

October is

DOMESTIC
VIOLENCE
AWARENESS
MONTH

Learn more about DVAM
& how you can
get involved

Flora Stone Mather Center for Women



What is Domestic Violence Awareness Month (DVAM)?

Domestic Violence Awareness Month (DVAM) is a national campaign dedicated to raising awareness about domestic violence.

Every October, organizations and individuals unite across the country for a national effort to uplift the needs, voices, and experiences of survivors. Congress declared the month of October to be Domestic Violence Awareness Month in 1989.

DVAM is a chance for anyone and everyone to unite in the work to end domestic violence. With so many people speaking in a unified voice throughout October, we can raise our collective awareness about domestic violence to end abuse for good.

Get Involved on Campus

- **DVAM Kickoff** | Wednesday, September 30
 - Thwing Atrium | 4:00-6:00pm
- **Homecoming Football Game** | Saturday, October 1
 - DiSanto Field | Kickoff at 1pm
- **Wear Purple Day** | Thursday, October 15
- **How I Met Your Red Flag** | Friday, October 16
 - Flora Stone Mather Center for Women | 2:00-4:00pm
- **Craft Night** | Thursday, October 22
 - Flora Stone Mather Center for Women | 6:00-8:00pm
- **Teal Talk: FSM Center for Women** | Tuesday, October 27
 - Flora Stone Mather Center for Women | 10:00-11:30am
- **Relationship Horror Stories** | Friday, October 30
 - Flora Stone Mather Center for Women | 12:30-2:00pm
- Grab your **DVAM 2026 Punchcard**
- Engage with and share **@ItsOnCWRU & @FloraStoneMatherCenter's Instagram content**
- **Write your own message for survivors**, pick up your purple ribbon, and take the "It's on CWRU" pledge

Books to read during DVAM

- **Assume Nothing: A Memoir of Intimate Violence, *Tanya Selvaratnam***
 - Selvaratnam was a highly educated, successful woman who still found herself trapped by an abusive, powerful partner. It perfectly illustrates how abuse can happen to anyone—regardless of intelligence, status, or independence.
- **Crazy Love, *Leslie Morgan Steiner***
 - Steiner talks about falling in love with a man who seemed perfect, but slowly escalated into violence. It is an ideal pick for young adults because it maps out the gradual, confusing "frog in boiling water" progression of an abusive relationship.
- **Dear Sister, *Michelle Horton***
 - "In September 2017, a knock on the door upends Michelle Horton's life forever: her sister had just shot her partner and was now in jail. During the investigation that follows, Michelle learns that Nikki had been hiding horrific abuse for years. Stunned to find herself in a situation she'd only ever encountered on television and true crime podcasts, Michelle rearranges her life to care for Nikki's children and simultaneously launches a fight to bring Nikki home, squaring off against a criminal justice system seemingly designed to punish the entire family.
- **Goodbye, Sweet Girl, *Kelly Sundberg***
 - In this brave and beautiful memoir, written with the raw honesty and devastating openness of *The Glass Castle* and *The Liar's Club*, a woman chronicles how her marriage devolved from a love story into a shocking tale of abuse - examining the tenderness and violence entwined in the relationship, why she endured years of physical and emotional pain, and how she eventually broke free.
- **If He's So Great Why Do I Feel So Bad?: Recognizing and Overcoming Subtle Abuse, *Avery Neal***
 - Nearly half of all women -and men- in the United States experience psychological abuse without realizing it. Manipulation, deception, and disrespect leave no physical scars, but they can be just as traumatic as physical abuse. This groundbreaking book helps you recognize the warning signs of subtle abuse. As you learn to identify patterns that have never made sense before, you are better equipped to make changes.
- **In the Dream House, *Carmen Maria Machado*.**
 - An innovative, gripping memoir that chronicles the author's experience in an abusive same-sex relationship. This is a crucial read for college campuses, as it highlights that intimate partner violence affects the LGBTQ+ community heavily, yet it is rarely talked about.

