

## Suggested Domestic Violence Awareness Month Activities

October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month (DVAM) and across the nation, battered women's advocates will join elected officials, health care providers, business leaders, police officers, faith-based groups, concerned citizens and many others to organize events and activities that raise awareness about domestic violence. Events range from national efforts to statewide activities to local community events. The activities will vary in size and costs. However, the goal of DVAM activities is to raise awareness about the prevalence and cost of domestic violence, the absolute need for prevention, and availability of services for victims.

Listed below are a few examples of successful DVAM events that have been developed and utilized by numerous domestic violence service providers in Texas and across the country.

1. **Save our Sisters March:** A two-mile march through your local community for citizens to show their support in ending domestic violence. At the conclusion of the march, participants can hear from survivors, sing songs, and hold a moment of silence in honor of those lost to domestic violence.
2. **Pets against Violence:** A fun walk for pets and their owners. The purpose is to raise awareness of the correlation between pet abuse and domestic violence. People can register for the walk with or without pets. Tables can be sold to vendors for a set amount to display their products or services. Local organizations can be asked to develop posters with statements about pet abuse and domestic violence and held up during the walk.
3. **Men's March against Violence:** Men march through the local community with local elected officials and other prominent community leaders. Participants can hold a large banner along with individualized group banners and pledges written on posters. A rally following the march can be held at city hall with several speakers. The event can be closed with a memorial to those killed as a result of domestic violence.
4. **Halloween Treat Bags:** A unique way to connect Halloween and domestic violence education and prevention. Have your local hotline number or contact information on Halloween treat bags. Your agency can distribute light reflective Halloween bags with a domestic violence message to local elementary school children.
5. **Candlelight Vigil:** A candlelight ceremony in memory of individuals who have suffered and died from domestic violence and in celebration of the work done to end violence. An important public place should be selected for the vigil. Ceremony can include the playing of music, reading of poetry, dance performances, survivor stories and moments of silence. Purple ribbons can be distributed during the vigil and participants asked to wear the ribbons throughout the month.
6. **Pledge Wall:** A free standing wall located in a visible and prominent place in the local community with "Men Standing with Women against Domestic Violence". Signed pledges from men in the community are attached/taped to the wall.
7. **Speak Out:** Numerous prominent community leaders and a domestic violence survivor are invited to speak about the need to end violence in the community. Signs are displayed around the location of the event related to and explaining the purpose of the event. A eye-catching, visible banner can be displayed across a main intersection or street publicizing the activity. Speeches, group sharing, and a candle lighting ceremony and moment of silence in honor of victims can be utilized. Domestic violence information can be distributed and refreshments served.

8. **Hospital Training Workshops:** Domestic violence service providers can offer training workshops on domestic violence for all local hospital departments and staff. Workshops can be held throughout the month at various times to accommodate all employees. The training goal is to motivate health care professionals to improve their response to domestic violence victims and families.
9. **Day of Healing Activity:** A date is selected and all local churches are asked to sponsor/hold independent discussions of the problem of domestic violence. This event is coordinated with local church leaders who are asked to educate their congregations about domestic violence and to reach out to members who may be in need of assistance and support. Printed materials and other resources can be provided to participating clergy by local domestic violence-related providers. The local ministerial alliance can be approached for support.
10. **Get Involved Day:** Local programs can recruit/approach volunteers and area businesses to distribute DVAM materials. The local agency can organize a meeting at a central community location/site, provide volunteers with refreshments, play music and have prominent leaders deliver speeches. At the conclusion of the event, volunteers are asked to fan out to distribute information which can include posters, palm cards, brochures, and merchandise.
11. **Let's Have Coffee:** The local agency can approach a local coffee shop to sponsor a small group discussion on domestic violence. Invitations can be sent out to local elected officials, business owners, church and neighborhood leaders, law enforcement officials and domestic violence advocates. The program can involve a brief presentation by the local agency followed by a facilitated discussion on domestic violence.
12. **Wish List Drive:** Place posters in area beauty salons displaying the shelter's wish list and provide literature and information on domestic violence. For every item donated, the person's name is entered in a drawing for a prize.
13. **Children's Campaign:** Have children from the local shelter write thank you cards with painted hand prints and have them distributed to police departments, probation officials, judges and prosecutors in the area.
14. **Chili Cook-Off:** Sponsor a chili cooking contest with donated prizes and entertainment. Invitations can be extended to individual cooks, teams, and restaurants to compete with tasting open to the public. The money raised would benefit the local shelter.
15. **Library Displays:** Contact and work with public libraries by providing domestic violence information and materials which can be displayed in a visible, high traffic location in the library.