

Awareness Into Domestic Abuse-AIDA 501c3 is a non-profit organization that seeks to bring awareness to communities. The AIDA Chronicles consists of testimonials of past participants, articles, domestic violence statistics and facts. Our goal for the reader is to gain a greater insight into the ongoing work of men/women transforming themselves and their inferior belief systems. AIDA hopes that all who read the AIDA Chronicles will gain insight into ending abuse in America.



20TH EDITION

In 2017, AIDA published its first ever volume of the AIDA Chronicles. Here we are 5 years and 19 volumes later. We've shared stories from people both inside and out. Through The AIDA Chronicles we've met some of the most amazing human beings. This will be the last Chronicles of 2022; we are excited to for what 2023 will bring. To our readers stay hopeful the best is yet to come.

When You Can Expect the AIDA Chronicles



Submit your writing/photo, drawing, or poem for a possible print in one of our future AIDA Chronicles.

Criminalizing Intimate Partner Violence Doesn't Stop It. Here's What Might.

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I have been representing victims of intimate partner violence since 1994. When I started that work, I firmly believed that all men (and at that time, we were only talking about men) who used violence against their partners should be incarcerated because incarceration was the only way to send a message about the seriousness of the behavior, to protect their victims, and to make them change. But over the last almost thirty years, my clients and the research on intimate partner violence have taught me something different. Criminalization does not decrease or deter intimate partner violence. It exacerbates conditions that correlate with the perpetration of intimate partner violence. And it has serious consequences for victims of violence, who often do not want their partners arrested or incarcerated.

Criminalization has been the primary response to intimate partner violence in the United States for the last forty years. Billions of dollars have been allocated to the criminal legal system's response to intimate partner violence, funding police, prosecutors, and courts. Over that time, rates of intimate partner violence have decreased—but so has the overall crime rate. And intimate partner violence fell the same amount or less than the decrease in the overall crime rate, suggesting that those billions of dollars did little to stop the violence. Similarly, there is no evidence to suggest that arrest, conviction or incarceration deters people from using violence against their partners, another reason often given for the strict application of the criminal law.

What is clear is that criminalization has had a number of destructive consequences. Criminalization generally disproportionately targets people of color; the criminalization of intimate partner violence is no different. Criminalization has also had a negative impact on survivors of violence.

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Policies like mandatory arrest (which require police to make an arrest any time they have probable cause to believe that intimate partner violence has occurred) and no-drop prosecution (where prosecutors bring cases regardless of whether the victim wants to go forward) have taken power away from survivors to decide how they want to address the violence done by their partners. Worse, mandatory arrest policies have resulted in increased numbers of arrests of women (especially Black and other women of color)—not because they have become more violent, research shows, but because of how police implement those policies. Prisons are full of “criminalized survivors”—women incarcerated for crimes related to their own victimization. And even when survivors are not brought into the criminal system, interaction with the state can mean intervention by the family policing system (also known as the child welfare system), causing survivors to lose custody of their children.

Criminalization makes repeat violence more likely. Male under- and unemployment are associated with perpetrating intimate partner violence; being arrested, convicted, and incarcerated lead to those conditions and create economic strain, which is also associated with intimate partner violence. Experiencing trauma and intimate partner violence are linked; nonetheless, to punish people for using violence, we send them to places where they are likely to be victims of or witnesses to violence, then send them back into communities without treating that trauma.

We could do this work differently. Rather than seeing intimate partner violence as a criminal system problem, we could see it as an economic, a public health, and a community problem. We could focus on ensuring that everyone has work with a living wage, decreasing economic stress. We could provide families with services to prevent their children from experiencing the trauma that later manifests as violence against a partner, and we could teach adolescents about healthy relationships. We could teach and support community members interested in intervening to protect survivors of violence and to hold those who use violence accountable for their actions so that the criminal legal system would never be called on to intervene.

We could improve the services provided to people who use violence. Research suggests that “batterer intervention programs” (a title that incorporates shame by labelling those involved as “batterers,” not people) are not very effective in stopping future violence. This is true in part because they rely on shame, which is associated with the perpetration of violence, and because they do not confront the hard truth that most people who use violence have been victims of trauma themselves. That trauma is not an excuse for their behavior, but it is an explanation, and ignoring that trauma leads to ineffective interventions. We should be providing services that both acknowledge the trauma that people have experienced and help them to change their behavior. Very few prisons offer any form of intervention that understands and incorporates trauma for those who have used violence against their partners.

Accountability matters. It is important that people who use violence be held accountable for what they have done. But the criminal legal system is not designed to provide real accountability. It enables people to continue to deny what they have done (in fact, because of the presumption of innocence, it encourages people to deny what they have done). Incarceration is a passive form of accountability—it doesn’t require people to reckon with their actions or to come face to face (either literally or metaphorically) with those they have harmed. We need to develop active forms of accountability that don’t require intervention by the state in ways that perpetuate harm.

AIDA’s work is an essential component in fostering accountability. Prison and punishment don’t help people to change—they make the problem of violence worse. AIDA is giving incarcerated people the tools they need to confront their own trauma and the behaviors associated with that trauma and to change—so that their partners, their children, and their communities will be safer when they rejoin the community.



The Importance of Collaboration

by Amanda Tenorio, MSW

Had I been writing this article ten years ago, I would have been writing it with a very different opinion than I am today. I am a survivor of domestic violence. What this means is that I was in a relationship with a man who is now considered an offender/an abuser. At a very young age, my boyfriend was sentenced to 55 years in prison for multiple crimes against me- assaults, malicious wounding, abduction, kidnapping and false imprisonment. The goal of the criminal justice system is victim safety and offender accountability. Did I feel safe when he was sentenced to prison? Absolutely! Did I feel a sense of justice? That's more complicated than a simple yes or no, but there was some sense of justice with the sentence he received. Did the criminal justice system hold my offender accountable? Without a doubt, yes! But offender accountability goes beyond the justice system holding the offender accountable. We need the offender to hold themselves accountable.

