

GUEST OPINION

Everyone can do #1 Thing to end domestic violence

By Linda Oberhaus
CEO The Shelter for Abused Women & Children

Domestic violence impacts millions of people each year, but it can be prevented. It requires the collective voice and power of individuals, families, institutions, and systems – each whose “one thing” adds a valuable and powerful component to transforming our communities.

That is why during October’s Domestic Violence Awareness Month (DVAM), The Shelter is asking “What is the #1Thing you can do to end domestic violence?”

Many people care and understand that domestic violence is a serious public health problem. They want to do something but believe their actions can’t make a difference. It feels overwhelming. But change can start with only #1Thing. Imagine if all of people in Immokalee committed to doing just one thing to stop domestic violence — we could really see some serious social transformation.

According to the Centers for Disease Control, 1 in 4 women and 1 in 9 men have

experienced contact sexual violence, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner in their lifetime.

In 2018, The Shelter served over 1,700 victims of abuse and violence alone. That is why we need everyone – advocates, medical professionals, educators, survivors, researchers, policy makers, law enforcement officers, business owners, students, and more, to do at least one thing (#1Thing) to stop domestic violence here in Immokalee. Below are some ideas:

#1Thing you could do to address domestic violence:

- Attend The Shelters DVAM activities to raise awareness – the Immokalee Children’s Fair will be held from 3-6 p.m., Monday, Oct. 21, at the Immokalee Sports Complex.
- Be a caring and consistent adult in the life of a child
- Talk to loved ones about violence and oppression
- Use social media to raise awareness among your peers
- Reach out to The Shelter to learn

how you can help (administrative phone is 239.775.3862)

- Listen to and validate a survivor of trauma

It is important to know the warning signs of abuse – seek help if your partner:

- Constantly puts you down
- Controls who you see, where you go, or what you do
- Checks your cellphone or email without your permission

- Threatens to hurt you, your family, or your pets
- Physically hurts you in any way
- Isolates you from family and/or friends
- Limits your access to money, the phone, or the car
- Blames you for his/her hurtful behavior

You are not alone. Free help is available at The Shelter – for more information, call our crisis line at 239.775-1101.



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