Niagara County
FAMILY VIOLENCE INTERVENTION PROJECT
Newsletter

Volume 10.1

September 2026

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LEARN & SHARES

Keep an eye out for upcoming Learn & Shares by FVIP!

Domestic Violence Awareness Month

This October, for Domestic Violence Awareness Month, we encourage you to show your support by attending the many events offered throughout Niagara County (see inside for details). We also ask that you share and post information on social media to raise awareness.

FVIP appreciates your efforts in keeping a trauma-informed lens when serving clients affected by Domestic Violence. With so many shortfalls in funding, changes to policies and how that affects the safety of those we serve, it is more important than ever to stay connected.

For additional ways to support our community in raising awareness, please do not hesitate to reach out.

Sincerely, FVIP

What is Purple Thursday?

Purple Thursday is a national day of action held on the third Thursday of October during Domestic Violence Awareness Month (DVAM). This year, Purple Thursday is October 15th, 2026. People wear purple to show support for survivors, honor victims, and start conversations about ending abuse.

The broader awareness movement started as a “Day of Unity” in 1981, organized by the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence. By 1987, it expanded to a full month and in 1989, Congress passed public law to officially designate October as the federally observed Domestic Violence Awareness Month.

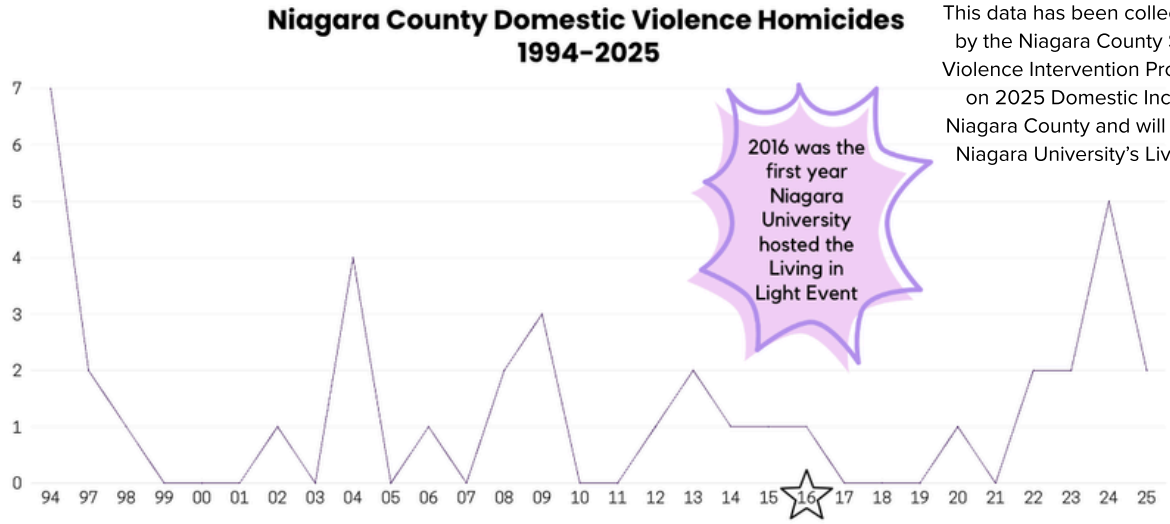
Why Purple?

The color’s connection to women‘s equality and advocacy dates back to the historic women’s suffrage movement and large-scale equal rights marches in Washington D.C., in 1978. It later became a universal symbol for peace, courage, survival, and a dedication to ending violence.

Research Corner:

Recent research related to IPV

If you would like a PDF copy of any of the articles, please email Dr. Dana Radatz at dradatz@niagara.edu



This data has been collected and organized by the Niagara County Sheriff's Domestic Violence Intervention Program (DVIP) based on 2025 Domestic Incident Reports for Niagara County and will also be featured at Niagara University's Living in Light Event.

The highest reported homicides occurred in 1994. This was also a year of drastic changes in Niagara County, as the Violence Against Women Act was signed into law by President Clinton on September 13, 1994. VAWA increased criminal penalties for crimes such as rape, sexual assault, and domestic abuse. Since then, VAWA has continued to provide grants to further address crimes of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault.

The graph shows that over the last 30 years, domestic violence homicides have been pretty consistent. Niagara County noticed a slight decrease in 2025, reporting 2 homicides compared to 5 in 2024.

