



Tackling domestic violence

Domestic Violence Solutions unveils new posters to help victims get help

by Dave Mason
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Domestic Violence Solutions for Santa Barbara County unveiled new posters Thursday to raise awareness and help survivors.

They're being placed in break rooms and other areas frequented by employees in local government workplaces throughout Santa Barbara County.

"They're in workplace areas in all county buildings and in the city halls in almost of the cities of Santa Barbara County," Ken Oplinger, the interim executive director and director of operations at DVS, told the News-Press after a news conference on the steps of the Santa Barbara County administration building in Santa Barbara.



Ken Oplinger, far right, the interim executive director and director of operations at Domestic Violence Solutions for Santa Barbara County, discusses the new domestic violence awareness poster as elected officials listen. From left are state Sen. Monique Limón, Supervisor Gregg Hart and Supervisor Das Williams.

Mr. Oplinger said DVS hopes to later extend its reach and place the posters in private workplaces.

The poster says, "Everyone deserves a healthy relationship. No one ever deserves to be mistreated."

"Abuse is a pattern of behavior that one person uses to gain power and control over another," the poster says. "These behaviors can include isolation, emotional abuse, monitoring, controlling finances, cyber abuse, or physical and sexual assault."

The poster goes on to cite statistics. Then it provides the 24/7 information and crisis hotline and website for Domestic Violence Solutions for Santa Barbara County, as well as the number and website for the National Domestic Violence Hotline. (See the FYI box.)

There are both English and Spanish versions of the poster.

The posters are going up in the workplace, where survivors are away from their abusers and feel safe and empowered to seek help, Patricia Ritchie, chair of the DVS Advocacy Committee and the DVS board treasurer, told the News-Press.

“Domestic violence is not an issue specific to one country or place,” Mr. Oblinger told reporters as local elected officials listened in front of the county administration building on Anapamu Street. “It knows no gender, no race, no ethnicity, no economic status, no sexual orientation, and it can happen to anyone.



Domestic Violence Solutions unveils the posters going up in city halls and Santa Barbara County government buildings.

“And yet, even though so many people are familiar with domestic violence, it remains one of those things that just aren’t spoken of,” Mr. Oblinger said.

He said one of DVS’ goals is to break through the silence “that may cause us to turn a blind eye to domestic violence.”

Gregg Hart, the 2nd District representative on the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors, stressed that domestic violence has no place in the community.

“We are here to stand with the survivors of domestic violence,” Supervisor Hart told reporters. “All too often, the survivors of domestic violence have felt alone or unheard. That is not acceptable in our community. We want survivors to know we hear you and are dedicated to providing everything you need. Domestic Violence Solutions is here to serve you and provide all the assistance you need.”

Mr. Hart noted that often the county has seen repeat offenders of domestic violence. “This is the time to unite together to create more effective intervention and prevention programs in our justice system.”



State Sen. Monique Limón announces her plan to introduce a bill to create a framework for placing domestic violence awareness posters in workplace throughout the state.

At Thursday’s news conference, state Sen. Monique Limón announced that she will introduce a bill during the 2023 session to establish a framework to place domestic violence awareness posters in workplaces throughout California. Like the posters in Santa Barbara County, they will feature phone numbers and websites where survivors can get help.

“I’m thankful to Domestic Violence Solutions because they brought the idea for this bill to me.”

Sen. Limón said the information on the posters will save lives and that a similar framework already exists in Washington state, Oregon, Colorado and Missouri.

“We all know the statistics about domestic violence,” Sen. Limón said during the news conference. “We know that during the pandemic, we saw the highest levels of domestic violence in our community.”

Sen. Limón later told the News-Press that her goal is to create a template for other counties to create the posters. She said often employers want to provide resources but don’t know where to start.

Sen. Limón described the legislation as a bipartisan effort to provide resources such as phone numbers and website links.

Das Williams, the 1st District representative on the Board of Supervisors, discussed the county’s declaration of October as Domestic Violence Awareness Month.

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