

CRIME VICTIMS RESOURCE CENTER

Fall 2024 Newsletter

Serving victims in Mower County since 1977 - To subscribe or unsubscribe, email miller.tori@mayo.edu



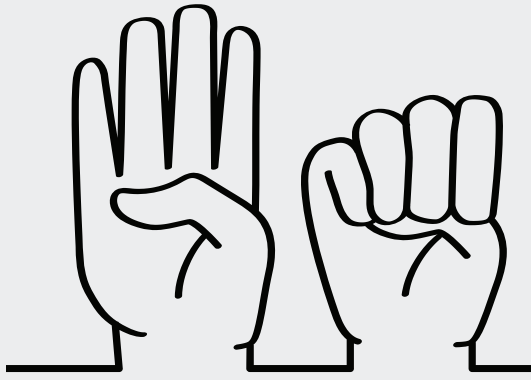
Abusive behavior is a choice

Despite what many people believe, domestic violence and abuse does not take place because an abuser loses control over their behavior. In fact, abusive behavior and violence is a deliberate choice to gain control. Perpetrators use a variety of tactics to manipulate you and exert their power, including:

Dominance — Abusive individuals need to feel in charge of the relationship. They may make decisions for you and the family, tell you what to do, and expect you to obey without question. Your abuser may treat you like a servant, child, or even as their possession.

Humiliation — An abuser will do everything they can to lower your self-esteem or make you feel defective in some way. After all, if you believe you're worthless and that no one else will want you, you're less likely to leave. Insults, name-calling, shaming, and public put-downs are all weapons of abuse designed to erode your self-worth and make you feel powerless.

Isolation — In order to increase your dependence on them, an abusive partner will cut you off from the outside world. They may keep you from seeing family or friends, or even prevent you from going to work or school. You may have to ask permission to do anything, go anywhere, or see anyone.



A distress and domestic violence hand signal was created at the start of Covid lockdown as a way for domestic violence victims to non-verbally seek help. It is now recognized as an international signal for 'Help Me.' Scan QR Code to see it in action.



Learn it. Watch for it. Share it with others.

1. Palm facing outwards.
2. Place thumb on the palm.
3. Move fingers down over thumb.

Threats — Abusers commonly use threats to keep their partners from leaving or scare them into dropping charges. Your abuser may threaten to hurt or kill you, your children, other family members, or even pets. They may also threaten to commit suicide, file false charges against you, or report you to child services.

Intimidation — Your abuser may use a variety of intimidation tactics designed to scare you into submission. Such tactics include making threatening looks or gestures, smashing things in front of you, destroying property, hurting

your pets, or putting weapons on display. The message behind these actions is that violent consequences will follow if you don't obey.

Denial and Blame — Abusers are adept at making excuses for the inexcusable. They may blame their abusive and violent behavior on a bad childhood, a bad day, or even on you and the kids, the victims of their abuse. They may minimize the abuse or deny that it occurred. Often, they will shift the responsibility on to you: somehow, their violent and abusive behavior is your fault.

Abusers ARE able to control their behavior ...
they do it all the time.

Abusers pick and choose whom to abuse — They don't insult, threaten, or assault everyone in their life who gives them grief. Usually, they save their abuse for the people closest to them, the ones they claim to love.

Abusers carefully choose when and where to abuse — They control themselves until no one else is around to witness their behavior. They may act like everything is fine in public, but then lash out instantly as soon as you're alone with them.

Abusers stop their abusive behavior when it

it benefits them — Most abusers are not out of control. In fact, they're able to immediately stop their abusive behavior when it's to their advantage to do so (for example, when the police show up or their boss calls).

Violent abusers usually direct their blows where they won't show — Rather than acting out in a mindless rage, many physically violent abusers carefully aim their kicks and punches where the bruises and marks won't show.



Breaking a Trauma Bond

Part 3 of a 3-part series

In our spring and summer newsletters, you learned how a trauma bond develops and how to identify the signs of a trauma bond relationship. In our final article, we will highlight the steps to break free from a trauma bond.

Step 1: Know what you're dealing with

Trauma bonds can masquerade as healthy, functioning relationships. Therefore, learning and recognizing the early signs of dysfunctional and harmful dynamics is key. Be direct and honest with yourself about the situation and take necessary steps to protect yourself.