The See It to Stop It Indicator Tool to Identify Child Sex Trafficking: Acceptability, Feasibility, Utility, and Outcomes

Adolescents involved in sex trafficking may not engage in help-seeking behavior due to fear, stigma, and lack of awareness about available resources. Likewise, professionals interacting with these youth may have little guidance on how to identify risk or respond when trafficking concerns are detected. This study describes the development, feasibility, acceptability, utility, and outcomes of the See It to Stop It Indicator (SITSII) tool for middle school staff (MSS), developed as part of a Cluster Randomized Control Trial of a bystander intervention, to prevent child sex trafficking (CST) in students. The SITSII contains 17 items categorized into three tiers of concern (Probable Concern Tier 3; Potential Concern Tier 2; Emerging Concern Tier 1) that map onto bystander actions based on a risk stratification model. Mixed-method data from 63 MSS were analyzed to determine screening outcomes, intentions to act, barriers to action, and assessments of feasibility, acceptability, and utility. Outcomes indicate that running away (Tier 3) and truancy (Tier 2), followed by a history of child maltreatment (Tier 2), were the most prevalent student behaviors, while 21% had no identifiable risk factors. This suggests a lack of bias toward over- or under-identification. Users rated the acceptability and utility of the tool favorably, and 91.5% endorsed confidence in taking the recommended bystander actions. The SITSII establishes a continuum of risk factors for CST that map onto actionable items. There is evidence of successful SITSII implementation as well as enhanced confidence in intent-to-act to protect identified students.

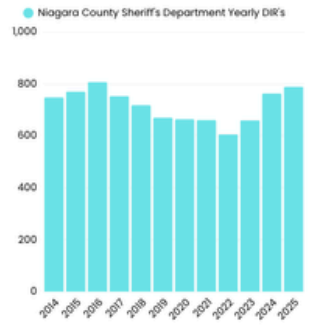
Sprang, G., Coker, A. L., Mennicke, A., Brancato, C., Ray, C. M., & Thorne, E. (2026). The See It to Stop It Indicator Tool to Identify Child Sex Trafficking: Acceptability, Feasibility, Utility, and Outcomes. Journal of Child Sexual Abuse, 1–21. https://doi.org/10.1080/10538712.2026.2641779

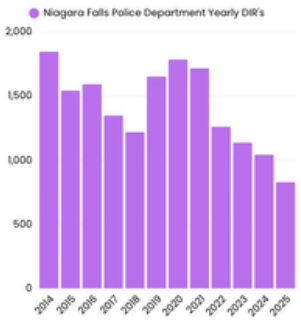
Cyberstalking Perpetrators and Their Methods: A Systematic Literature Review

The existing body of research on cyberstalking has identified the prevalent nature of this behavior and the detrimental impact that cyberstalking has on victims and society. This systematic review aims to summarize literature on the perpetration of cyberstalking with two research questions: (a) Who are the perpetrators of cyberstalking? and (b) What are the methods of cyberstalking? Two literature databases (SCOPUS and Web of Science) were searched for empirical research or literature reviews examining cyberstalking perpetration and/or methods. Following screening, 80 articles were identified and rated as highly relevant based on their applicability to research questions. Perpetrators of cyberstalking were found to lack social skills, have low self-control, have experienced physical abuse victimization, endorsed stalking-related attitudes, and have higher rates of Internet use. Perpetrators were motivated by trying to reconcile a relationship, exact revenge, seek a relationship, or establish control over the victim. The most commonly reported methods of cyberstalking were unwanted and repeated online contact through email, social media, or text message. Other methods of cyberstalking include accessing the victim's accounts, tracking their GPS location, posing as the victim online, or contacting friends/family of the victim. The findings of this review highlight precursors to, and patterns of, cyberstalking perpetration, and future research is required to explore how existing "offline" stalking risk assessments and typologies can be applied to cases of cyberstalking, which would allow authorities to develop effective case management strategies.

Weekes, C. J., Storey, J. E., & Pina, A. (2026). Cyberstalking Perpetrators and Their Methods: A Systematic Literature Review. Trauma, Violence, & Abuse, 27(3), 1009-1025. https://doi.org/10.1177/15248380251333411

Domestic Incident Reports By Jurisdiction

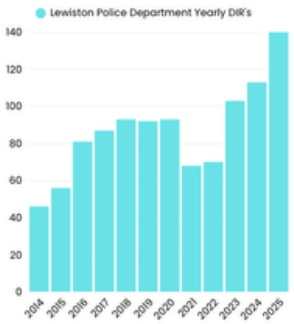


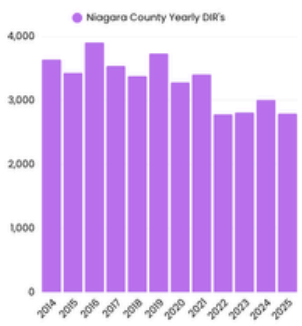


Niagara County Sheriff's Department reported a total of 789 DIR's in 2025, while Niagara Falls Police Department reported 830, and Lewiston Police reported a total of 140.

Niagara County as a whole reported a total of 2793 DIR's in 2025, compared to 3008 in 2024.

DIR = Domestic Incident Report.
A DIR is a report that is made on receiving a complaint of domestic violence. Every DIR filed with law enforcement agencies is acted upon shortly after an incident occurs.





This data has been collected and organized by the Niagara County Sheriff's Domestic Violence Intervention Program (DVIP) based on 2025 Domestic Incident Reports for Niagara County and will also be featured at Niagara University's Living in Light Event.

