

## Message from the NYC Healthy Relationship Training Academy



(The leadership team of the NYC Healthy Relationship Training Academy. From Left: Elizabeth Falcone, Director of Youth Programs, and Program Assistants Isabella Odonkor, Michael Wallace, Jr., and Bella Tabassum.)

May was National Foster Care Awareness Month, the annual recognition of the year-round needs of young people in the foster care system and the organizations that serve them. For the Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence (OCDV), this month marked a time to continue growing and strengthening programs that support youth in care by raising awareness about teen dating violence, building youths' skills in healthy relationship development, and connecting young people and foster care service providers to resources.

In February 2016, OCDV launched the Creating Awareness about Relationship Equality (CARE) program to provide workshops on teen dating violence awareness and healthy relationship skill building to young people in the New York City foster care system. The CARE program arose through collaboration with the Administration for Children's Services (ACS), as part of First Lady Chirlane McCray's ThriveNYC mental health initiative, in recognition of the unique needs and vulnerabilities that youth in care too often face, particularly when it comes to relationship abuse.

In 2015, over 5,000 children in New York City were placed in foster care after domestic violence was confirmed in their homes. The devastating consequences exposure to domestic violence can have for young people cannot be overstated. Studies show that growing up in a home where domestic

violence is present is a significant predictor of children becoming either victims or perpetrators of relationship abuse later in life.

The CARE program aims to support youth in care by offering educational and prevention-focused workshops on the subjects of teen dating violence and healthy relationships. These workshops are provided through OCDV's youth program, the NYC Healthy Relationship Training Academy (Academy). As with all Academy workshops, the workshops offered through the CARE program are facilitated by peer educators between the ages of 17-26, who encourage open discussion and critical thinking about the challenging topic of relationship behaviors.

Through its peer education model, the Academy and CARE program offer young people the opportunity to connect and learn with others who face similar pressures and concerns. For one Academy peer educator, she feels that relationship abuse is a critical topic to talk about with teens, but particularly with teens in the foster care system. Her own experiences growing up in the New York City foster care system have shown her how the "desire to belong" that youth in care may feel, and that she felt as a young person, can easily be exploited by a partner. As she noted, "For my peers who were also in foster care, their relationships too easily turned into narratives of a partner saying: 'No one else cares about you the way that I do. Your parents even abandoned you. But as long as you do what I say, our relationship can last forever.'"

Through collaborative initiatives such as the CARE program, youth in foster care can be supported in developing the skills to create and maintain healthy, positive relationships that bring them personal fulfillment and growth. Since its launch in February, the CARE program has reached over 250 youth in care and is working toward its goal of reaching 5,000 young people in the foster care system annually. Further, in order to create a broader culture of healthy relationships for young people, the Academy will conduct trainings to 900 foster care parents and foster care agency staff so that young people can receive continuous support from the adults in their lives as they build healthy, positive relationships.

In recognition of National Foster Care Awareness Month, please support the efforts of the CARE program by hosting a workshop or training, which can be requested [through our website](#) or by emailing [OCDVacademy@cityhall.nyc.gov](mailto:OCDVacademy@cityhall.nyc.gov).

- Elizabeth Falcone, Director of Youth Programs



Host a workshop on teen dating violence and healthy relationships with OCDV's NYC Healthy Relationship Training Academy. Submit your request through our online [workshop request form](#) or call the Academy at 212-788-2516.

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## Upcoming OCDV Events & Trainings

***\*Please note that Family Justice Center trainings are geared toward service providers and professionals.***

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**Domestic Violence Dialogue**

*Facilitated by FJC Administrative Staff*  
Monday, June 13<sup>th</sup>, 2:00 p.m.-5:00 p.m.  
NYC Family Justice Center, Manhattan  
80 Centre Street, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor  
To register, please [click here](#).

**Risk Assessment and Safety Planning**

*Facilitated by STEPS to End Family Violence*  
Tuesday, June 14<sup>th</sup>, 2:00 p.m.-5:00 p.m.  
NYC Family Justice Center, Manhattan  
80 Centre Street, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor  
To register, please [click here](#).

**Cultural Conversations**

*Facilitated by NYC Anti-Violence Project & OCDV Staff*  
Wednesday, June 15<sup>th</sup>, 2:00 p.m.-5:00 p.m.  
NYC Family Justice Center, Manhattan  
80 Centre Street, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor  
To register, please [click here](#).

