

Survey shows domestic violence is a local problem

Forty-seven percent of the survey's respondents said they don't know how they can help

By Jesse Sowa
Community Reporter

Domestic violence is a major issue in Lane County, and many people are unsure how to reduce the problem in their communities, according to the results of a survey recently released by Womenspace and the Lane County Domestic Violence Council.

In a news conference Friday at the United Way office in Springfield, Joan Quaempts, community educator of Womenspace, said many people fail to report domestic violence because of anxiety about experiencing more violence or an uncertainty of where to report the incidents.

"Out of fear or lack of understanding, many of us remain silent when we suspect that people we love are being abused," she said. "To end battering and save lives, we must respond as a community to the problem of domestic violence."

The survey of 802 Lane County residents was conducted in July and August 1997 by RMC Research Co. and showed 47 percent of the respondents said they didn't know how to help reduce the problem. The survey also found that 18 percent of respondents said they would try to avoid becoming entangled in the issue.

"It's our responsibility to know about community resources," Quaempts said. "Safety for the victim always comes first. [Domestic violence] is a crime, and

police will respond to that."

The survey showed 74 percent of those responding believe abuse of alcohol and other drugs is the primary cause of domestic violence. Twenty percent of the respondents disagreed with this conclusion, 4 percent said neither was the primary cause and 2 percent were not sure or did not know.

Thirty-two percent of the women responding said they had been a victim of domestic violence sometime during their lives, and 15 percent reported they were a victim within the past year.

Seventy-seven percent of those who identified themselves as victims said they talked to their friends and 55 percent with immediate family members about the problem. Respondents could select more than one response, which resulted in a total percentage that exceeded 100, the survey said.

Twenty-seven percent of alleged victims said they spoke with therapists, 22 percent with acquaintances, 21 percent with extended family and 40 percent with others, according to the survey.

Domestic violence goes beyond physical and sexual abuse to include emotional and financial abuse, Quaempts said.

The survey showed that while 99 percent of respondents recognize slapping and punching as domestic violence, subtle forms of abuse often go unrecognized. For example, 19 percent did not consider it abuse to check up on a partner all the time to see what they are doing, and 11 percent did not consider it abuse to control whether a partner can look

for or take a job.

"It is important to recognize that these sorts of attempts to exert power and control over another human being are a form of abuse," Quaempts said. "Often these are indicators of physical or sexual abuse that may be occurring as well."

Pam, a domestic violence survivor who did not release her last name, told her personal story of having to retreat to a motel and being unable to go to work in order to avoid her husband. She said police showed up at her home to speak to her husband, who then ran from the house because of assault charges against him.

Pam said she appreciated that her employer and co-workers intervened in the situation to assist her in getting help and turning her life around.

"I couldn't be here now if it wasn't for the help I got along the way," she said.

Carol Bernard, also a survivor of domestic violence, gave credit to victim services, the Lane County district attorney's office, Womenspace and Lane County Parole and Probation for their help in getting her back on her feet.

She also said despite the resources available, more volunteers would help curb the problem.

"I want the public to know their help is needed," she said. "We need to put an end to this crime."

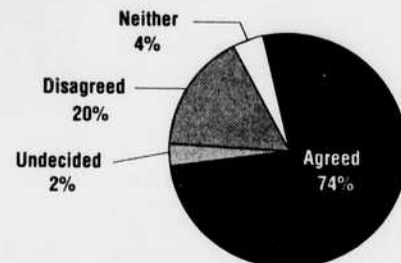
"Any kind of support you can give will make a world of difference. Domestic violence affects everyone. We need to get the word out there and start getting involved."

Domestic violence survey

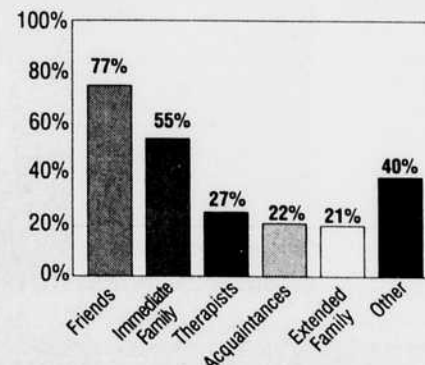
A survey of 802 Lane County residents produced some interesting results. The survey was conducted by RMC Research Corporation.

Drug and alcohol abuse

Seventy-four percent believed that abuse of alcohol and other drugs is the primary cause of domestic violence.



