



# Soboba Tribal Family Services

## FEBRUARY NEWSLETTER

### TEEN DATING VIOLENCE AWARENESS MONTH



"Our families made strong through balance and support."

#### Soboba Tribal Family Services Staff:

**Nancy Currie, Director**

**Alicia Golchuk, Tribal Social Worker**

**Catherine Gonzalez, Legal Admin. Assistant**

#### **Office Hours:**

**Mon-Thurs 7:00am to 5:30 pm**

**(951) 487-0283**

#### **Teen Dating Violence Prevention Resources**

There are limited resources available for teen dating violence prevention among American Indian and Alaska Native females. **The Native American Women's Health Education Resource Center** has developed the Teen Dating Curriculum for girls. For more information, call the Center at (605) 487-7072 or visit [www.nativeshop.org](http://www.nativeshop.org).

Other emerging issues for teens are harassment through cellular phones and texting. More information on the awareness month can be found at the **Teen Dating Violence Prevention Project** at [www.teendvmonth.org](http://www.teendvmonth.org).

Other noteworthy teen based dating violence campaigns are **Choose Respect** [www.chooserespect.org](http://www.chooserespect.org) and **Start Strong** [www.startstrongteens.org](http://www.startstrongteens.org). The Family Violence Prevention Fund has produced posters and awareness material on violence prevention for American Indian and Alaska Native adults and teens. **Family Violence Prevention Fund** resource materials can be found at [www.endabuse.org](http://www.endabuse.org).

"A nation is not defeated until the hearts of its women are on the ground. Then it is done, no matter how brave its warriors or how strong its weapons."  
-- Cheyenne proverb



#### **Alternatives to Domestic Violence 24-hour Hotline**

Riverside City and out of County: (951) 683-0829

Remainder of Riverside County: (800) 799-SAFE (7233)

(800) 787-3224 – TDD Line

**If you are in immediate danger call 9-1-1**

#### **February is Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month**

Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month brings to focus the issue of teen dating violence and the need to educate our youth about healthy relationships and raise awareness within the care providers such as health centers, schools and families. Together we can work together to prevent the cycle of violence in abusive relationships.

Approximately one in three adolescent girls in the US is a victim of physical, emotional or verbal abuse from a partner. American Indian and Alaska Native young women are survivors of dating violence or will experience dating violence at some point in their lives. Limited or non-existent information is available on this health issue in adolescent American Indian and Alaska Native females. A 1992 Minnesota youth study found that 92% of American Indian girls who reported having sexual intercourse have been forced against their will to have sex. In addition, 62% of those girls reported to have been pregnant by the 12<sup>th</sup> grade. The problem is addressed after it occurs and not prevented before it happens.

Excerpted from an article by Michelle Begay, Public Health Analyst of the Indian Health Service Domestic Violence Prevention Initiative, found at [www.ihs.gov](http://www.ihs.gov).

If you think your friend is a victim of dating violence, step up to help. Your help may save your friend's life.

#### **Common clues that indicate a teen may be experiencing dating violence:**

- Physical signs of injury
- Truancy, dropping out of school
- Failing grades
- Indecision
- Changes in mood or personality
- Use of drugs/alcohol
- Pregnancy
- Emotional outburst
- Apologizing for their girlfriend's/boyfriend's behavior
- Isolation - spending all their time with their boyfriend/girlfriend

## TEEN CORNER

### How to Tell Someone About an Abusive Relationship

We know that telling someone in your life that the person you are dating is abusive is not easy. We know that you don't want to talk about it and the people in your life will probably have trouble hearing it. However, these people can help you get through this and give you the support you need.

Start small by telling the person you feel most comfortable with. If the person you want to tell is friends with your abusive partner, this is not the person to tell. Not everyone is able to help. The most important thing is that you find someone who can help keep you safe, makes you feel secure and does not judge what is happening to you.

Keep in mind that if you don't have to tell all these people, but it can help if you let some of them know what is going on. What's been happening will be difficult, sometimes nearly impossible for the people around you to wrap their head around. Here are some pointers on how to prepare for telling these people:

**Your Parents.** Sitting Mom or Dad down can be really hard, but they can help you figure out the best ways to keep you safe. We often suggest to callers that they blame not being able to see an abusive partner on their parents not allowing it, so your parents can be huge allies in this. You don't have to tell them everything but just let them know that you're scared of your partner. Their first reaction may be to call his or her parents, ground you or be upset with you. Be patient with them because they are probably very upset and concerned for you. After you give them some time to process, talk about ways to keep you safe.

*[Continued on next column]*

If you are a teenager involved in an abusive relationship, you need to **know that no one deserves to be abused or threatened.**

Remember...you cannot change your batterer, and in time the violence will get worse.

You need to take care of yourself. Talk to a trusted adult, call Soboba Tribal Family Services, or call the local shelter serving victims of domestic abuse (ADV (800) 799-7233.)

Together, we can make a plan to keep you safe.



Violence Against Women is Not Our Tradition

### How to Tell Someone About an Abusive Relationship (cont'd)

Prepare a list of what you are afraid of. For example, saying "I am afraid [insert abusive partner's name] is going to call my phone non-stop or break into our house when no one else is home."

**Your Friends.** Make sure that these friends know not to tell your abuser or anyone who might tell your abuser that you are opening up to them. These are your friends and they care about you. What you've been experiencing is really traumatic and stressful and you need their nonjudgmental support right now. Your friends may not be able to solve everything, but they can help keep you safe by walking with you to class, not tweeting or Facebooking where you are and protecting you from having to see your abuser. For this conversation, prepare a list of what you are afraid of that they can help with. For example, letting them know that your abusive partner threatened to spread rumors about you can encourage them to do some damage control around school.

### Your Teacher, Coach, Counselor, Band

**Director.** These people may be the ones you aren't as comfortable telling, but they can help in keeping you safe at school. You don't need to go into all of the details, but highlight that you don't feel safe at school and fear that someone is going to threaten, spread rumors or hurt you. If this person isn't able to give you the help you need, find someone else at school who can. Know that these mentors may be required to report the abuse.

To view the entire blog post, visit [www.loveisrespect.org](http://www.loveisrespect.org). Scroll down to the Recent Posts and click "How to Tell Someone About an Abusive Relationship"



Soboba Tribal Family Services has received a grant from the Administration for Native Americans to develop training curriculum and outreach/recruitment for relative caregivers and tribal foster parents for Soboba children.

If you are interested in becoming a foster parent for Soboba children or are already providing care for a relative and would like some training and support please give us a call. Look for posters and brochures in the near future.