

OCTOBER IS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS MONTH

Domestic violence (DV) is “a pattern of coercive control that the abuser exercises over the victim.” (*National Coalition Against Domestic Violence*). Elder victims of DV are the least likely to seek out or accept assistance. They are often socially isolated and many believe that family problems are a private matter. Some are not aware that Massachusetts has two laws which protect seniors from domestic violence: domestic relations (MGL 209A) and elder abuse (MGL 19A) laws provide for intervention to stop the abuse and protect elders.

Under the Massachusetts Abuse Prevention Act (MGL 209A), any person who is suffering from abuse by a present or former family or household member, or by a dating partner, may obtain an emergency, temporary, and/or permanent restraining order against the abuser” (from a court). If you want assistance or support in obtaining a restraining order, you can contact REACH (formerly Support Committee for Battered Women) at 1-800-899-4000.

The Elder Abuse Hotline (under MGL 19A) is used to report physical, emotional, or sexual abuse, neglect, and financial exploitation of someone over the age of 60 at the hands of relatives or a caretaker and self-neglect by an elder. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts Elder Abuse Hotline can be accessed 24 hours a day, seven days a week, by calling 1-800-922-2275 or you can make reports during regular business hours directly to the Protective Services unit at Springwell (formerly West Suburban Elder Services) 617-926-4100.

In order to raise awareness about the emotional toll domestic violence takes, the Newton Senior Center will host *The Clothesline Project* (CLP), a program started on Cape Cod, in 1990, to address the issue of violence against women. It is a vehicle for women affected by violence to express their emotions by decorating a shirt. They then hang the shirt on a clothesline to be viewed by others as testimony to the problem of violence against women. The Clothesline Project will be at the senior center on October 4, 2006 from 11 – 1 p.m.. Counselors will be available to answer questions or address personal concerns. Elder Abuse and Domestic Violence are against the law! If you have questions or would like to talk to someone, you may call Kathy Laufer at the Newton Senior Center at (617) 796-1663.

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WELCOME TO MEGHAN KENNEDY

Meghan is the new outreach worker. She has a Master’s Degree in Social Work from Wheelock College and has previously worked in elder services. She is eager to meet all of you so please do not hesitate to say hello in person or over the phone. Her direct line is 617-796-1672.