

PaintPimaPurple.org



End Domestic Abuse

This is the second in a series of six emails for Domestic Violence Awareness Month. Please help us spread awareness about domestic abuse! Forward this information to friends, family and to other caring community members in your network.

Suzanne's Story

Suzanne's Story: When Suzanne* was just nine, her mother passed away. After her mother's passing, Suzanne's father married a woman he thought would make a good mother for Suzanne. Her father's work often kept him away from home, so she spent most of her time alone with her new stepmother.



It soon became clear that her stepmother never wanted children; she became abusive, both verbally and physically toward Suzanne. When she was given the option to attend a boarding school around the age of thirteen, Suzanne jumped at the chance.

Years later, Suzanne went off to college and got married. Everything was going well, she and her new husband were deeply in love. They had been discussing the possibility of having children, but those dreams were quickly shattered when her husband died in a car accident. Eventually, she remarried someone she thought was a kind and loving man. However, her life had taken another wrong turn.

By the time Suzanne came to Emerge! in spring of 2013, she had endured 16 years of abuse from her second husband. The police had been called by a mail carrier who overheard him abusing her. Her husband was arrested for domestic violence and Suzanne went to stay with a longtime friend. When Suzanne returned for her belongings, she found her husband burning her clothes in their backyard. This time Suzanne called the police herself, and her husband was removed from the home.

Suzanne frequently returns to Emerge! for support in stepping out of the cycle of abuse and moving forward with her life. She always brings a list of topics to discuss, and is proactively working to educate herself about the dynamics of abuse and healthy relationships. She has been able to identify the patterns of abuse that occurred through the course of her second marriage. She found herself connecting the dots; the abuse in her marriage had been an echo of the abuse inflicted by her stepmother when she was a child. She loves her new life and is thankful to have found clarity.

**The names, photos and identifying details in all of our participant stories have been changed to protect the identity of the people described. Read more stories online by clicking [here](#).*

Reasons People Stay In Abusive Relationships

Leaving is not as easy as it may seem. Suzanne (from above) endured 16 years of abuse. Abusers create a variety of barriers to prevent the person they are abusing from escaping. They often ruin the person's credit, prevent them from keeping a job, talk them into letting go of their work/school permit that they need to reside legally in this country-all to make them dependent. This is in addition to driving away the person's family and friends. Often these tactics are in place before the physical abuse starts. Leaving is the most dangerous time in an abusive relationship; it can escalate the abuse.

Reasons they might stay:

- Fear of retribution against not only the person experiencing the abuse, but against children, other family members or pets (the most serious injuries and deaths in domestic abuse cases occur once the victim has left or tries to leave their abuser).
- Hope that the relationship will get better/go back to the way it was
- Financial dependence
- Low self-esteem
- Guilt or feelings of obligation
- Marriage coupled with traditional value systems of the abused person's culture or religion
- Fear/experience of not being believed
- Fear of losing/not being able to support their children
- Isolation or lack of support from family, friends or the community
- Emotional dependence
- Immigration status

Domestic Abuse Is More Common Than You Might Think

Myth: Domestic abuse is rare; most people don't know anyone who has been abused.

Fact: One in every four women and nearly one in seven men in the U.S. report having experienced physical violence by an intimate partner at some point in their lifetime. Domestic abuse is in every community. Often domestic abuse is hard to identify because it is often misunderstood and hidden. Domestic abuse can be financial, emotional, verbal and/or physical; often more than one type of abuse is present.

You Can Help Paint Pima Purple!

October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month. Help us raise awareness by forwarding these emails to your friends and associates. On October 17, 2014, wear purple and/or a purple ribbon. For more ideas on how to participate, read these emails, or visit www.paintpimapurple.org.

In the Coming Weeks:

Reasons People Stay in Abusive Relationships, How to Respond, Warning Signs, and Safety Planning.

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Emerge! Center Against Domestic Abuse

Our Mission is to provide the opportunity to create, sustain and celebrate a life free from abuse.

Anyone can experience abuse. Emerge! Center Against Domestic Abuse serves anyone without regard for gender, race, creed, color, religion, ethnicity, gender identity or gender expression, age, sexual orientation, or disability. The majority of the people seeking services are women and their children, however our programs are available to everyone.

Need Support? Call the Emerge! Hotline. It's open 24 hours a day, seven days a week and is available in both English and Spanish. If you need help, or need to know how to help a friend/family member, the hotline is here for you. Local: 795-4266 Toll-free: 888-428-0101. Learn more at www.emergecenter.org or at www.paintpimapurple.org

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