

# SAFE SPACE

## September 2013 Newsletter



### *The Secondary Survivor*

When a loved one is a survivor of domestic and/or sexual violence, it is natural to want to protect and help them through the traumatic experience. It is important to recognize that in addition to the primary survivor of abuse, the loved ones who are helping them can also be affected by the violence. These loved ones are called "secondary survivors". A secondary survivor can be any family member or friend.

Secondary survivors will often recognize emotions and behaviors from the primary survivor, such as:

- Depression or anxiety
- Drug and/or alcohol abuse
- Eating disorders
- Self-injury or self neglect
- Emotional numbness
- Sleep problems
- Panic Attacks
- Withdrawal from family
- Inability to respond to the needs of their children.

These behaviors and emo-

tions are not exclusive to the primary survivor. In fact, secondary survivors can also experience the same mental pain and anguish as the primary survivor. Guilt, self-blame, and anger can also be experienced by both the primary and secondary survivors as well. A secondary survivor may feel responsible for not recognizing the signs of abuse or taking previous actions during a domestic or sexual assault on a loved one. Experiencing the trauma on an emotional and mental level with a survivor of domestic and/or sexual assault may leave a secondary survivor at a loss as to how they can help, where the resources are, and what to say to their loved one.

Safe Space can help secondary survivors to be a positive support for their loved ones while receiving support and resources to ensure they can heal emotionally and mentally as well. It is important to all survivors that each person recognizes their needs and receives individual support as well as being in support of each other. Here are some tips to help secondary survivors navigate their way to healing and to be able to continue to

provide support to their loved one:

1. Be supportive. This is a broad statement, but means to allow the primary survivor the ability to make choices and take action. Supportive actions may include weighing pros and cons of each option available, providing resource information, legal matters (civil and criminal), and attending support groups or individual counseling sessions. The ability for the primary survivor to make the choice is important to his/her healing process and empowers him/her to break free from the cycle of power and control they experienced with their abuser. Many times, just being there to listen is the best support any person can provide.
2. Consider counseling for yourself. You have also experienced a trauma that can have effects on your wellbeing. Speaking with an outside party with professional background can help you to identify your boundaries in the situation, effectively help your loved one, and learn appropriate coping skills to heal.
3. Be patient. Patience for your loved and for yourself will help both of you to keep moving forward. Small victories are important: i.e., completing the temporary order of protection

one day may be all that a survivor can face—but it is important that he/she was able to complete another positive step towards safety.

4. Don't take it personally. As a survivor goes through the many emotions, withdrawal, anger and blame may begin to show. Remember that you did not cause the violence. You are not the abuser. During those times, it is okay to let your loved one know that you hear how they feel and that you love and care about them.

5. Make time for yourself. Engage in activities that are healthy for you and leave you feeling recharged. This may be a favorite hobby, exercise, lunch with a friend, or even just a nice bubble bath.

6. Educate yourself. Understanding the effects and aftermath of domestic and sexual violence will help you to understand your own emotions as well as your loved ones. This will lead to your ability to better support your loved one as well. Be aware of not becoming obsessed with the violence, but rather try to understand the violence and its effect, and how you and your loved one can become empowered to live a life free from violence.

### *SHELTER*

- \* 24 hr. crisis line
- \* (406) 782-8511
- \* Emergency shelter

### *ADVOCACY*

- An advocate can help with:
- \* Locating financial resources
  - \* Court accompaniment

### *SAFETY*

- \* Brainstorming plans for getting away
- \* Anticipating legal needs and resources

**If you feel unsafe in your home but are not quite ready to leave, call us to discuss safety planning options that might keep you safe until you are ready. Crisis line is available 24 hours/day!**



### *Share with us how we are doing!*

Are you a former client? Volunteer or community Member who is working/has worked with Safe Space? We want to hear from you! With Domestic Violence Awareness Month just around the corner, Safe Space is looking for feedback from those we have served and those we have worked with on their experience. Testimonials will help us to share with the community the positive effects Safe Space has as well as bring an understanding to the community

about what Safe Space can do. Safe Space would also like to hear from clients their suggestions on how we can improve our services. All testimonials received can be submitted anonymously. Please visit our website for further information, or send your written testimonial to:

Safe Space  
P. O. Box 594  
Butte, MT 59703

See one of the testimonials we've all ready received on the right!

"I am so appreciative of everyone here at Safe Space. Your help, guidance and safety—I could never repay it to its fullest."

-Former Client



## ***October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month!***

***Safe Space is planning many awareness activities for the community. Our current schedule is listed below, but remember that our website and Facebook page will be presenting additional activities and updates throughout the rest of September and in October. Join us as we work towards the prevention of domestic violence in our community!***

Safe Space

Office: (406)782-9807

Crisis: (406)782-8511

Toll Free: 1-877-335-8511

Email: safespacebutte@gmail.com

Website: www.safespaceonline.org

### **Coming up!**

October 3—Safe Space 1st Annual Fun Run "Light Up the Night to Stop Violence." 6:30 PM. \$5/person. Visit our website to download the registration form.

October 5—"I Am Woman" 11:00 A.M.—5:30 P.M. at the Copper King Hotel. This event is organized by a group of private citizens and all profits will be donated to Safe Space.

Mid-October—Officer of the Year Luncheon. Safe Space will be presenting the 17th Officer of the Year Award .

All of October—Purple Pinkies! Safe Space is encouraging our community to paint their pinkies purple throughout the month to honor victims, support survivors, and spread prevention awareness. For more information, visit our website!

And don't forget about "Purple Light Nights". Purchase a purple light from Safe Space to shine on your front porch or where it can be seen in support of a community without domestic violence.

**Visit [www.safespaceonline.org](http://www.safespaceonline.org) for more activities and events throughout October 2013!**