- **No Visible Bruises: What We Don't Know About DV Can Kill Us, *Rachel Louise Snyder***
 - Written by an investigative journalist, this book dispels the massive myth that domestic violence is just "a private family matter." It explores the psychological, economic, and societal traps that keep victims stuck, making it an essential read.
- **See What You Made Me Do, *Jess Hill***
 - This book shifts the age-old, problematic question from "why didn't she leave?" to "Why did he do it?" It deep dives into the psychology of perpetrators and the concept of coercive control.
- **Surviving: Why We Stay and How We Leave Abusive Relationships, *Beverly Gooden***
 - With unflinching vulnerability and compassion, an abuse survivor shares her own story of survival to answer the question "Why did you stay?," offering help to those who want to leave and rebuild their lives and strategies for overcoming the barriers survivors often face.
- **The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma, *Bessel van der Kolk***
 - While not solely about domestic violence, this book is widely used to understand how emotional and physical trauma literally rewires the brain and body. It is highly empowering for anyone trying to understand their own responses or wanting to practice trauma-informed advocacy.
- **On Violence and On Violence Against Women, *Jacqueline Rose***
 - Why has violence, and especially violence against women, become so much more prominent and visible across the world? To explore this question, Jacqueline Rose tracks the multiple forms of today's violence— historic and intimate, public and private —as they spread throughout our social fabric, offering a new, provocative account of violence in our time.
- **What My Bones Know: A Memoir of Healing from Complex Trauma, *Stephanie Foo***
 - By age thirty, Stephanie Foo was successful on paper: She had her dream job as an award-winning radio producer at *This American Life* and a loving boyfriend. But behind her office door, she was having panic attacks and sobbing at her desk every morning. After years of questioning what was wrong with herself, she was diagnosed with complex PTSD—a condition that occurs when trauma happens continuously, over the course of years.
- **Who Deserves Your Love: How to Create Boundaries to Start, Strengthen, or End Any Relationship, *KC Davis***
 - A practical, compassionate guide to setting healthier boundaries and navigating difficult relationships with family, friends, partners, and coworkers.
- **Why Does He Do That?: Inside the Minds of Angry and Controlling Men, *Lundy Bancroft***
 - Considered the gold standard text on the mechanics of control. Bancroft breaks down the different "types" of abusers (the Mr. Sensitive, the Water Torturer, etc.) and exposes the core belief systems behind their behavior. It is a vital relationship safety manual for young adults entering the dating pool.

Movies & TV to watch during DVAM

- **Alice, Darling** (2022)
 - Starring Anna Kendrick, this film expertly highlights the subtle, damaging signs of psychological abuse and coercive control.
- **Big Little Lies** (2017)
 - Based on the same-titled bestseller by Liane Moriarty, "Big Little Lies" weaves a darkly comedic tale of murder and mischief in the tranquil beachfront town of Monterey, Calif. Amidst doting moms, successful husbands, beautiful children, and stunning homes exists a community fueled by rumors and divided into haves and have-nots, exposing fractured relationships between husbands and wives, parents and children, and friends and neighbors. Told through the eyes of three mothers -- Madeline, Celeste and Jane -- the series' narrative explores society's myths regarding perfection and its romanticization of marriage, sex, parenting and friendship.
- **Gaslight** (1944)
 - The psychological thriller that popularized the term "gaslighting," starring Ingrid Bergman as a woman whose husband slowly manipulates her into thinking she is losing her mind.
- **I, Tonya** (2018)
 - This dramatization of figure skater Tonya Harding's life delves far deeper than just the baton-to-Nancy-Kerrigan's-knee attack she was involved in. It's a retelling of her childhood mired in abuse by her mother and then a marriage that echoed that with an abusive husband who physically and sexually assaults her. For the record, Harding agreed to and approved of the film.
- **Maid** (2021)
 - Single mother Alex turns to housecleaning to make ends meet as she escapes an abusive relationship and overcomes homelessness to create a better life for her daughter, Maddy.
- **Not Without My Daughter** (1991)
 - Betty Mahmoody is an American woman married to "Moody", an Iranian-American living in the United States. When Moody informs her that he wants her and their daughter, Mahtob, to visit Iran with him, Betty is reluctant because of the country's harsh treatment of women. When the family arrives in Iran, Betty discovers that her husband plans to stay in the country for good, and has no intention of letting her or Mahtob return to the United States.