Animal-Inclusive Protection Order Statutes: A Powerful Tool For Addressing and Mitigating Coercive Control

Given mounting evidence that animal abuse and intimate partner violence commonly co-occur, and that victims/survivors will delay leaving abusers due to concern for their companion animals, many U.S. states have amended their protection order statutes to enable the inclusion of animals. These amendments have received limited attention, and research has not examined their use and interpretation in the courts. Addressing this gap, this article analyzes legal judgments where these statutes have been cited to date, 38 in total. The findings indicate these statutes are providing much-needed protection for victims/survivors, particularly from ongoing coercive control. Recommendations for extending these protections are provided.

Fitzgerald, A. J. (2026). Animal-Inclusive Protection Order Statutes: A Powerful Tool for Addressing and Mitigating Coercive Control. Violence Against Women, 32(6-7), 1637-1664. https://doi.org/10.1177/10778012251338405

Project Beloved is a nonprofit organization founded in memory of Molly Jane Matheson. Her mother, Tracey, keeps Molly's story alive by raising awareness about domestic and sexual violence and bringing attention to the circumstances surrounding her daughter's passing. Tracey established Project Beloved with the mission to "educate, advocate, and collaborate to change the conversation about sexual assault and empower survivors to find their voices."
https://www.projectbeloved.org/



Through Project Beloved's support, the YWCA of the Niagara Frontier and the Niagara County Sheriff's Office are receiving funding for a soft interview room designed to provide survivors of sexual assault and their families with a comfortable, trauma-informed environment during interviews and conversations.

The YWCA will be hosting Tracey Matheson for a special Domestic Violence Awareness Month Luncheon. For more details and registration information, see the flyer on Page 10.

Crime Victims Fund Stabilization Act

The Crime Victims Fund Stabilization Act, H.R. 909 in the House, is a bipartisan effort to stop immediate funding cuts for victim services agencies from going into effect by adding a new Crime Victims Fund (CVF) revenue source, the False Claims Act. The bill would give Congress four years to create a permanent fix to funding for the needs of crime victims before sunsetting. The bill currently has more than 100 House co-sponsors from both parties.

This act stems from the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA), which was signed into law in 1984 and created the Crime Victims Fund (CVF). VOCA is the primary source of federal grant funding for victim services, including services for survivors of domestic violence, child abuse, sexual assault, stalking, trafficking, attempted homicide, and other crimes. It also matches 75% of eligible victim compensation funding.

While the Crime Victims Fund Stabilization Act (CVFSA) recently passed in the House on January 12, 2026, the act now rests with the Senate and its companion bill, S. 1892. CVFSA will provide essential funding for Children's Advocacy Centers and the wider victims' services field.
We ask you to join September 23rd for our Day of Action!
https://www.nationalchildrensalliance.org/voca-fix/

“Hat’s Off!” to... Molly Maigret!

Molly Maigret is a highly respected retired nursing professional whose career has been defined by compassion, expertise, and an unwavering commitment to caring for patients in times of crisis. Molly began her nursing career after graduating from the Sister of Charity School of Nursing in 1971, she then went on to earn her Bachelor of Science in Nursing from the University at Buffalo in 1980. Throughout her career, Molly served as both an emergency room nurse as well as a specially trained Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE), providing empathetic and specialized care to survivors of sexual assault.

In 2001, Molly successfully completed the Sexual Assault Forensic Training Program at the Erie County Police Academy. She became nationally certified as a Sexual Assault Examiner in 2002 and received New York State certification in 2004. Molly’s dedication extended beyond direct patient care. In 2004, she worked with the Niagara County District Attorney’s Office to help develop a comprehensive “Protocol for Handling Sexual Assault Cases for Niagara County.” She also spent countless hours of her free time presenting her knowledge and education to the youth in local middle schools, high schools & colleges in Niagara County.

Her leadership was also instrumental in helping Eastern Niagara Hospital (ENH) achieve Center of Excellence recognition in 2003, along with a five-year grant to educate and train SANE nurses. This initiative established ENH as the first hospital in the area to have 24/7 SANE-trained nurses on staff. Molly’s commitment to excellence and compassionate care has been recognized throughout her career. In 2018, she received the YWCA Women’s Leadership Award in Health Care. The following year, she received the National DAISY Award for exceptional care provided to sexual assault survivors at ENH.

Molly reflects not only remarkable professional achievement but also a deep commitment to serving others. Through her clinical expertise, leadership, advocacy, and compassion, she has made a lasting difference in the lives of countless patients, members of the community, and colleagues whom have had the pleasure of working alongside her.

Hat’s off to you, Molly!!