**Housing and Shelter**

*Facilitated by New Destiny Housing, Sanctuary for Families, Safe Horizon*  
Friday, June 17<sup>th</sup>, 10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.  
NYC Family Justice Center, Manhattan  
80 Centre Street, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor  
To register, please [click here](#).

**Trafficking and Commercial Sexual Exploitation**

*Facilitated by the Center for Court Innovation & New York Asian Women's Center*  
Monday, June 20<sup>th</sup>, 10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.  
NYC Family Justice Center, Manhattan  
80 Centre Street, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor  
To register, please [click here](#).

**Criminal Justice Responses to Domestic Violence**

*Facilitated by the Manhattan DA's Office & NYPD*  
Monday, June 20<sup>th</sup>, 2:00 p.m.-4:00 p.m.  
NYC Family Justice Center, Manhattan  
80 Centre Street, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor  
To register, please [click here](#).

**Immigration Law**

*Facilitated by NY Legal Assistance Group & Sanctuary for Families*  
Tuesday, June 21<sup>st</sup>, 2:00 p.m.-5:00 p.m.  
NYC Family Justice Center, Manhattan  
80 Centre Street, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor  
To register, please [click here](#).

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**Family and Matrimonial Law**

*Facilitated by NY Legal Assistance Group*

Wednesday, June 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2:00 p.m.-5:00 p.m.

NYC Family Justice Center, Manhattan

80 Centre Street, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor

To register, please [click here](#).

**Elder Abuse**

*Facilitated by the Weinberg Center*

Tuesday, June 28<sup>th</sup>, 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

NYC Family Justice Center, Manhattan

80 Centre Street, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor

To register, please [click here](#).

**Economic Empowerment**

*Facilitated by Sanctuary for Families & the Financial Clinic*

Wednesday, June 29<sup>th</sup>, 10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.

NYC Family Justice Center, Manhattan

80 Centre Street, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor

To register, please [click here](#).

**Immigrant Eligibility for Public Benefits**

*Facilitated by OCDV Staff*

Wednesday, June 29<sup>th</sup>, 1:30 p.m.-4:30 p.m.

NYC Family Justice Center, Manhattan

80 Centre Street, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor

To register, please [click here](#).

**QUEENS:****Power and Control: Focus on the Batterer**

*Facilitated by Anthony Rizzuto, LMSW, CASAC*

Wednesday, June 15<sup>th</sup>, 10 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

NYC Family Justice Center, Queens

126-02 82<sup>nd</sup> Avenue

To register, please [click here](#).

**Working with Transgender Communities**

*Facilitated by New York Commission on Human Rights*

Thursday, June 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2:30 p.m.-4:00 p.m.

NYC Family Justice Center, Queens

126-02 82<sup>nd</sup> Avenue

To register, please [click here](#).

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**Top News Stories from May**

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## Message from Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence to Survivors in Staten Island: You're Not Alone



(The entrance to the new Family Justice Center on Staten Island, opening this month. This is the fifth Family Justice Center in New York City, completing the goal of seeing a Center in every borough. From Left: Janeira Bencosme-Gil, Director of Programs & Outreach; Darren Albanese, Executive Director; Alison Francis-Lord, Deputy Director.)

The Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence (OCDV) is acutely aware of the domestic violence homicides that have occurred on Staten Island this year. Every death is a tragedy, and when it occurs at the hands of an intimate partner, we must respond with a renewed urgency to eradicate domestic violence of all kinds across our city, in every borough. OCDV is partnering closely with the Richmond County District Attorney, City agencies and community members to work toward this goal, and to make sure Staten Islanders know where they can turn for help.

[Read more](#)

## **New York Makes Changes to Domestic Incident Report**

New York Governor Andrew Cuomo announced important changes to the state Domestic Incident Report (DIR). The report allows law enforcement officials to collect more detailed information to enhance investigations, improve officer safety, and connect domestic violence victims with services to break the cycle of abuse. The governor's office says the form will allow police agencies to better document domestic violence incident calls, enhance victim and officer safety, and investigate domestic violence crimes.

> [Read More](#)

## **Sen. Schumer Backs PAWS Act to Protect Domestic Violence Survivors and Their Pets**

The Protect Pets and Women from Domestic Violence, or PAWS Act, would help fund pet-friendly domestic violence shelters. It would also strengthen protections against animal abuse. Schumer says pets are sometimes threatened and held hostage by abusers as a power and control tactic.

