

Domestic Violence and Housing for Survivors



Presenters

Leah Droge – Friendship Home

Linda Olson – Bright Horizons

Hilary Wasserburger – The DOVES Program

Moderator

Lee Heflebower – Nebraska Coalition to End Sexual & Domestic Violence

Domestic Violence Programs

Offer a life line to survivors

May be able to help a survivor stay safely in their own home

May provide a range of services including

- Homeless Prevention
- Diversion
- Emergency Shelter
- Rapid Rehousing
- Transitional Housing
- Support services

Domestic Violence Programs

On September 12, 2019, 186 adult and child victims found refuge in DV Emergency Shelters, Transitional Housing or other Housing provided by local programs.

71 requests went unmet because of a lack of resources

National Domestic Violence Statistics

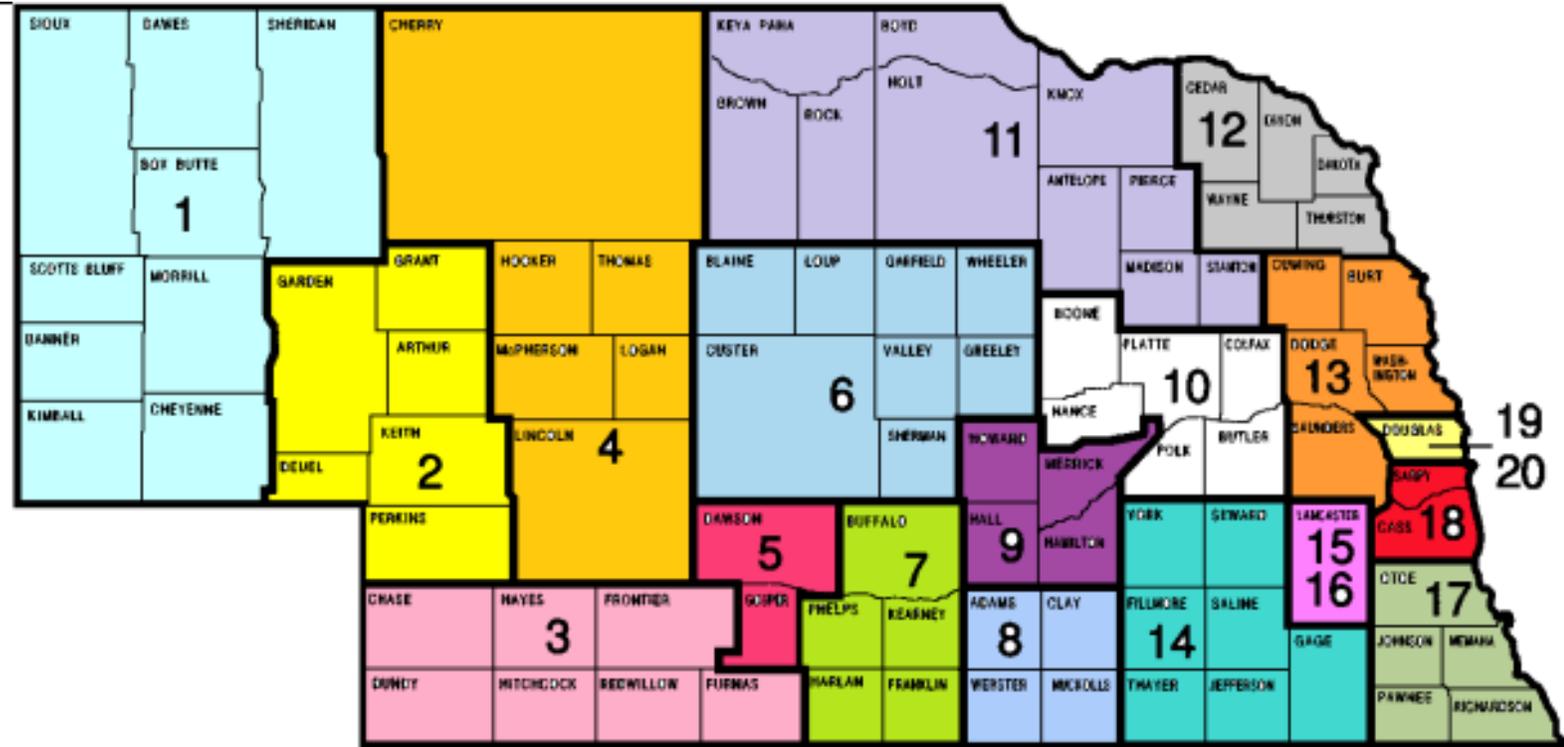
- 1 in 4 women and 1 in 9 men experience severe intimate partner physical violence, intimate partner contact sexual violence, and/or intimate partner stalking with impacts such as injury, fearfulness, post-traumatic stress disorder, use of victim services, contraction of sexually transmitted diseases, etc.
- Domestic violence is the leading cause of injury to women age 15-44 years.
- Domestic violence accounts for 15% of all violent crime.