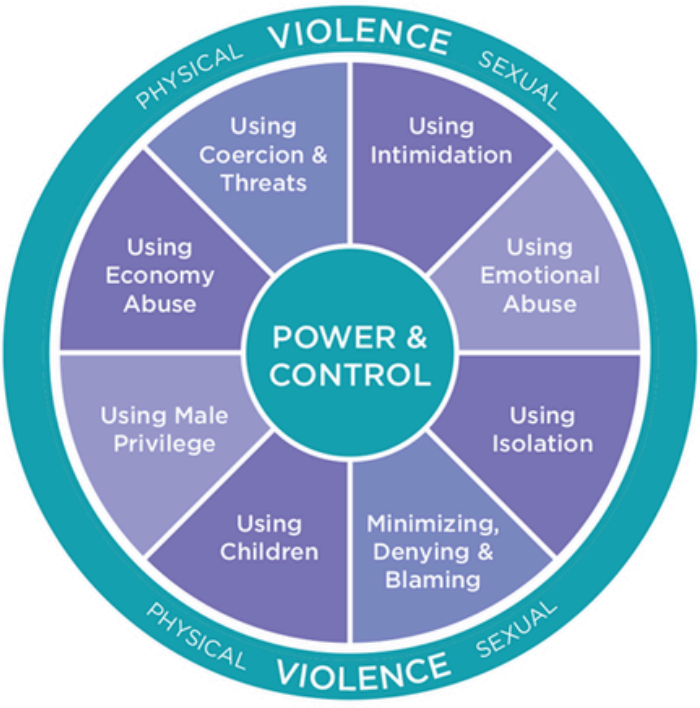
Written by: Rachel Sandle-Sacco

Resource Features

NEW YORK STATE | Office of Mental Health

New York State Trauma-Informed Network & Resource Center

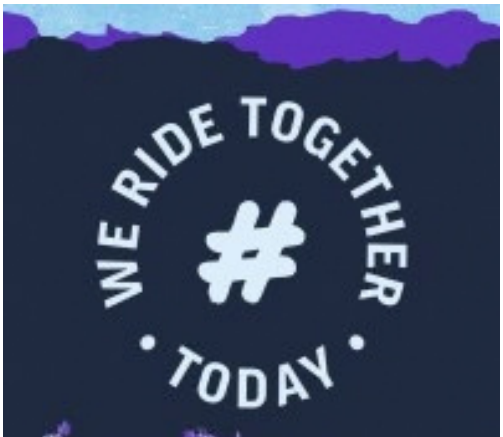
The NYS Trauma-Informed Network & Resource Center aims to uplift the principles of trauma-informed care and create a place for learning, knowledge sharing, and resource and event promotion around trauma-informed work and wellness practices. There is a wide variety of trauma-informed resources easily accessible for direct service workers through their website.
https://www.traumainformedny.org/initiatives/flw-toolkit/direct-service/



https://theduluthmodel.org/wheels/



#WeRideTogether is a nonprofit organization dedicated to eliminating abuse in all sports, at every level of play, around the world. Our mission is to make sports environments safer for all athletes. We are committed to creating the radical change needed to fulfill that vision by addressing education and awareness, creating a safer place for survivors to find resources and share their voices, & eliminating the stigma around these necessary conversations.
https://www.weridetogether.today/









Niagara County Mental Health Association's Directory of Community Services- 35th Edition Help Book
https://www.mhanc.com/cmsAdmin/uploads/help-book-35th-edition.pdf

MHA in Niagara is the official information and referral source for all of Niagara County. Referral Services are available anytime of the day or night, through our printed directories, resource guides, and through our website, www.mhanc.com.

Our phone referral system, known as the Help Line, is staffed Monday-Friday 8:30am-4:00pm. One Help Line number serves all of Niagara County: 716-433-5432

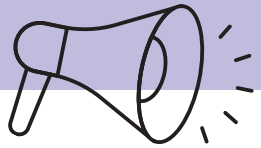


iHEAL

Canada has released a nationwide free app called iHeal.
The app is designed to be a confidential digital resource and intervention tool to help women who have experienced intimate partner violence or abuse.

There are 6 areas to explore: Safety, Basic Needs, Health & Well-Being, Connecting Safely, Claiming Your Power, and Family. The app offers personalized safety planning, health assessments, and access to more than 400 localized resources across Canada.

Download the mobile app or use the web tool- whichever is safest and easiest to use for you.



Events Coming Up... You're Invited!

Fliers for all listed events can be found starting on page 9

Tuesday 10/6- *Living in Light* hosted by Niagara University's Office for Violence Prevention and Education. 4:30-6:30pm at Niagara Castellani Art Museum. No RSVP required.

Saturday 10/10- *Trunk or Treat* hosted by Niagara County Sheriff's Office. 1pm-3pm at NCCC. See flyer on page 11 for more details.

Thursday 10/15- *Domestic Violence Awareness Month Luncheon*, hosted by the YWCA of Niagara Frontier. At 32 Cottage Street, Lockport, NY. RSVP required; see the flyer on page 8 for contact information and to purchase tickets.

Thursday 10/15- *Niagara Falls In Her Shoes*, hosted by Pinnacle Community Services. 10 am-12 pm at 1522 Main St, Niagara Falls. RSVP required; see flyer on page 9 for contact information.

Wednesday 10/21- *Safe At Home Conference* hosted by Niagara County's Family Violence Intervention Project. 8:30-4:30pm Doubletree by Hilton. Fee includes lunch. Registration is required and closes October 9th; see page 11 for more details.

