Did you know that according to the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence (www.ncadv.org) every 9 seconds a woman in the U.S. is beaten by an intimate partner? Or that 1 in 4 men will experience DV in their lifetimes? Or that on a typical day, more than 20,000 calls are placed to DV hotlines nationally? These are sobering statistics but these are just a few of the statistics that pertain to DV, sexual assault and stalking.

Many times, when we hear about domestic violence or DV, we question: “Why doesn’t she/he just leave, if it is so bad?” Well, there are many reasons: fear, nowhere to go, money, transportation, status (e.g. if the victim is in the country illegally), the victim’s own criminal record or drug use, but mostly, fear of not being believed or that nobody will help. Domestic violence cuts across all lines: social, economical, gender, sexual orientation, religious and racial lines. Anyone can become the victim of domestic violence.

During the month of October, you will notice information posted and displayed around campus about domestic violence, its impact, statistics and ways to get help for yourself, or offer help to someone you care about. But, October is not the only time advocacy needs to occur. In accordance with new federal mandates, and within the new authorization of the Violence Against Women Act and Title IX, we as a community and an institution of higher education have a charge to educate students, staff and faculty about violence, including domestic violence. As such, many activities and information postings will occur throughout the year, not just October. Thus, keep an eye out for information that you can share, you can use to help yourself or someone you care about, or just to be an advocate.

If you, or someone you know is experiencing domestic violence, know that you are not alone and there is help. The National Domestic Violence Hotline is a great resource: 1.800.799.SAFE. A local agency that assists victims is Sojourn Shelter and Service, Inc. Their 24-hour hotline can be reached at 1.866.HELP4DV or 726-5200. Additionally, the National Sexual Assault Hotline can be reached at 1.800.656.HOPE or the local agency, Prairie Center Against Sexual Assault, can be reached at 753.8081.