Bright Horizons

Linda Olson

Executive Director

Area #11 Northeast/ North Central
Counties served: Keya Paha, Brown, Rock, Boyd, Holt, Knox, Antelope, Pierce, Madison, Stanton



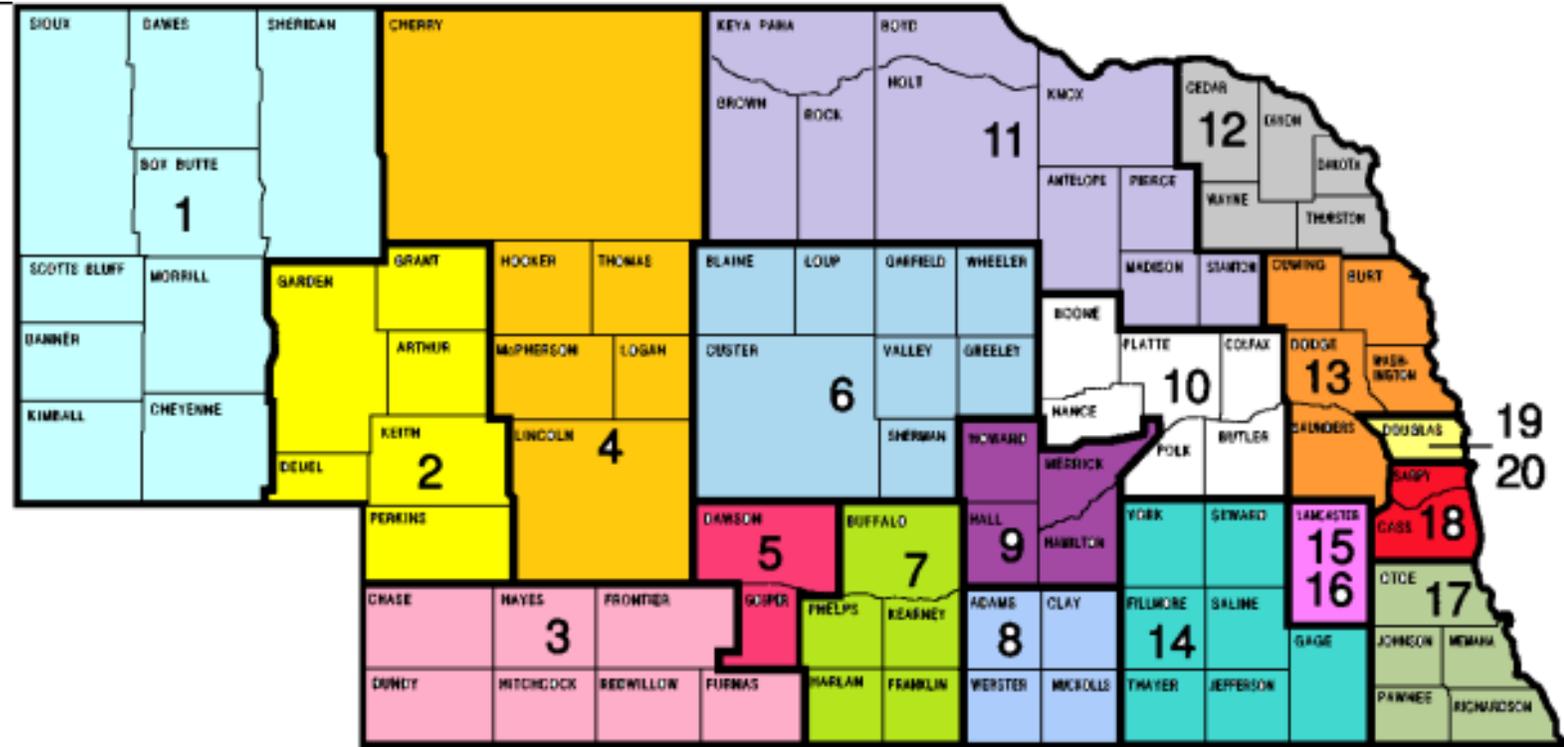
The DOVES Program

Hilary Wasserburger

Executive Director

Area #1 Panhandle

Counties served: Sioux, Scotts Bluff, Banner, Kimball, Dawes, Box Butte, Morrill, Cheyenne, Sheridan,