> [Read More](#)

## **#MaybeHeDoesntHitYou Spotlights Relationship Violence That Isn't Physical**

When many people think of domestic violence, they likely picture something not unlike Rihanna's bruised and battered face at the hands of then-boyfriend Chris Brown in 2009. However, physical violence is not the only way domestic violence exists. Twitter users reminded everyone about the nonphysical forms abuse of relationship abuse can take with the hashtag #MaybeHeDoesntHitYou. According to StopRelationshipAbuse.org, warning signs of abuse include a partner preventing you from seeing your friends and family, or humiliating you in front of them. Your partner might make it a point to knock down your self-worth. Or leave you worrying about if — or when — the abuse will become physical.

> [Read More](#)

## **Pastors, Imams And Rabbis Urge Congress To Close Gun Loopholes For Domestic Abusers**

Nearly 500 Christian, Jewish and Muslim faith leaders have signed a letter asking Congress to close loopholes in federal law that allow domestic abusers to own and buy firearms. "Domestic violence, dating abuse, and stalking are extreme violations of the dignity and humanity of a person, and these crimes have no place in our faith traditions," the letter reads. "As people of faith, we affirm the right of every person to live free from violence, and we ask that you act now to protect that sacred right." The letter urges members of Congress to support the Zero Tolerance for Domestic Abusers Act (HR 3130) and the Protecting Domestic Violence and Stalking Victims Act (S 1520), which would expand federal prohibitions

on firearms to include stalkers and individuals who abuse dating partners.

> [Read More](#)

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## Almost A Third Of Mass Shooting Deaths In 2015 Were Related To Domestic Violence

Thirty-one percent of all mass shooting deaths in 2015 were related to domestic violence incidents, according to a New York Times analysis. The New York Times examined violent episodes in which four or more people were killed or wounded by a firearm, including the shooter. In 2015, there were 358 shootings that fit that category, which resulted in 462 dead and 1,330 injured. While domestic violence incidents were only 39 of the total episodes, they were responsible for 145 deaths. That's around 31 percent of the total killings.

> [Read More](#)

## Domestic Violence Kills More People Than Wars, Global Study Finds

Domestic violence is more costly than warfare, in terms of both lives lost and dollars spent, according to a new global report that says the issue is largely overlooked. The study authors conclude that domestic abuse, perpetrated mostly against women and children, costs about \$9.5 trillion dollars each year in lost economic output. That far surpasses the price tag for recent civil wars, estimated at an annual \$170 billion, as well as for homicides unrelated to intimate partner violence, estimated at an annual \$650 billion. Researchers arrived at those ballpark figures by attempting to estimate both tangible and intangible costs resulting from violence, like lost earnings, reduced economic activity, and health consequences. The human cost is also greater. According to the researchers, roughly nine people are killed in domestic disputes for every one person who dies in a civil war. About 769 million women are the victims of domestic violence at some point in their lives, and 290 million children are subject to violence in their homes.

> [Read More](#)

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## Many Victims of Domestic Abuse Do Not Know Their Spouse Can Be Their Rapist

## Advocates' Hopes High for Domestic Violence Hotline for Native Women

One of the difficulties in reporting intimate partner violence statistics is that many people don't realize that marital rape is rape. "Until 1993, throughout most of the United States, it was not illegal to force sexual intercourse on your spouse," says Dr. Karla Ivankovich. "Specifically, the laws excluded the spouse as a perpetrator when defining the occurrence of a rape." The melting pot of cultures and religions nationwide are another challenge when it comes to clarifying what constitutes rape. "You can't dismiss the role of upbringing and beliefs," Ivankovich insists. "In some cultures, it remains permissible to forcibly engage in sexual activities with your spouse — and for many, what happens behind closed doors in a marriage stays behind closed doors."

> [Read More](#)

Rape and domestic violence against Native women have reached "epidemic proportions," but the hotlines that could help are often unprepared for the unique cultural needs of tribal women who may live in rural areas with little support and a bewildering legal system. But that could be changing. Sometime this year, the National Domestic Violence Hotline expects to take the first call at a hotline created specifically to respond to tribal victims. The hotline, four years in the making, will be staffed either by tribal women or specially trained advocates "who can answer calls from Native women to help them ... problem-solve around these issues," said Katie Ray-Jones, CEO of the national hotline.

> [Read More](#)

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## Survey Says 30% of Millennials Have Been Financially Hurt by a Partner

Nearly a third of people ages 18 to 35 have had a romantic partner act dishonestly or abusively with money, according to a new survey by financial wellness community CentSai. About 30 percent of millennials surveyed said they've been the victim of financial abuse, defined as using money to assert power or control in a relationship — by cutting off access to a shared bank account, for example — or financial infidelity, such as concealing activities regarding joint funds.

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