My abuser never once admitted to any of the horrendous things that he did to me. He always pointed the finger at someone else, including me assaulting myself. He always had a story or an explanation, and had an answer to every question that he was asked. He would talk for hours- in the interrogation room, on the stand during both trials, and at both sentencing hearings. He never accepted responsibility for what he did. He never expressed remorse for what happened to me or for the harm that he caused. It was never his fault! The criminal justice system can and should hold offenders accountable, but the transformation happens when they hold themselves accountable. For many years, I viewed every abusive man as being the same as my abuser. I believed that they would never change, that they would never hold themselves accountable, that they were all as manipulative as he was, and that if given the chance, they would go on to abuse their next intimate partner.

I have worked as a victim advocate for more than a decade now. I have seen thousands of cases of domestic violence. They have included all forms of intimate partner violence- verbal, emotional, physical, mental/psychological, spiritual, financial and sexual- and while each story is unique, they all have so many commonalities weaved into the dynamics of the abusive relationship.

I have seen many improvements over the years. There are domestic violence shelters in every state across the country. There is more awareness about Protective Orders. There are more services and resources than there were only a few short decades ago. People are openly talking about domestic violence. Professionals are screening for signs of domestic violence. People are working to eradicate domestic violence. We talk about victim empowerment. We talk about victim safety. The work is very much focused on victims, who absolutely should be at the center of this work. However, we are missing one very big piece to the puzzle. Collaborating with offenders.

I am a survivor and a victim advocate. I have had to do a lot of work to heal from my trauma. The trauma will never go away. It will live within my body and my mind forever. But after years of healing, after years of working in this field, after years of learning, I have come to my own conclusion. There needs to be more collaboration with individuals who have been abusive to their intimate partners. I have had the privilege of meeting and getting to know men who are holding themselves accountable for the choices that they have made and the harm that they have caused. Victim advocates are constantly looking for new and creative ways to help women become empowered, so that they have the strength and the resources to leave an abusive relationship. That will not end domestic violence. The victims' behavior is not what needs to change. So I began to wonder why there isn't a collaboration with the individuals who do need to change- the abusers.

As a survivor, talking to a man who once abused and even killed his own partner, has been life changing and healing for me. I now see how complex and intricate domestic violence is. It's not as simple as power and control. Having these conversations allows me to share a victim's experience, and then hear about the abuser's mindset and their belief systems. Just like we know that in a domestic homicide, the person didn't just wake up and snap one day, we also know that this person didn't become abusive overnight. My goal is to prevent more women from having to lose their lives at the hands of the man who claims to love them. Through an openness and willingness to collaborate with the "other side", I have learned that my goal is shared by men who have done exactly that. The voices of victims and survivors is central to this goal, but the collaboration with offenders who have transformed their lives is imperative.

October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month. It's during this month that the stories of victims and survivors are highlighted, the resources and services are front and center, and the discussions and challenges for "what's next" are put on the agenda. Now it's time to include the voices of those who have learned about and acknowledged their abusive behaviors, showed remorse for the hurt and pain that they have caused, and chose to make this work their living amends. I am personally looking forward to this new chapter of collaboration and am optimistically hopeful that together we can change one small piece of the world at a time.

The Other Side

Linda Ricchio

The other side arrives whether abused or abuser when the willingness to make personal change occurs. It is choice. A conscious altering of decisions in thinking, in attitude, and in behaviors to positively affect both moving forward and letting go of the past.

There does exist the other side of violence and of abuse. Of perpetrating and of victimization. It may not be familiar to some, or comfortable even when it does appear, maybe incrementally – as most recognizing Domestic Intimate Partner Battering know the cycle of violence to be. Understand it's repetitiveness.

It is possible to tap into those other places we, humans sometimes neglect of ourselves. Those inner chambers we feed on. We know, but forget we need our self-care.

To love ourselves unconditionally despite our flaws and unspeakable misgivings. To forgive ourselves despite our deeds and offenses. To hope and believe in our futures. There is the other side I write of, know of because I've been there. And I now, live there.

The other side is caring, and is fostering goodwill, and authentic intention. It is honoring self and others with respect and integrity. And it is never regarding yourself as greater or better than others. It is self-sacrificing – standing last in line, offering another your last one, helping someone up. It is the unseen, the unanticipated, the unexpected, of what we learn to give of ourselves with out hesitation. For others, for the community, for the suffering. And in doing so, compassionately.

It is loving – kindness in action like life depends on it. Like your breath of life depends on it. Because when you arrive on the other side you understand it truly does.



Our good friend Linda Ricchio shares her artwork with us.

When Writing Us

Don't forget AIDA is not:

- Pen-Pal Agency
- Legal Assistance Program
- We do not write support letters at this time.

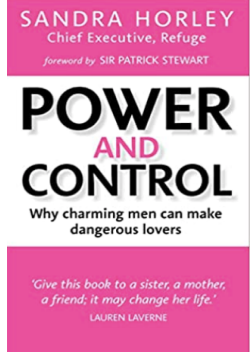
The postal service will return mail if it is not address to the organization directly. Be sure to address it as follow

[Awareness Into Domestic Abuse](#)

Suggested Book Reading!

Power and Control:
Why Charming Men
Make Dangerous
Lovers

By: Sandra Horley



**AT ANY GIVEN
MOMENT YOU HAVE
THE POWER TO SAY
THIS IS NOT HOW THE
STORY IS GOING TO
END.
-Christine M. Miller**



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