

Embrace Quarterly E-Newsletter
June 2016



Will You Take a Stand with Us?

The first domestic violence homicide of 2016 in America happened in Wisconsin. As of Sunday, June 19, 2016, the death toll of domestic violence in Wisconsin rests at 36 victims, 8 abusers, and 1 unclassified person adding up to a total of 45 lives lost in less than six months. This is a life lost every 3.8 days. One quarter of these victims were children age 18 and under. If this trend of high homicide rates continues through the end of the year, there will be at least 97 lives lost in our state due to domestic violence. In comparison, 2009 had the highest domestic violence homicides previously recorded at 67 deaths. Providing high quality direct services is not enough to end the violence. We need you to speak up and take a stand against these deadly crimes. Together, and only together, we can end domestic and sexual violence.

Will you join us in commemorating the lives lost this year? Embrace's tri-county offices would like to install awareness lanterns and plaques at each of our three offices. The lanterns will be lit to commemorate the lives lost, future victims, and to remind our communities to take a stand in preventing more deaths. If you would like to donate a lantern or help with this cause, please [contact Katie](#) for more information.

Thank you to our colleagues at Rainbow House who are raising awareness of these tragic deaths in our state and have taken on the overwhelming responsibility to put together this heartbreaking report about the people we lost. You can find the report and read the victims' obituaries on their website [HOPE Domestic Violence Homicide Help](#).

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[Price County Outreach Office Open House: August 18, 2016 11:30am to 1:30pm](#)

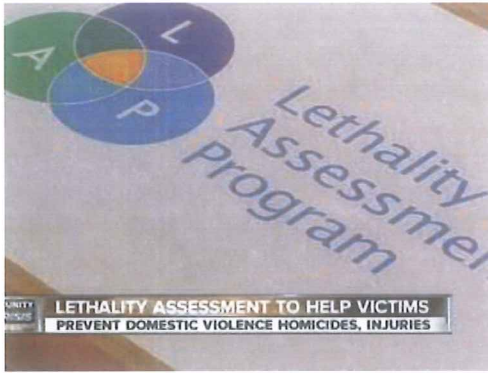


Program Highlights



Embrace and Prentice High School Present Their Teen Dating Violence Awareness Project at the Statewide Teen Summit

This past April, Becky Steinbach, Embrace Sexual Assault Program Coordinator in Price County, and Jamie Spagnolo, Prentice High School English Teacher, presented on their unique and innovative teen dating violence awareness student workshop at the Statewide Summit on Healthy Teen Relationships in Wisconsin Dells. Four local teens who were involved in the 2016 Price County Project--Carolyn Bauer, Titus Bolles, Joseph Jast, and Mariam Lyons--co-presented with Becky and Jamie at the Summit. The whole group is in the photo to the left. The Teen Summit is hosted by the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families, the Wisconsin Coalition Against Sexual Assault, and End Abuse Wisconsin, every two years. The event spans across three days and is focused on ending physical and sexual violence and provides ways teens can get involved in awareness activities, as well as heal from past trauma. Teens, ... [Read More >>](#)



Embrace Partners with Local Law Enforcement Agencies to Implement Homicide Prevention Tool

In order to properly respond to survivors coming forward to Embrace and local law enforcement agencies and to help them thrive within the unique poverty and social barriers in the rural communities of Rusk and Washburn Counties, Embrace and its six law enforcement partners know it is critical to take every opportunity available to... [Read More >>](#)



A New Logo to Match Our Name!

The Embrace logo has been officially released. Embrace's Mission and Vision Committee along with our talented graphic designer created a logo that represents support and equality for all survivors, change, and growth. This past month, Embrace's Board of Directors voted on the final design and colors of teal and purple--domestic and sexual violence awareness colors. Embrace staff will now move forward with an extensive, tri-county outreach campaign to publicize the organization's new branding and ensuring our communities' access to services.



Advocate Story

After getting to my office and checking emails and phone messages from community partners, I called an ongoing client back who had talked with a Night Supervisor the night before on the 24/7 crisis line. Despite having a restraining order against him, her ex-boyfriend still was not leaving her alone and assaulted her once again. She filled me in on what had happened and how she was... [Read More >>](#)

"There are many gifts one may receive, but none so great as the gift of being heard." -- Tree Spirited Woman





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Newsletter

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[Embrace and Prentice High School Present Their Innovative Teen Dating Violence Awareness Project at the Statewide Teen Summit](#)

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The Teen Summit is hosted by the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families, Wisconsin Coalition

Against Sexual Assault and End Abuse Wisconsin, every two years. The event spans across three days and is focused on ending physical and sexual violence and provides ways teens can get involved in awareness activities, as well as heal from past trauma. Teens, educators, and advocates from all over the state come together to discuss innovative plans and ideas for ongoing and future projects. There were more than 60 presentation and workshop proposals from which the Price County project was selected!

For the past three years, Jamie Spagnolo and the Prentice High School Junior English class have welcomed Embrace into their classroom for teen dating violence awareness presentations. From those presentations, they went on to create radio public service announcements (PSAs) that were played throughout the month of February (Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month) on local radio stations in Price, Rusk, and Washburn Counties.

Their presentation on this collaborative work called, “Making Teens Aware Over the Air—Radio and Dating Violence PSAs,” was attended by two dozen people. Jamie and Becky talked about how they came up with the idea for the project and the specifics about being able to fit it into Common Core school requirements. The students shared their personal experiences and insights, which was certainly the most impactful aspect of the presentation. Afterward, many people stayed to gather more information, as well as to make plans for future collaborations.