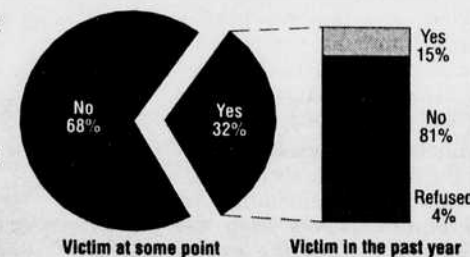
Contacting people after abuse



Most of the victims said they talked to their friends and immediate family. Few talked to acquaintances and extended family.

Female victims of domestic violence

Thirty-two percent of women surveyed said to be a victim sometime during their lives, 15 percent during the past year.



CARA STRAZZO/Emerald

Four more robberies occur at Eugene-area businesses

Among the places hit were a Barnes & Noble store and an ice cream parlor on 19th Avenue

By Jesse Sowa
Community Reporter

The Eugene area continues to be hit with a barrage of robberies, this time with three hold-ups taking place Feb. 12 and another on Feb. 14.

The first robbery occurred Feb. 12 at the 207 Coburg Rd. Wells Fargo Bank location at approximately 4:30 p.m., a police news release said.

The robber approached a teller and presented a demand note. After obtaining money, the suspect ran southbound from the bank.

The suspect is described as a black male in his mid-30s, 5 feet 6 inches, having a medium build, and wearing a blue nylon jacket and brown hat. The jacket and hat were recovered near I-105 at

the Coburg Road exit.

The release said it was possible the suspect had parked a waiting vehicle on the westbound shoulder of I-105 at the Coburg Road exit.

The robbery is being investigated by the Eugene Police Department and the FBI.

The second robbery took place Feb. 12 at the Barnes & Noble Bookstore at about 11 p.m., the release said.

A man entered the bookstore and approached employees, pulling a gun from his coat pocket. He pointed the weapon at the employees and demanded money. After obtaining cash from the register, the robber demanded additional money from a safe. The employees cooperated with the robber's demands and were led to a back room where they were told to wait while he escaped.

The suspect is described as a white male between 35 and 40 years old, 6 feet 2 inches, weighing 190 pounds, with brown hair and a mustache. He was wearing

a black leather jacket and a green corduroy baseball cap.

The final robbery on Feb. 12 was at the Shell Station, 1395 Hwy. 99 N., at 11:56 p.m.

According to the release, a man approached the station, grabbed the attendant and demanded his wallet. When the employee tried to break free, the robber sprayed him in the face with pepper spray. The spray momentarily incapacitated the employee and allowed the robber to escape with cash.

Officers searched the area with the help of a police dog, but they were unable to find the suspect.

The suspect is described as a white male in his late 30s, 5 feet 7 inches, weighing 135 pounds, and wearing a black stocking cap, a gray hooded sweatshirt and white tennis shoes.

The final holdup of the weekend occurred Feb. 14 at Sweet Treats, 1605 E. 19th Ave., at about 11:15 p.m.

The release stated that two sus-

pects wearing blue ski masks entered the business through an unlocked door. They confronted three female employees inside. One of the suspects displayed a semi-automatic weapon and demanded money.

The suspects fled on foot after receiving an undetermined amount of money.

The first suspect is described as a white male under 30 years

old, 5 feet 7 inches, weighing 150 pounds, and wearing a gray sweatshirt with burgundy lettering, dark blue jeans and black gloves. The second suspect is believed to also be a white male under 30 years old, 5 feet 6 inches, weighing 150 pounds, and wearing a dark blue hooded sweatshirt and dark blue jeans.

Police officials were unavailable for comment Sunday.

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Tobacco companies focus of Utah lawsuit

SALT LAKE CITY — Four Utah residents have filed a lawsuit accusing cigarette manufacturers of selling a defective product and conspiring to conceal the addictive power of nicotine.

A trio of Salt Lake law firms filed the lawsuit Friday in District Court on behalf of four individuals. They are asking the

judge to give the lawsuit class action status.

The lawsuit contends tobacco giants elevated the level of nicotine in cigarettes, which helped to create addictions so strong that customers were left without a choice to smoke.

A proposed \$368.5 billion tobacco settlement now under debate in Congress would provide immunity from such lawsuits.

The Utah complaint con-

tends the tobacco industry should establish a medical monitoring fund for smokers, finance smoking-cessation programs and give up at least five years of gross revenues from cigarettes sales in Utah. It also demands punitive damages.

All four plaintiffs took up cigarettes as teen-agers, smoked for decades, and now are suffering from smoke-related illnesses.

— from the Associated Press

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