Friendship Home

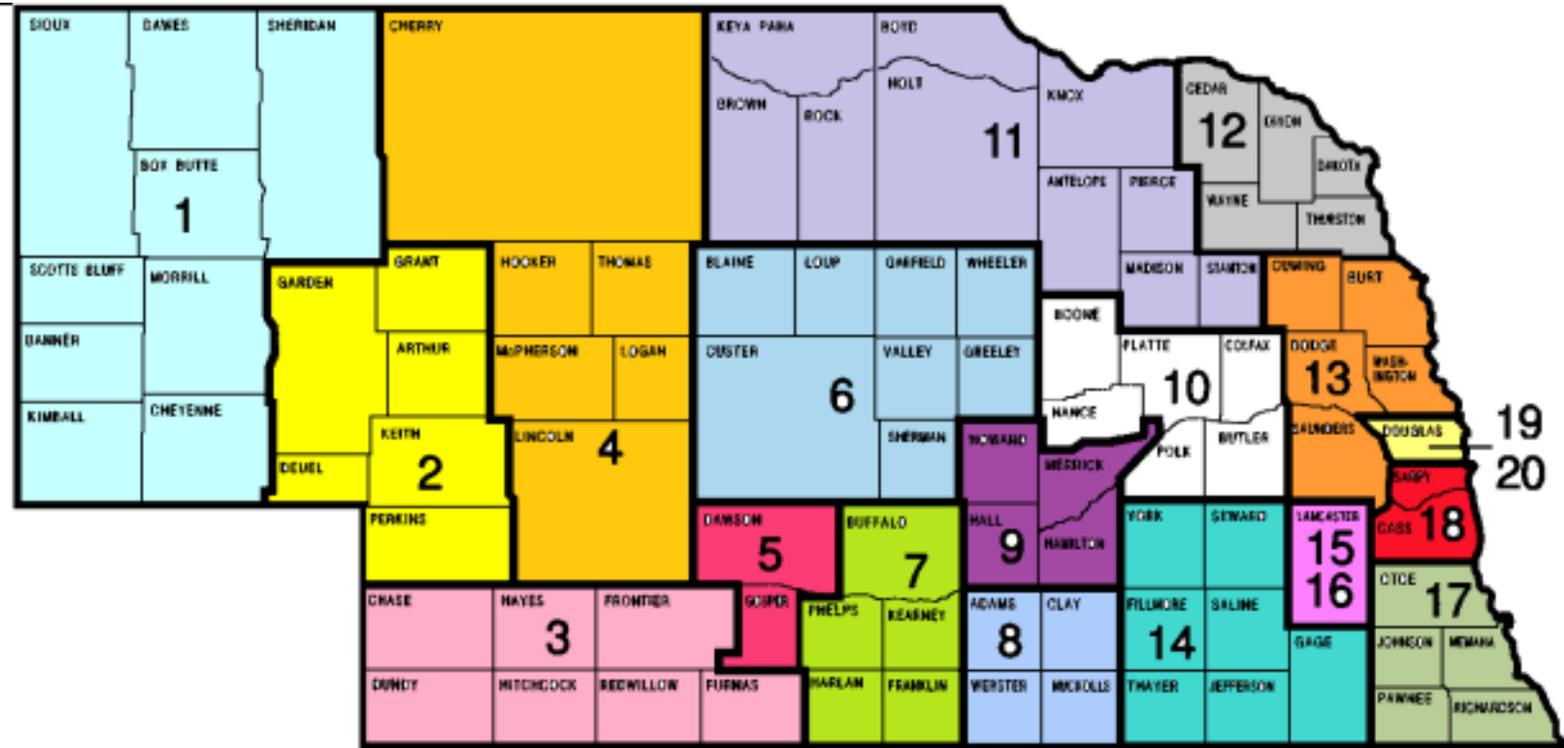
Leah Droge

Assistant Director of
Program Development

Area #16

Area served:

City of Lincoln & Lancaster County



Domestic Violence

Myths & Facts

Myth: Domestic violence is bad but it happens elsewhere. It doesn't happen in my community, my neighborhood, my culture, my religion, or my congregation.