- **Safe Haven (2013)**
 - It's domestic violence with a Nicholas Sparks twist which means you'll get a fair dose of romanticism sprinkled into the story of a violent and stalking estranged husband who won't let the main character leave (a very typical scenario in real life). It also touches on the survivor resorting to violence to escape, something many survivors are forced to do and suffer the consequences of as a result. Oh, and there's also a ghost.
- **The Glass Castle (2017)**
 - Based on a memoir, four siblings must learn to take care of themselves as their responsibility-averse, free-spirit parents both inspire and inhibit them. When sober, the children's brilliant and charismatic father captured their imagination, teaching them physics, geology, and how to embrace life fearlessly. But when he drank, he was dishonest and destructive. Meanwhile, their mother abhorred the idea of domesticity and didn't want to take on the work of raising a family.
- **This Boy's Life (1993)**
 - Based on the memoir of Tobias Wolff, a 19-year-old Leonardo DiCaprio plays the son of Ellen Barkin's character who just wants to provide a stable home for her child, only to marry, of course, an abusive bully of a husband played by Robert De Niro. It depicts a survivor parent who has a hard time getting out... until she does.
- **To All the Boys I've Love Before (2018)**
 - Lara Jean, a high school girl, writes letters to the boys she is infatuated with but keeps them in her closet instead of mailing them. Things change when her sister discovers the letters. Often highlighted as an example of communication and healthy relationship boundaries.
- **Turtles All The Way Down (2024)**
 - It's not easy being Aza, but she's trying to be a good daughter, a good friend, and a good student, all while navigating an endless barrage of invasive, obsessive thoughts that she cannot control. When she reconnects with Davis, her childhood crush, Aza is confronted with fundamental questions about her potential for love, happiness, friendship, and hope. Highlighted for its focus on mental health struggles within teenage friendships and dating
- **No One Would Tell (1996)**
 - A teenager thinks all her dreams have come true when the school hunk begins dating her, but it's not long before the darker side of his personality rears its ugly head when her seemingly perfect relationship with a popular jock quickly turns abusive and dangerous.
- **Waitress (2007)**
 - This movie has been said to portray an accurate representation of domestic violence with the husband demonstrating controlling and berating behavior, minimizing his abuse, isolating his wife and forcing her into traditional gender stereotypes. The only criticism is the ease with which the wife's character leaves her husband at the end- survivors are typically most at risk from escalating violence when they decide to leave and often leave and return several times.

Podcasts to listen to during DVAM

- **Believe Her**

- Believe Her is true crime, upside down. In September 2017, young mom Nikki Addimando shot and killed her partner, Chris Grover. She was sentenced to nineteen years to life in prison for murder. Through rare access to police audio, a month-long trial, conversations with Nikki, and original reporting, journalist Justine van der Leun lays out the killing, the evidence, and the aftermath. As this six-part series unfolds, listeners will put together different pieces of a disturbing puzzle. One thing is clear: perception ≠ reality.

- **Courageous Conversations**

- A podcast that goes beyond Domestic Violence 101 and into the real, unfiltered experiences of survivors, advocates, and the people doing the work every day. Hosted by PADV President & CEO Katha D. Blackwell, Courageous Conversations takes a deeper look at what it truly means to leave, rebuild, and rediscover safety and self-worth after abuse.

- **Hang in There**

- A podcast that shares real stories of survival to raise awareness about domestic abuse and support healing. It offers hope, community, and strength through lived experiences and trusted resources.

- **I, Survivor**

- Another that may be tough for some survivors to listen to, but this captivating series features inspiring survivors of all types of trauma telling their first-hand stories of perseverance.

- **It's Not Normal, It's Toxic**

- A toxic relationship specialist brings hope, healing and freedom to those that have been affected by toxic relationships and emotional abuse. Learn to recognize red flags and choose to live free from the control of others.

- **Narcissist Apocalypse**

- Brandon Chadwick talks with survivors about growing up in dysfunctional families, codependency, fear, obligation, guilt, bullying, infidelity, betrayal trauma, fraud, intimate partner violence, narcissism, liars, neglect, healing, and more. For survivors, you'll be guaranteed to feel less alone.