Thursday 10/22- *Lockport In Her Shoes*, hosted by Pinnacle Community Services. 1 pm-3 pm at the Public Safety Training Facility, 5574 Niagara Street Ext., Lockport. RSVP required; see flyer on page 10 for contact information.

Resourceful Websites to Explore



Futures Without Violence (FUTURES) aims to build healthier, safer, and more prosperous communities. They have a wide variety of resources in their resource library.
https://futureswithoutviolence.org/

Love is Respect is a program from the National Domestic Violence Hotline. They provide tools to support young people ages 14-24, aiming to disrupt unhealthy relationships and intimate partner violence as well as empower young people with safer options for abusive relationships.
https://www.loveisrespect.org/

The Battered Women's Justice Project (BWJP) is the national legal resource for gender-based violence. Our projects provide some of the nation's leading specialized policy and practice initiatives on improving survivor safety.
https://bwjp.org/

Joyful Heart Foundation aims to create a more compassionate world that supports survivors of sexual assault, domestic violence and child abuse on their path to justice and healing.
https://www.joyfulheartfoundation.org/

Living in Light

OVPE

CASTELLANI ART MUSEUM OF NIAGARA UNIVERSITY

NIAGARA UNIVERSITY

The Art of Healing

We invite you to a one night exhibit featuring domestic violence survivor artwork from members in our local community.

All donations will benefit Pinnacle Community Services' Passage Domestic Violence Services

TUESDAY
OCTOBER 6, 2026

4:30 PM – 6:30 PM
Program begins at 5:00 PM

CASTELLANI ART MUSEUM
5795 Lewiston Rd, 7 Varsity Dr, Niagara University, NY 14109

10 YEARS ANNIVERSARY

PRESENTED IN COLLABORATION WITH OUR

Community Partners

Castellani Art Museum
Child Advocacy Center of Niagara
Niagara County Sheriff's Office Victim Services
Niagara County Strive
Pinnacle Community Services
Seven Dancers Coalition
YWCA of the Niagara Frontier

This project was supported by Grant No. 15JOVW-23-GG-04480-CAMP awarded by the Office on Violence Against Women, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, conclusions, and recommendations expressed in this publication/program/exhibition are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women.

Questions:
ovpe@niagara.edu

YWCA of the Niagara Frontier

Lockport, NY

Domestic Violence *Awareness Month*

LUNCHEON



THURSDAY, OCTOBER 15

DOORS OPEN: 11:30 AM
EVENT STARTS: 12:00 PM

32 COTTAGE STREET
LOCKPORT, NY

Tickets: $25

Guest Speaker: Tracy Matheson

Founder of Project Beloved

ABOUT TRACY MATHESON

- Tracy Matheson is a nationally sought after speaker who has appeared on numerous Apple Podcasts, NPR interviews, and Dateline.
- Inspired by the life and loss of her daughter, Molly Jane, Tracy founded Project Beloved, a nonprofit dedicated to educating, advocating, and collaborating to shift the conversation around sexual assault while empowering survivors to reclaim their voices.
- Under her direction, Project Beloved has transformed over 130 sterile interview spaces across the United States into comfortable, trauma-informed soft interview rooms for survivors of sexual assault and domestic violence.
- Her mission is to honor her daughter's memory by creating healing, justice, and hope for survivors.

Scan the QR code to pay
or call 716-433-6714

YWCA of the Niagara Frontier

IN HER SHOES®

FREE TRAINING

Thursday, October 15, 2026
10:00am | 1522 Main St, Niagara Falls

Take the in person opportunity to learn more about what domestic violence survivors face everyday and the decisions they need to make.



RSVP

Suzanne Cassick
scassick@pinnaclecs.org
716-285-6984 ext.217

Pinnacle
Community Services

IN HER SHOES®

FREE TRAINING

Thursday, October 22, 2026
1:00pm - 2:30pm
Public Safety Training Facility
5574 Niagara Street. Ext, Lockport

Take the in person opportunity to learn more about what domestic violence survivors face everyday and the decisions they need to make.



RSVP

Suzanne Cassick
scassick@pinnaclecs.org
716-285-6984 ext.217

Pinnacle
Community Services

Niagara County Family Violence Intervention Project

2026 Safe at Home Conference

Wednesday,
October 21, 2026
8:30am - 4:30pm

Doubletree by Hilton
Niagara Falls, NY
Ticket Price: $75
(includes buffet lunch)

To Register Scan Code or Visit HERE



Khalila Riga

Survivor,Subject Matter Expert, Author, Consultant

Khalila Riga is a nationally recognized subject matter expert with lived experience in human trafficking. She is a published author of the book **The Story of Foster Care | Volume 2**, a collaborative work by Empty Frames Initiative, highlighting the intersection of human trafficking and foster care. Drawing on her own lived experience, Khalila illuminates the realities of exploitation while advocating for systemic change, trauma-informed care, and survivor inclusion at every level.



Jennifer Landhuis, M.S.

