportunities for our domestic violence service system to strengthen and adjust policy and practice to better meet the needs of victims and survivors. During COVID-19, all domestic violence organizations in Connecticut have remained fully operational, offering flexible, creative remote services to meet the needs of victims and survivors.

Our 18 member organizations substantially increased proactive outreach to existing clients to ensure that they have what they need to be safe. Just comparing the fourth quarter of 2020 (April – June) to the same months in 2019, our members saw a 75% increase in incoming/outgoing calls and a 131% increase in time spent on calls with victims.

Safe Connect, Connecticut’s domestic violence resource hub, has been working diligently to provide a 24/7 response to victims and survivors, ultimately making a safe connection for them to our 18 member organizations for ongoing services. Over 60% of individuals who have contacted Safe Connect during the pandemic had never previously sought services from Safe Connect or our 18 member organizations.

Shelters have remained over capacity throughout the pandemic. As our 18 member organizations have adhered to social distancing guidelines, they have continued to increase the use of hotels as a temporary shelter option to allow for safe housing. This has been a necessary step, but not one without its challenges – in addition to the regular operating cost of maintaining a shelter, our members have been spending between $6,000 and $8,000 per month on hotel costs.

Throughout the pandemic, CCADV and our 18 member organizations have also placed a significant focus on helping survivors access safe, stable, longer-term housing options through our federally-funded Domestic Violence Rapid Re-housing (RRH) Program. This program offers families a rent
subsidy that decreases over time as the survivor works towards self-sufficiency. However, understanding the financial challenge that so many victims and survivors have faced throughout COVID, we were able to pay 100% of rent for families during April, May and June. We also worked with our federal funder to grant a waiver allowing for short-term leases that helped to decompress shelters while longer-term housing was sought.

On April 6th, because many courts had to close and because some victims simply didn’t feel safe going to those that remained open, Governor Lamont issued an executive order allowing for the remote filing of restraining orders without the need for an in-person notary. This provided Safe Connect advocates the opportunity to begin assisting victims with the online filing of restraining order applications. While the total number of applications filed statewide during the pandemic dropped by about 50% compared to the previous year, Safe Connect advocates have been able to assist more than 300 victims by filing the application online on their behalf and by working with our 18 member organizations who have coordinated the service of those orders on behalf of the victim, as well as transportation to and from hearings.

Everyone’s experience with abuse is different, including during a pandemic – some victims have reported experiencing more due to increased stressors during the pandemic and some have reported experiencing less because everyone is home and the abuser feels completely in control. What we know is that victims need flexible services that accommodate these individual experiences. Stay tuned as CCADV will be releasing a lessons learned document in the coming months as we seek to not only understand how to be prepared for any similar pandemics or emergencies in the future, but also which changes made during COVID would best be incorporated permanently into our service system.

Below you can view several snapshots of services provided during COVID-19 by Safe Connect and our 18 member organizations. And, if you’re able to or looking to help, your support of your local domestic violence organization would have a meaningful impact on the services that will continue to be provided to victims and survivors as the effects of COVID-19 persist through the remainder of the year. Click here to access the webpages of each of our 18 member organizations, where your donation will be greatly appreciated.

Domestic Violence Service Snapshot During COVID-19 - Update #4
Save the Date! Join Us for our 10th Annual Signature Fundraising Event

Save the Date

10th Annual Signature Fundraising Event
Virtual Community Conversation with

TIFFANY DUFU

Women's Rights Advocate
Author, Drop the Bell

WOMEN UNITING

Friday, November 13th, 2020
Noon

While we can’t gather for our traditional breakfast and awards ceremony this year, we still wanted to...
provide an opportunity to bring our community together.

This year we'll hold a virtual conversation with Tiffany Dufu, who is a founder and CEO of The Cru. Their algorithm matches circles of women who collaborate to meet their personal and professional goals. She's also the author of the bestselling book *Drop the Ball: Achieving More by Doing Less* According to foreword contributor Gloria Steinem, *Drop the Ball* is “important, path-breaking, intimate and brave.” Learn more about Tiffany here!

Stay tuned for additional details in the coming weeks. And thank you to our generous sponsors to-date! Your ongoing support is greatly appreciated!

**Champions:**

Bank of America

Dominion Energy

**Defenders:**

adimeback

Spectrum

Women's Health Connecticut

**Advocates:**

Cigna

Locke Lord, LLP

Robinson+Cole

**Supporters:**

Guilmartin, DiPiro & Sokolowski, LLC

Interested in becoming a sponsor?