Fact: Domestic violence happens to people of every educational and socioeconomic level. Domestic violence happens in all races, religions, and age groups. Domestic violence occurs in both heterosexual and same-sex relationships and to all genders.

Myth: Domestic violence is an impulse control or anger management problem.

Fact: Abusers act deliberately and with forethought. Abusers choose whom to abuse. For example, an abuser will selectively batter their partner but not their boss.



Why doesn't she or he just leave?

The answer is complicated and in most cases based on the reality that their abuser will follow through with the threats they have used to keep them trapped.

The time of greatest risk of harm to a victim of domestic abuse is when they threaten to leave or actually do leave.

Barriers to Leaving Abusive Relationships

- No one is abusive all of the time and they often still love the abuser
- Hope that things will get better
- Fear that they will become homeless
- Fear that the abuser will get custody of the children
- Fear that they will harm them, their children, or other friends or family members
- Fear that they will harm or kill pets
- Lack of transportation

Barriers to Leaving Abusive Relationships

- Financial control or other financial issues
- Isolation – no close friends or family members
- Immigration issues
- Religious or cultural beliefs
- Fear of law enforcement's response and/or legal system not holding the abuser accountable
- Lack of knowledge of or access to resources, safety and support

Why is housing so
important to survivors?

The Intersection of Domestic Violence & Homelessness

Studies have shown that

- 80% of homeless women with children had previously experienced domestic violence.
- 57% of homeless women report domestic violence as the immediate cause of their homelessness.

Homelessness and Housing Insecurity can exacerbate vulnerability.

Housing is Safety

The two most pressing concerns for survivors are housing and economic resources to maintain safety.

Without housing, survivors are hesitant to even attempt to leave their abusers.

- Survivors are often choosing between abuse/violence and homelessness.

Securing safe, affordable housing is a crucial step on the pathway to longterm security.

Why is it difficult for survivors to find housing?

Survivor-Centered Housing

Survivors may have unique needs related to

- Safety
- Confidentiality
- Trauma

Individuals may have unique needs/challenges related to

- Family structure
- Ability
- Discrimination

Financial Abuse

“Abusers have always been financially controlling, but recently abusers are forcing their victims to apply to payday lenders with absolutely no intention of ever paying back the loan, forcing their victims to obtain students loans and then working to sabotage her education, and forcing their victims to put all credit card debt and loans in her name while putting all assets in his. In the past, domestic violence victims would leave with nothing but their children and the clothes on their back. Now they leave with crushing debt.”

-Victim Advocate

National Network to End Domestic Violence National Conference on Financial Abuse

Effects of Financial Abuse

Lack of resources

Poor credit history

Poor rental history

Lack of steady employment/income

Control of lease by abuser

Lack of knowledge of housing protections

Lack of subsidized or other affordable housing

There is a nationwide lack of safe, affordable housing.

Only 1 in 4 who are eligible for public housing receives it

Loss of subsidized or affordable housing

Abuser may cause lease or voucher policy violation

- Unauthorized tenant

Repeated calls to police

Property damage caused by the abuser

Risk of harm to others

What can I do to assist survivors?

Tenant-related warning signs

Repeated late payment of rent

Noticeable injuries, or use of dark glasses, long sleeves, makeup

Fewer visitors

Change in tenant's behavior

Change in visits to the office

Seems to need partner's permission for everything

Expression of fear

Property-related Warning signs

Broken lock or door

Smashed lights

Broken window or mirror

Hole punched or kicked in the wall

Noise complaints

Concerns expressed by other tenants

Working with survivors

Reduce isolation

Promote healthy relationships

Build a sense of community

Connect with local neighborhood and community

VAWA protections

Federal legislation

Covers all applicants and current tenants in properties receiving federal funding; including HUD, LIHTC, Dept. of Ag, Rural Housing Voucher Program, properties with federally back mortgage loans.

Protections cover applicants when they apply for covered housing programs as well as current tenants.