Step 2: Talk to loved ones

It may be difficult to discuss with your loved ones, everything that you have gone through. Support from loved ones is essential when breaking free from a trauma bond. Seeking outside perspectives and working with others to develop safety precautions can be very useful.

Step 3: Make a safe exit

Once you have identified that there is indeed a trauma bond and connect with support, planning your escape is important. Rather than thinking the person's behavior will change, fleeing is likely your best option. Collaborate with a victim's advocate or other caring parties to determine a safe and effective plan.

Step 4: Avoid blaming yourself

Often in an abusive and unhealthy relationship, your partner will work to convince you that you are to blame for the dysfunction. This guilt, shame, and self-doubt keeps them in control and may lead you to stay. Reassure yourself that you are doing the right thing and that you do not deserve to be mistreated.

Step 5: Cut off contact completely

Finding some way to maintain or establish a balanced relationship following a trauma bond is extremely unlikely. Though there may have been some positives linked to the relationship, they will never outweigh the negatives. Cut off all communication; phone calls, text messages, and social media contact will give you the best chance of breaking free.

Step 6: Get professional help

You'll benefit from some professional help; victim advocacy, support groups, therapy, etc will be instrumental in keeping you strong.

**Call Crime Victims Resource Center at 507-437-6680
for more information on trauma bonding.**

Source: choosingtherapy.com

CVRC Updates

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Building awareness is a key component to early intervention and breaking the cycle. If you have a club, church, school or other organization that you would like us to speak with about victimization, our services, volunteer opportunities, or other crime topics, please call 507-437-6680.

NEW STAFF — COLEENA SNYDER

Coleena joined our team on August 26, check out her introduction and get to know her on the next page.

TRAININGS — PAST & FUTURE

Mower County Sheriff's Department: We facilitated the interactive role play *Why They Stay* — a great opportunity to increase awareness and build empathy experiencing the many obstacles that victims face when it comes to leaving an abuser. We appreciate and thank you for your collaboration.

Speaking to the **Austin Morning Lions Club** on Oct. 17.

Mayo Clinic Health System: Speaking to Family Medicine providers on Oct. 23.

Sexual Abuse Prevention Education: Coming soon to educate second graders in area schools including Adams, Grand Meadow, LeRoy and Lyle.



INTRODUCING — COLEENA SNYDER

We're excited to welcome Coleena Snyder, Crime Victim Advocate to CVRC. We've had some time to get to know her over the summer and wanted you to meet her too:

“ Prior to this role, my career was focused on Community Based Services for adults and children with disabilities. In 2010, I graduated from Iowa State University with a bachelor’s degree in Adult and Family Services. Throughout high school and college, I provided direct care to individuals with disabilities living in their own homes or in a group home setting. Eventually, I moved into a case management role, and this is where my passion for advocating for others truly blossomed. I am

very grateful for this opportunity and look forward to working alongside individuals in the Austin community. Outside of work, I stay busy between my four children and all the activities they are involved in. My husband and I just moved our oldest to college where she started her first semester and our youngest started preschool this fall. There isn't a lot of downtime but when we get the chance, my husband and I enjoy taking the side by side out for a spin or finding a new series on Netflix. ”

Crime Victims Resource Center

1000 First Drive NW, Austin · 507-437-6680

Empowering victims of crime through education, intervention, support and advocacy.

The Crime Victims Resource Center will help individuals who have been victims of many different types of crime. Some of the specific crimes we work with are:

- Accidents involving intoxicated driver
- Assault
- Burglary
- Child Abuse
- Domestic Abuse/Assault
- Elder Abuse
- Harassment
- Sexual Abuse/Assault
- Stalking
- Terroristic Threats
- Theft



Tori Miller
Director



Sasha Border
Victim Advocate



Coleena Snyder
Victim Advocate

Victim Support Services

- 24 hour crisis hotline
- Crisis counseling
- Safety planning
- Arranging emergency shelter
- Support groups
- Referrals to other agencies
- Emergency transportation
- Support during hospital examinations
- Support during police reporting
- Assistance with Orders for Protection and Harassment Restraining Orders
- Assistance with understanding the criminal justice system
- Accompaniment to court proceedings for support
- Updates on the progress of court proceedings
- Notification of victims’ rights

Free and confidential service funded by The Hormel Foundation, Minnesota Department of Public Safety-Office of Justice Programs, and United Way of Mower County.