DirectoroftheStalking Prevention, Awareness, and Resource Center (SPARC) and the National Resource Center on Cybercrimes (NRCC)

Know More, Do More: Identifying and Responding to Stalking

Stalking is a prevalent, dangerous, and often misunderstood crime. This session explores the dynamics of stalking, focusing on the highly contextual nature of the crime by discussing common tactics used by perpetrators and the co-occurrence of stalking with domestic and sexual violence, as well as tools to plan for victim safety and hold offenders accountable.



Det. John Witherspoon

Detective,MontgomeryCounty Police Dept., Special Victims Investigations Unit

Investigations of Child Sex Trafficking from Initial Report to Closure

This factual-based case review will highlight trends and concepts used by traffickers and associates to recruit, groom, and transport multiple juveniles. The case will detail how traffickers do not follow the traditional stereotypes and methods once thought to be standard.



Maxwell Potter

ForensicInterviewSpecialist, Department of Homeland Security Investigations

Social Media & the Modern Perpetrator: Examining Perpetrator Typology through Case Study

Perpetrators utilize and infiltrate social media to gain access to victims. Through case study examples we will identify and understand different typologies of perpetrators and what key attributes help define them. This will lead to a better understanding of how to interview victims and what questions will be relevant for ongoing cases.

For more information, visit: cacofniagara.org/services/family-violence-intervention-project/


SHERIFF
NIAGARA COUNTY
NY
NIAGARA COUNTY
TRUNK OR TREAT
NIAGARA COUNTY
EMERGENCY SERVICES
FIRE DEPT
RESCUE
JOIN US
IN YOUR SPOOKIEST COSTUMES!
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 10th 2026
1:00 PM – 3:00 PM | FREE EVENT
NCCC 3111 SAUNDERS SETTLEMENT RD
SANBORN, NY 14132 LOT #4

What Is FVIP?



The Niagara County Family Violence Intervention Project (FVIP) is a coalition of agencies and organizations committed to addressing interpersonal violence and child abuse through collaborative responses, community education, and professional training.

For nearly 20 years, FVIP has recognized the co-occurrence of child abuse and domestic violence and worked together to protect children and adults alike. The FVIP Steering Committee sets the FVIP's strategic agenda for training, collaboration, and networking to support a shared mission. The FVIP is coordinated by the Child Advocacy Center of Niagara, a service of Niagara Falls Memorial Medical Center. The FVIP will also provide custom training for your church, your business, and other organizations. For more information, call the Child Advocacy Center of Niagara Education and Outreach Coordinator at (716) 285-0045.

We are so excited to share the FVIP Newsletter with the community. We will be sharing news, events, and program highlights on a biannual basis!

The FVIP is coordinated by the Child Advocacy Center at Niagara, Niagara Falls Memorial Medical Center.

For more information on FVIP, please visit our website:
https://cacofniagara.org/services/family-violence-intervention-project/

Domestic Violence Hotline Numbers:

Passage (716) 299-0909
YWCA (716) 433-6716
National DV: 1-800-799-7233

FVIP STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Catholic Chartities

Lila Rollo, Mental Health Clinician, lila.rollo@ccwny.org

Child Advocacy Center of Niagara

Shelley Hitzel, LMSW, Executive Director, shelley.hitzel@nfmmc.org

Marissa Virtuoso, Education and Outreach Coordinator, marissa.virtuoso@nfmmc.org

Neighborhood Legal Services

Kathy Kephart, Staff Paralegal, Family Unit, kkephart@nls.org

Niagara County Department of Social Services

Bridget Janese, Deputy Director of Services, bridget.janese@dfa.state.ny.us

Niagara County Sheriff's Office Victim Services

Stacy Suess, Niagara County Victim Services Coordinator, Domestic Violence Intervention Program & Victim Assistance Unit, stacy.suess@niagaracounty.gov

Niagara County Strive

Kathy Stack, STRIVE Coordinator, kathy.stack@niagarafallsny.gov

Niagara University

Dr. Dana Radatz, Professor, Criminology & Criminal Justice, dradatz@niagara.edu

Pinnacle Community Services

Larissa Bachman, LMSW, Chief Operating Officer, lbachman@pinnaclecs.org

Suzanne Cassick, Director of Family Violence Services, scassick@pinnaclecs.org

YWCA of Niagara Frontier

Rachel Sandle-Sacco, Rape Crisis Program Supervisor, rsandle@ywcanf.org

FVIP-SERVING NIAGARA COUNTY AGENCIES & RESOURCES

NIAGARA COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE OF VICTIM SERVICES:

Domestic Violence Intervention Program

- Collects, calculates, and maintains all Domestic Incident Reports (DIRs) in Niagara County
- Processes orders of protection from criminal & family court
- Provides statistics to area providers and community partners about crime flows and notify on policy and improvements for law enforcement to best serve family violence, including training for law enforcement officers and supervisors
- Outreach attempted on all DIRs reported in Niagara County (3,000 incidents annually)
- Early crisis intervention, safety planning, danger assessments, criminal justice support and family court information: including orders of protection, referrals to appropriate resources and follow-up

Victim Assistance Unit

- Provides services to victims of every crime type and offers assistance with claim compensation through the New York State Office for Victim Services
- Advocates are on call 24/7 for law enforcement for crisis intervention
- Advocates provide: outreach to explain victims' rights, liaison with other agencies on victims' behalf, supportive counseling, court & interview accompaniment (this includes transportation to court-related appointments, criminal justice information including long-term contact and notifications, danger assessments, safety planning, referrals and follow-ups
- Follow-ups include home, hospital, and on/off site visits

We can be reached by phone at (716) 438-3306.
Note: This is not a 24/7 hotline. In an emergency, contact 911.