Vawa protections, continued

Protections include:

- Survivors may remain in the home
- Landlords/property managers may bifurcate the lease
- Emergency transfer plan - allows for survivors to move to another safe and available unit if they fear for their life and safety.
- Confidentiality
- Remember, survivors may **self-certify** the violence they have experienced.

Big picture

Understand that there may be unintended consequences to systematic involvement

If possible, try to speak with the survivor one on one to determine what may help or harm in their situation

Keep in mind that victims may apply for an order of protection, but there is a process

- If approved, may create additional struggles for victim, or escalate the violence

options

Can you evict the abusive partner?

Can you change the locks?

Can you work with the survivor to mutually terminate the lease early?

Can you work with the survivor for relocation to other properties?

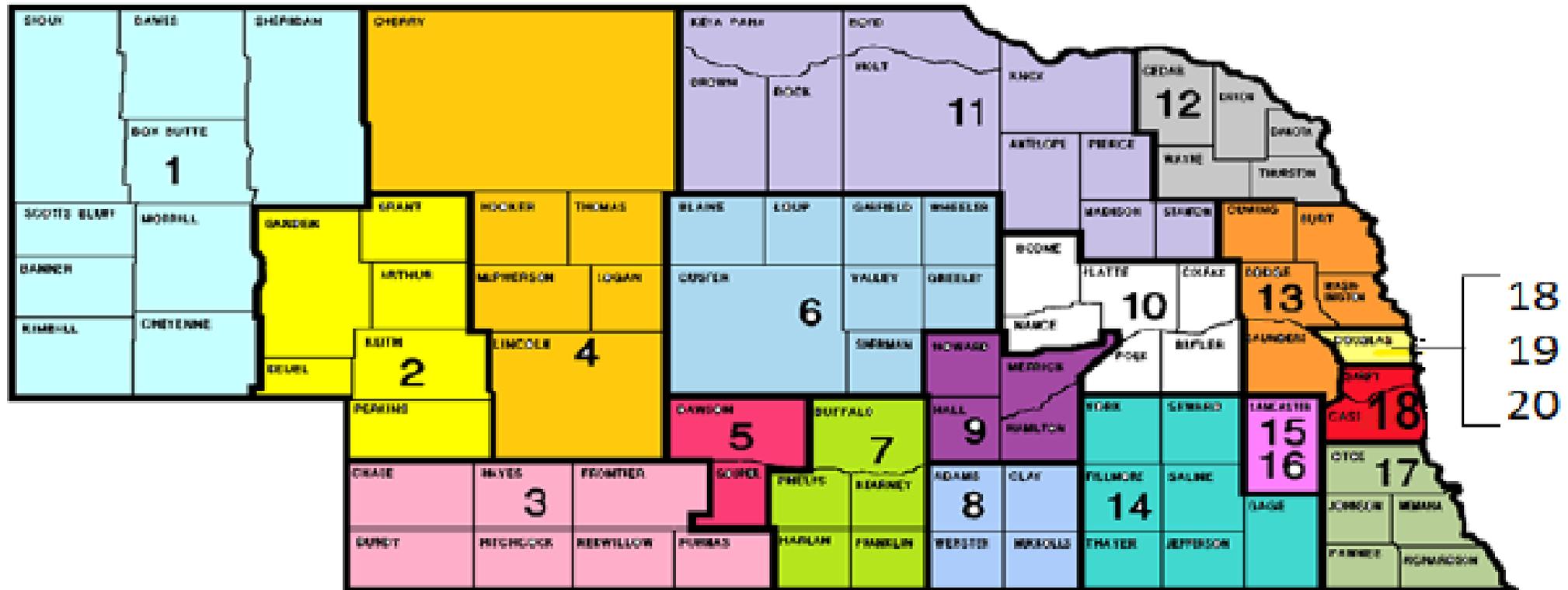
How to Approach a Potential Survivor

Find a moment of opportunity – safety first

Learn more: <https://www.thehotline.org/support-others/>

Learn about your local resources for survivors of domestic violence, know where to refer someone if they need assistance. You don't have to know all of the answers, **just where to start.**

Nebraska's Network of Domestic and Sexual Violence Programs



Want to find your local domestic violence program?

A listing of domestic violence programs across Nebraska can be found on the Nebraska Coalition to End Sexual & Domestic Violence website:

https://www.nebraskacoalition.org/get_help/

Questions?

