

Sexual Assault Awareness Month

DANBURY, CT, May 1, 2023— Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM) ended on April 30, and we are reflecting on the impact we have had over the past month. Cara Mackler, Director of Community Impact, knows how vital awareness months are, "Awareness months are an incredible opportunity to spark important and difficult conversations about the real experiences around sexual violence in our communities, and the kind of support available. But our work doesn't stop with the end of April - it is on all of us to continue raising awareness to help build a safer community free from sexual violence."

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), "Over half of women and almost 1 in 3 men have experienced sexual violence involving physical contact during their lifetimes. One in 4 women and about 1 in 26 men have experienced completed or attempted rape. About 1 in 9 men were made to penetrate someone during his lifetime. Additionally, 1 in 3 women and about 1 in 9 men experienced sexual harassment in a public place." Those statistics are staggering and most likely mean that you or someone you know has experienced sexual violence. We know that those numbers are highly underrepresented because sexual violence is highly underreported. There are many reasons why someone doesn't report their sexual assault and it isn't for anyone to judge or question them for not reporting. They have their reasons and that is reason enough.

Sexual violence is underreported and can have long-term health complications, impact relationships, and a person's overall well-being. We know from the CDC that experiencing violence has detrimental long-term implications. The different forms of violence share common consequences that have health effects across the lifespan, such as mental, emotional, physical, or social problems. These consequences may contribute to chronic health problems like cancer, cardiovascular disease, lung disease, or diabetes. We need to do more to prevent sexual violence. As we move into May, we encourage the community to continue the hard conversations because we know how prevalent sexual violence is in our community. What can you do to help be a part of the solution?

You can promote social norms that protect against violence by encouraging Bystander Intervention approaches. Learn more about these [Bystander Intervention techniques](#) or contact CEE to schedule a training for your company or community group. You can speak up and encourage schools, workplaces, community organizations, and businesses to provide prevention education programming taught by our Community Impact Team. By supporting our message, you can ensure that we can teach skills to prevent violence by encouraging more schools to bring in prevention education programming to teach children and teens green flags for healthy and safe relationships, and learn how to confide in a trusted adult if something feels unsafe. You can support victims and survivors by believing their stories. You can listen to victims without judgment, support them, and connect them with resources like CEE. You can educate yourself and advocate. "Even when we think that there is nothing left to do, there is still room for growth to include helping others to rise from the shame and trauma connected to sexual assault." Abilene Ribeiro, Director of Client Support Services, says. You can do your part by reminding people it is never the victim's fault. It is the perpetrator's fault 100% of the time. Recovering from sexual assault is a process; each person will experience this differently. It may take weeks, months, or years: no one is on the same timeline. Healing from trauma is not linear. Learn more about how you can support someone you care about by visiting <https://www.rainn.org/TALK>

CEE remains a client-focused organization that empowers clients to make their own decisions. We support each survivor as they work through the trauma of violence. We want to remind our community that we are here.

Please visit our newly redesigned website for more information and connect to support at www.thecenterct.org.

If you or someone you know needs support, our no-cost confidential hotlines are available 24/7.

24/7 Domestic Violence Hotline (203)731-5206

24/7 Sexual Assault Hotline (203)731-5204



About The Center for Empowerment and Education

Since its founding in 1975, The Center for Empowerment and Education (CEE), formerly The Women's Center of Greater Danbury, has been a safe haven as the sole provider of services to victims of domestic and sexual violence in the Northern Fairfield and Southern Litchfield County areas. Each year, CEE serves over 30,000 individuals from area communities with confidential services available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year, and provided at no cost.

CEE provides support services in the form of counseling and advocacy, crisis intervention, and emergency shelter. Their advocates empower individuals to find their voice and choose their path toward healing as they rebuild their lives. CEE prevents and reduces interpersonal violence in the community through prevention education and awareness. CEE is reducing trauma by stopping violence from manifesting in the first place. CEE believes that everyone deserves to live a life free from violence.

All funds provided to CEE support their critically needed domestic violence, sexual assault, and resource services for adults and children in an 11-town service area, including: Bethel, Bridgewater, Brookfield, Danbury, New Fairfield, New Milford, Newtown, Redding, Ridgefield, Roxbury, and Sherman. CEE is a member of the Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence (CCADV) and The Connecticut Alliance to End Sexual Violence.

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