CHILD ADVOCACY CENTER OF NIAGARA

Services

- **Child-friendly atmosphere for interviews**
- **Medical evaluations**
- **Coordination of investigative, legal, medical, and mental health services**
- **Counseling**
- **Forensic interviews**
- **Information and referral**
- **Education and training**
- **Family services advocacy**

- **Niagara County's Child Abuse Intervention Project** (CAIP) includes law enforcement, social services, medical, mental health, and victim assistance professionals who help to support and protect children & their families.
- **The Child Fatality/Serious Injury Review Team** is a multidisciplinary team tasked with conducting a confidential, thorough, comprehensive, multidisciplinary examination of the cause, manner, and circumstances of a child's death in Niagara County to prevent future deaths and promote child safety.
- **Family Violence Intervention Project (FVIP)** is a coalition of agencies and organizations committed to addressing interpersonal violence and child abuse through collaborative responses, community education, and professional training.
- **Niagara County Safe Harbour Project.** In a with partnership with the Niagara County Department of Social Services, the Safe Harbour Project addresses the issue of child trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation of children. The program provides training, promotes public awareness, conducts direct outreach to youth, and offers case management services and support to survivors.

For information about upcoming trainings and additional services, please call (716) 285-0045.

YWCA OF THE NIAGARA FRONTIER

Housing Services

- **Carolyn's House** — Offers 19 apartments with on-site supportive services for women and children. Housing services include employment and training, case management, counseling, financial literacy, and more. For more information or to apply, call (716) 433-6714 x218.
- **49 Tremont Street** – Provides a 12-apartment permanent housing complex with a social enterprise component to help women avoid homelessness and escape family violence. For more information or to receive an application, call (716) 433-6714.
- **Safe Dwelling** — Hosts a 9-bed crisis housing facility for domestic violence victims and their children located in eastern Niagara County for a maximum of 30 days. During their stay, clients meet regularly with a domestic violence counselor. Call or text our Crisis Hotline (716) 433-6716 for a screening with a YWCA counselor.

Crisis Services

- **KidStrong Children's Support Group**
- **Women's Domestic Violence Support Group**
- **Domestic Violence Counseling** - provides victims with information on the dynamics of domestic violence and abusive relationships; identifies options, develops safety plans, and offers emotional support and guidance for victims
- **Domestic Violence Advocate** - provides information on the family and criminal court process, safety planning, court accompaniment, emotional support & guidance
- **Community Outreach** - speakers are available for education & awareness training to community organizations and general audiences
- **Sexual Assault Advocates** - provides confidential advocacy for rape and sexual assault victims. An advocate can accompany a sexual assault victim to the emergency room for a forensic rape exam, assist them through the criminal investigation process, and provide crisis counseling
- **Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault 24/7 Hotline** — call or text for resources, referrals, safe house screenings, safety planning, and emotional support. To reach our hotline, please call or text (716) 433-6716

PINNACLE COMMUNITY SERVICES

Free Emergency Shelter at Passage House

- Provides free emergency shelter for individuals experiencing domestic violence and their children
- Offers a 15-bed shelter located in a secure, confidential location in Niagara County. The shelter is staffed 24/7 and someone is available to respond at any time of day or night. Individuals do not need to reside in Niagara County to receive this service.

Support Groups

- Support groups provide a safe place to learn from others and to share & support each other in ways that help them grow and heal from an abusive relationship
- Children's support groups are offered to children who have witnessed domestic violence and whose parent is supportive and engaged in counseling

One-on-One Domestic Violence Counseling

- Individuals experiencing domestic violence can receive counseling services by appointment in their homes, at our main office, or in another location where they feel safe.
- Clients set goals, work toward greater understanding of domestic violence including personal safety, elf -esteem, boundaries and healthy relationships; and begin to take steps to remain safe whether they remain in the relationship or decide to leave

Advocacy

- Individuals experiencing abuse and their families can pair with an advocate who helps them navigate and access the community resources they need to seek safety and build a future free from abuse

24/7 Domestic Violence Hotline
(716) 299-0909

NIAGARA UNIVERSITY OFFICE OF VIOLENCE PREVENTION AND EDUCATION

What do we do?