Because of Becky and Jamie’s hard work combined with the support of the Prentice School District, the students have been empowered to be advocates at the state level speaking out against unhealthy relationships. Becky hopes to expand upon this project, potentially by branching out into television PSAs. The Prentice School District was so impressed with the information the students brought back from the Summit, they asked if it would be possible to send even more students to the following year’s Summit. Collaborations like these that create social change and end violence for our future generations are the most exciting and fun part of the work we get to do here at Embrace!

Embrace Partners with Local Law Enforcement Agencies to Implement Homicide Prevention Tool

In order to properly respond to survivors coming forward to Embrace and local law enforcement agencies and to help them thrive within the unique poverty and social barriers in the rural communities of Rusk and Washburn Counties, Embrace and its six law enforcement partners know it is critical to take every opportunity available to enhance collaborative efforts. In doing so, survivors are connected with the few available resources and efforts will help prevent future violence.

Washburn and Rusk community partners recognize the extraordinary benefits of our current collaborative response and warm referral systems. This spring, the team made up of six law enforcement agencies from Rusk and Washburn Counties, Washburn County Health and Human Services, Washburn District Attorney’s Office, Spooner Health Systems, and Lakeland Family Resource Center, along with Embrace, submitted an application to bring the formal training on the Lethality Assessment Program – Maryland Model (LAP). The team agreed that we want to capitalize on our current collaborative successes by incorporating the evidence-based and best practices of LAP into current policies and procedures as well as law enforcement’s new, survivor-centered Domestic Violence Incident Worksheets.

What is the LAP?

LAP is an innovative strategy to prevent domestic violence homicides and serious injuries created by the Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence (MNADV) in 2005. It is a standardized, evidence-based lethality assessment instrument that allows law enforcement and other community professionals (such as health care providers, clergy members, case workers, and court personnel) to identify survivors of domestic violence who are at the highest risk of being seriously injured or killed by their intimate partners. The LAP is a multi-pronged intervention instrument and accompanying referral protocol that helps first responders make a differentiated response that is tailored to the unique circumstances of survivors at high risk of

homicide.

How does the LAP Work?

The LAP is initiated when a trained officer or deputy arrives at the scene of a domestic call, or when a community professional believes a survivor may be in danger, and assesses the survivor's situation. If there is any question about the risk of lethality a survivor may be facing, the officer or community professional will ask the survivor to answer an evidence-based series of 11 questions known as the Lethality Screen for First Responders. If the survivor's response to the questions indicates an increased risk for homicide, the officer or community professional states he/she is going to place a phone call to Embrace's 24-hour domestic violence hotline to seek advice and encourage the survivor to speak with the specially trained hotline advocate about safety options and accessing shelter. Talking on the phone is always the survivor's decision.

The Washburn and Rusk County partners hope to receive LAP training this summer which will greatly enhance current practices and create more positive and safe outcomes for survivors. Additionally, formalizing the successful collaborative relationships between local law enforcement, Washburn County community partners, and Embrace will keep survivors from falling through the systematic resource gaps and prevent incidents of domestic violence homicides in the rural communities we serve.

For further information about the Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence's Maryland Model of the Lethality Assessment Program, you can check out their [website](#).

Thank you to our community partners who joined in on the LAP application with us!

Rusk County Sheriff Department, Ladysmith Police Department, Shell Lake Police Department, Spooner Police Department, Birchwood Police Department, Minong Police Department, Spooner Health Systems, Washburn County District Attorney's Office, Washburn County Health and Human Services, and Lakeland Family Resource Center.

Advocate Story: A Day in the Life of an Outreach Office Program Coordinator

After getting to my office and checking emails and phone messages from community partners, I called an ongoing client back who had talked with a Night Supervisor the night before on the 24/7 crisis line. Despite having a restraining order against him, her ex-boyfriend still was not leaving her alone and assaulted her once again. She filled me in on what had happened and how she was doing. We then talked through more safety planning and what her options were from there.

The first official thing on my to-do list for the day was to get in touch with the daycares in order to schedule the Talking about Touching presentations for the summer. The daycares have been extremely welcoming, allowing us to come in every summer for a presentation series covering personal and body safety as well as assertiveness. I was able to schedule in-person meetings with two of the Directors and made myself a note to call the other back later in the week. I also added to my calendar time for the following week to update the parent letters that accompany the presentations.

I then spent time typing up the minutes from the recent Coordinated Community Response meeting. This is a group of systems professionals who get together every-other-month to discuss our response to domestic violence. They offer really great ideas and insight, and as a group we have been able to accomplish several projects. Because everyone is incredibly busy, we send out an update after each meeting so that even those who can't attend in person, are able to keep up-to-date on what's going on.

When I checked my email again, I had a couple from students who I had been regularly meeting with in the schools. Since school was almost out for the summer, we had been making plans to stay in contact through

email or texting. I also reminded the students that we can always keep meeting through the summer, as long as it is at a public place such as a library or a park. Many of these students have come so far in their healing journeys this school year, and I want to make sure we don't lose our connections.

I then began to prepare for my last day of girls' group. I had to create an evaluation to give the girls so that I know how to improve the group for next year. I also promised I would bring in a treat for the last day, so I made a mental note to pick something up. Even though so many of these girls have already dealt with significant trauma, they chose to do things like share a talent and talk about future plans during their group time. They have taught me so much about being able to stay positive even in the face of adversity. I also sent out the final reminder email to the girls, which I started doing because they had so much going on, that they didn't always remember when group was!

I finished up my day with a webinar about new, nationally-recognized resource materials on preventing sexual violence in our communities. While watching the webinar, I made note of the areas that we are currently excelling in and the areas that we could do more to be addressing. Through this webinar particularly, I learned about a new program for empowering elementary-aged girls that I think would be awesome to implement in our community! I can't wait to weave the programming into my current work with young students. I finished up the day making a to-do list for the following day and headed home for some ever-important self-care!

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