- **Podcast on Crimes Against Women (PCAW)**
 - PCAW will serve as an extension of the information and topics presented at the annual Conference, providing in-depth dialogue, fresh perspectives, and relevant updates by experts in the fields of victim advocacy, criminal justice, medicine, and more. This podcast's format hopes to create a space for topical conversations aimed to engage and educate community members on the issue of violence against women, how it impacts our daily lives, and how we can work together to create lasting cultural and systemic change.
- **Seeding Safety**
 - A podcast on cultivating conditions for health, healing, and violence prevention. Intimate partner violence affects health, families, and communities. This podcast explores how healthcare providers, advocates, and child-serving professionals can prevent violence, support survivors, and promote accountability. Practical strategies, real-world stories, and innovative resources for creating safer, healthier communities.
- **Shatterproof, Thriving After Domestic Abuse**
 - Mickie Zada, a survivor herself, shares stories of other survivors who have reinvented themselves after escaping abuse.
- **Spotlight: The Podcast for the Domestic Abuse Sector**
 - Interviews with advocates and experts on important domestic violence issues like support for LGBTIQ+ survivors and how homelessness and abuse intersect.
- **Targeted—True Crime: Domestic Violence.**
 - This one may be difficult for some survivors, but fascinating to others. This true crime podcast delves into real life cases of family violence, examining how similar crimes might be prevented in the future.
- **The Warm Line**
 - A trauma-informed podcast about sexual harassment, gender-based violence, economic abuse, workplace safety, healing, and survivorship. Hosted by advocates and survivors Kiesha Preston and Suzette Wright, the series combines personal stories, practical guidance, expert perspectives, and supportive resources for people directly and indirectly affected by abuse and harassment.
- **VOICES of Hope**
 - From Alliance for HOPE International, VOICES of Hope tells the stories of what happens when collaboration and compassion come together to transform lives and strengthen communities at Family Justice Centers and other multi-agency collaboratives.
- **Why She Stayed**
 - A podcast where we dive deep into what really goes on inside of domestic violence relationships that makes it so hard to simply "just leave". Through stories of survivors, and practical conversations with guests, I am going to put the microscope back on what the abuser is doing that causes us to become so trapped in the first place, and how each survivor was eventually freed. We will discuss what abusive relationships look like, sound like, and feel like for the purpose of educating and relating to one another in a much needed way.

Supporting a Friend

Conversation Starters:

- “You’re always so fun, I’ve missed you! How are you?”
- “It seems like your partner always wants to know where you are, they’re always calling or texting, how does that make you feel?”
- “I’ve noticed you don’t seem yourself lately. How are you really doing?”
- “I care about you, and I’m here if you ever want to talk.”
- “You don’t deserve to be treated badly. I’m here to support you.”
- “Where do you see yourself/your relationship after this year/graduation?”

Having a Supportive Conversation:

Do:

- **Listen** more than you speak.
- **Believe** them without questioning.
- **Use caring statements** like “I’m here for you” or “You’re not alone.”
- **Educate yourself** about domestic violence.
- **Stay in touch.**
- **Respect their choices**, even if they’re not ready to leave.
- **Share resources** gently (the Confidential Advocates, local organizations, toolkits).

Don’t:

- Asking “Why don’t you just leave?”
- Blaming, judging, or pressuring your friend.
- Making promises you can’t keep.
- Gossip or tell others about what’s going on.
- Confront the abuser.
- Trying to “fix” the situation on your own.
- Tell your friend what to do, or not do.

Survivor Self-care

- Aromatherapy
- Take yourself out for coffee
- Escape into a book
- Meditate
- Listen to music
- Look at cute things
- Take a fun class, not related to your major
- Write a story
- Ask for help
- Create a self-care plan
- Get hooked on a podcast
- Start your day with an affirmation
- Take a walk in nature
- Wake up early to watch the sunrise
- Create a vision board
- Go to bed early
- Try a new workout
- Organize your closet/room
- Binge watch your favorite show
- Take some alone time
- Have a dance party
- Deep breathing
- Journal
- Call a friend from home

Survivor Affirmations

- I am safe in my own skin right now.
- My body and mind are allowed to rest.
- I can anchor myself in the present moment when the past feels loud.
- I bring more to this campus than just my academic performance.
- My worth is not defined by how much I produce or accomplish.
- My healing is not linear, and every pace is the right pace for me.
- How I was treated is not my fault, and the shame is not mine to carry.
- Asking for help when I need it is an act of bravery.
- I allow myself enough sleep and rest to recharge my mind and body.
- My ability to learn and remember improves every single day.
- I am prepared, and I can handle difficult things in small steps.
- I am the owner of my own space and my own story.
- I belong in this space, and I deserve my success.

Resources

Confidential Resources

Confidential Advocate: CWRUadvocate@case.edu
TVUC 248

Interreligious Council: 216.421.9614

University Health & Counseling Services: 216.368.5872
Dental Research Building

Non Confidential Resources

LGBT Center: 216.368.5428 | TVUC 179

Office of Equity: equity@case.edu
Dental Research Building, 0G60

Office of Multicultural Affairs: 216.368.2904
Sears Building 409

Public Safety: 216.368.3333

Off Campus Resources

Cleveland Rape Crisis Center: 216.619.6192 or 440.423.2020

Journey Center for Safety and Healing: 216.391.4357 (HELP)

Ohio Sexual Violence Helpline: 844.OHIO.HELP

National Domestic Violence Helpline: 1.800.799.7233

RAINN's national Sexual Assault Hotline: 1.800.656.4673

National Suicide and Crisis Lifeline: 988