- Promotes positive campus culture changes and reduce incidents of violence and victimization.
- Provides effective, comprehensive education about sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking (DVDVSAS) to students, faculty, and staff.
- Offers resources, tools, and information via social media to promote a violence-free community
- Makes resources available to victims and those that serve them.
- Promotes a trauma-informed response to reported incidents of sexual violence
- Engages all members of Niagara's campus community in prevention, education, and intervention efforts
- Collaborates with community partners who work to end DVDVSAS within our Niagara community.

Contact

ovpe@niagara.edu
(716) 286-8105

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

- Provides financial social services, employment, and child support assistance to Niagara County residents
- Provides assistance with medical care, food stamps, child welfare, adult protection, nursing home care, transportation, and housing, discounted fuel, jobs, education, and financial counseling
- **Child Protective Services** (CPS) investigates reports of child abuse or neglect and works to ensure child safety
- **SNAP** (food stamps) is a nutrition assistance program to help eligible households buy food
- **HEAP** (Home Energy Assistance Program) helps low-income residents pay for heating and utility costs
- **Temporary Assistance** offers cash assistance and work relief programs for individuals and families in financial need

Contact

(716) 439-7000

NEIGHBORHOOD LEGAL SERVICES

Who We Are

Neighborhood Legal Services is a not-for-profit public interest firm providing free legal services to low-income individuals and families in Western New York. Some of our services are free for everyone.

Services

- **People Living with Disabilities** assists with healthcare, social security and SSI denials, and work and benefits counseling
- **Health Insurance** provides help with registering and picking the best plans, regardless of your income
- **Public Benefits** assists with food stamps, utility shut-offs, problems with the Department of Social Services, Medicare, and Medicaid
- **Housing** provides eviction defense and legal assistance with poor housing conditions and housing discrimination
- **Family and Divorce** assists with divorce and family court proceedings; priority given to victims of domestic violence
- **Resources** are available via their online searchable library of helpful materials related to the services they provide and more
  - Visit the website: https://nls.org/resources/

Contact

Niagara County:
Niagara Falls: (716) 284-8831; Lockport: (716) 201-0046
Erie County: (716) 847-0650
Wyoming, Genesee & Orleans Counties: (585) 343-5450

NIAGARA COUNTY STATEWIDE TARGETED REDUCTION IN INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE (STRIVE)

Strive continues moving towards a proactive, victim-centered, and coordinated model of domestic violence (DV) response as it enters its second year (April 2026). Modern DV policing has evolved significantly from a reactive model to one focused on early intervention, multidisciplinary support, and evidence-based decision-making. To strengthen this approach, we have implemented the following:

- **Specialized Units and Training**: 2 detectives now serve exclusively within the DV Unit, allowing for more thorough case reviews and more effective evidence-based investigations
- **Risk Assessment Tools (DA-LE & DVHRT)**: Officers will begin using these tools in late October or early November. DA-LE includes immediate advocate contact to support those who may not seek services otherwise. The DVHRT model identifies high-risk victims through Danger Assessment-Law Enforcement scoring and refers them to a multidisciplinary team.
- **Community Partnerships**: Strive incorporates valued and ongoing partnerships with shelters, counseling providers, legal-aid organizations, and advocacy groups which are essential to creating safer outcomes.
- **Non-Law Enforcement reach:** Our partners at Pinnacle and the YWCA are now present in both Family Courts, providing advocacy to individuals who may not interact with law enforcement.
- **Data-Driven Case Tracking**: a dedicated data analyst now assists with case tracking, trend identification, and performance measurement. By monitoring DV calls, repeat incidents, risk-level changes, and outcomes across agencies, we can more effectively identify successful interventions, locate gaps, and ensure strategic resource allocation.

Kathy Stack
STRIVE Coordinator
kathy.stack@niagarafallsny.gov

CATHOLIC CHARITIES

Services

- **Basic Needs Assistance** (716) 856-4494
- **Behavioral Health Services** (716) 277-1137
- **Caring Dads** (716) 856-4494
- **Domestic Relationship Enhancement Program** (716) 896-6390
- **Health Home Care Management** offers care management for children and adolescents ages 0 to 20 in Erie, Niagara, Cattaraugus, and Allegany counties.
  - (716) 372-0101 or carecoordination@ccwny.org
- **Ladies of Charity** is a volunteer service ministry that coordinates a variety of assistance programs for those in need: (716) 895-4001
- **Our Kids and Parent Education & Awareness Program** is for those experiencing conflict around custody issues: (716) 896-6390
- **Family Services**
  - Niagara Falls: (716) 282-2351; Lockport: (716) 433-0246
- **Children's Clinics** offers counseling and medication management services for ages 3 to 22.
  - Niagara Falls: (716) 205-0825; Lockport: (716) 478-0315
- **Multisystemic Therapy** offers intensive family-based therapy for at-risk teens and their families.
  - Niagara Falls:(716) 282-4991; Lockport: (716) 478-0035
- **School-Based Services** (716)725-4431
- **WIC** provides federal nutrition and education for women, infants, and children: (716) 218-1484

Main Phone: (716) 282-2351