Your support for CCADV can be tremendously impactful as we continue to strengthen our outreach to survivors throughout this pandemic. Not only will sponsorship demonstrate your support of domestic violence victims and those leaders working to improve the lives of victims, but it will also be an opportunity to highlight your services to attendees and CCADV's full eblast list of supporters.

Click here to learn more!

**CCADV Hires New Director of Legal Advocacy to Co-Lead Project**

Attorney Rhonda Morra has been hired to join CCADV's existing legal advocacy project, led by Geralyn O'Neil-Wild, to serve as the co-lead and new Director of Legal Advocacy. Rhonda comes to CCADV with more than twenty years of family law experience as a sole practitioner working with families in Juvenile, Probate, Superior and Appellate Court in Connecticut. In that regard, Rhonda has represented adult clients in family matters including dissolution of marriage, custody, parenting, legal separation, and child support and paternity issues. She has also represented more than 1,000 child clients in family
Welcome Rhonda!

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**New Date! Rescheduled Wellness Workshops - next Wednesday 8.19.20**

*Please Join Us!*

**Virtual Wellness & Resiliency Workshops**

“Space to take a break and refill your cup”

**Wednesday, August 19, 2020**

**Noon - 2:00pm**

*No cost to attend, but registration is required!*

**CLICK HERE TO REGISTER!**

Rescheduled following Tropical Storm Isaias! Our apologies for the inconvenience.

Please join us for a series of Virtual Wellness & Resiliency Workshops! We'll be learning several tips and strategies for reducing stress, building resiliency, and supporting overall emotional and physical wellness. Workshops are scheduled in 15 minute increments so you'll be able to come in and out of these Zoom-based workshops as you like. For a complete agenda and workshop descriptions, please [view the event flyer](#). Please note that some workshops will be pre-recorded. Workshops will address:

- Yoga
- Mindful eating
- Writing/Journaling for self-care
- Dance routine
- Stress & anxiety management
- Vicarious trauma & resiliency strategies
- Grounding exercises & resiliency pauses

[Click here to download and share the event flyer](#)!

Please contact CCADV Clinical Director of Safe Connect, Kai Belton, with questions at kbelton@ctadv.org.

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**Check Out Our New Safe Connect Spanish PSA**

Check out Safe Connect’s new Spanish-language PSA. CCADV Director of Diversity & Accessibility, Wanda, and Safe Connect advocates, Biadney and Maritza, worked to develop the PSA highlighting the 24/7 availability of Safe Connect. The PSA has been used as part of an awareness campaign run on several Spanish-language media platforms since May.
And, in case you missed it, CCADV partnered with The Latino Way and CT En Vivo to air a series of virtual discussions in April and May. You can view them on Facebook via the following links:

- ÓRDENES DE RESTRICCIÓN EN CASOS DE VIOLENCIA DOMÉSTICA
- IMPACTO DE LA VIOLENCIA DOMÉSTICA EN LA SALUD Y EN NUESTRAS COMUNIDADES
- TRATA DE PERSONAS: ¿CÓMO DENUNCIAR, QUÉ HACER?
- EL ENCIERRO AFECTA NUESTRAS EMOCIONES – CT SAFE CONNECT
- ¿CÓMO CAMBIAN NUESTROS HIJOS EN TIEMPOS DE COVID-19?
- VIOLENCIA DOMÉSTICA: CUANDO TO CASA NO ES UN LUGAR SEGURO

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**Are you professional or volunteer with a faith-based organization? Join our new Ambassador Training Program!**

If you’re a professional or volunteer within the a faith-based organization and have been wanting to learn more about domestic violence and how it affects your community, CCADV’s new Faith-Based Domestic Violence Virtual Ambassador Training is for you!

This training program will help you to learn more about the…

- Dynamic of domestic violence
- Impacts on children and families
- Services available throughout Connecticut
- How to help others in your community

This is a 5 consecutive-week program for 2 hours per week. Training is available in Spanish on Tuesday evenings (5:30 - 7:30) and English on Wednesday evenings (5:30 - 7:30). Trainings will be held on Zoom.
Spanish Training Start Date
Tuesday, September 8th
5:30pm - 7:30pm
on Zoom

This training program is free of cost, but registration is required. To register, please email...

For Spanish - Wanda Gaines, Director of Diversity & Accessibility, at wgaines@ctcadv.org

For English - Kai Belton, Clinical Director of Safe Connect, at kbelton@ctcadv.org

CCADV Launches Coaching Girls To Leaders Prevention Program

You may have heard of Coaching Boys Into Men (CBIM), a national violence prevention program developed by Futures Without Violence for athletic coaches to inspire them to teach their young male athletes about the importance of respect for themselves, others, and particularly women and girls. The three pillars of CBIM are RESPECT, INTEGRITY, and NONVIOLENCE.

CCADV began providing training on CBIM throughout Connecticut last fall. To date we have had the opportunity to train 35 coaches. Feedback has been positive with coaches noting the ease of incorporating the discussions into their work with their student athletes and in terms of athlete engagement and commitment not only to listening, but to holding each other accountable.

We are proud to announce our new companion training program – Coaching Girls To Leaders (CGTL). Coaching Girls was compiled by CCADV using a collection of lessons plans from A Thin Line, Athletes as Leaders, RAINN, Girls Circle, and Adidas “She Breaks Barriers”. Coaching Girls To Leaders aims to present coaches with the tools to help girls succeed in life.
Similar to CBIM, CGTL is specifically developed for coaches to be easily incorporated into regular coaching strategy and practice sessions. Over the course of a season, CGTL coaches lead their players through brief weekly activities that address themes such as personal responsibility, communicating boundaries, consent, resilience, and modeling respect. Participating coaches receive a set of 12 training cards, each with a weekly topic and guidance for discussion.

Athletic coaches play an extremely influential and unique role in the lives of their players. Because of these relationships, coaches are poised to positively influence how both young men and women think and behave, both on and off the field. CBIM and CGTL are about more than just educating athletes about teen dating violence and healthy relationships, these programs also seek to build students up as leaders within their communities and create a school environment that is healthy and safe for all students. It’s an easy program to incorporate into practice, yet it can have a tremendous, long-term impact.

Coaches interested in being trained on either CBIM or CGTL can reach out to CCADV’s Director of Training & Prevention, Linda Blozie, at TeamUp@ctcadv.org.

ICYMI! Facebook Live Conversations

In May, as the long-term prospects of social distancing set in, we began holding a series of weekly Facebook Live conversations as way to reach victims, advocates and other community stakeholders. Not only did we want to create a forum to share critical information about issues impacting victims during COVID-19, but we also wanted to reiterate the 24/7 availability of Safe Connect and our 18 member organizations during the pandemic. Below is a list of topics covered and links to each conversation on Facebook (you can also watch each conversation on our YouTube channel). We’re taking a break this month, but stay tuned because we’ll be back in September!

- Access to Public Benefits During COVID-19 (5.6.20)
- Individual & Family Emotional Well-being During COVID-19 (5.13.20)
- Housing Protections During COVID-19 (5.20.20)
- Victims’ Rights During COVID-19 (5.27.20)
- Tech Safety for Victims & Survivors (6.3.20)
- Healthcare Resources During COVID-19 (6.10.20)
- Impact of COVID-19 on Childcare Services & Subsidies (6.17.20)
- Health & Wellness for the LGBTQ Community (6.24.20)
- Housing Location & Landlord Engagement (7.15.20)
CCADV Partners to Provide IPV Education Tools for Telehealth

COVID-19 has presented a series of challenges that have changed the way that various types of providers, healthcare providers included, offer services. As there was a significant shift to telehealth this past spring, CCADV sought to build on its existing Health Professional Outreach Project to offer healthcare providers with the tools that they need to educate their patients about intimate partner violence (IPV) and the services available throughout the state.

To that end, CCADV Director of Health Professional Outreach, Ashley Starr Frechette, developed an awareness toolkit and IPV telehealth script for use by healthcare practitioners. Isolation is a common experience for many IPV victims and it has only been compounded by the pandemic. So it is more important than ever that health professionals connect with patients and clients to offer helpful resources to cope with the increased stress and isolation brought on by the COVID-19. CCADV’s brief telehealth script for use during virtual appointments outlines why IPV is a serious concern right now, offers information on the statewide resources available, and encourages each patient/client to share this resource with anyone that might benefit from it. The script doesn’t point fingers or ask any specific questions, it’s simply a way to educate every patient, every time. It also includes resources and safety suggestions to help facilitate implementation into telehealth practices.

Longtime partner, Women’s Health CT, incorporated the script into their practices and we partnered with the CT State Medical Society to distribute the script to health professionals across the state. Access the script and learn more about our Health Professional Outreach Project here! If you have any questions or would like resources for your office as you transition back to in-person visits, please contact Ashley at astarrfrechette@ctcadv.org.