



TRAINING INSTITUTE on STRANGULATION PREVENTION

A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT AND CEO

Dear Friends,

This is, without question, one of the most extraordinary, anxious, and challenging periods of global crisis in any of our lifetimes. No one could have imagined six months ago that this pandemic would be unleashed on the world and cause such illness, heartbreak, and death.

Survivors need us now more than ever. Children impacted by trauma need us now more than ever. Don't forget that hope was the only thing left in Pandora's Box after a pandemic of illness, disease, evil, and calamity had been unleashed on the earth. And it was the only thing that could make a difference for all those suffering through the darkness, anxiety, and fear. It was true in the human condition described in Greek mythology and it is true for each of us today.

Welcome to another edition of the Strangulation Prevention E-News. The Training Institute on Strangulation Prevention launched E-News to share important information about non- and near-fatal strangulation assaults. Each E-News focuses on one subject, highlights one organization or individual, and shares one featured resource. In these unprecedented times in the United States and globally, we urge you all to stay safe, care for others, and don't forget the needs of survivors of violence and abuse – including those most robbed of hope, strangulation victims.



For this E-News, we focus on how advocates can give survivors HOPE even in the midst of travel restrictions, social distancing, and isolation. We take a closer look at power and control and, in particular, the link between non-fatal strangulation and coercive control. We also share top research articles about victim experiences being strangled, and Tips for Advocates. For this E-news we

have even more: Our new HOPE > Fear banner as a resource to use on your website; A Safety Plan from the Nashville Family Safety Center; and great DV Awareness Tweets from One Safe Place FJC in Fort Worth, Texas.

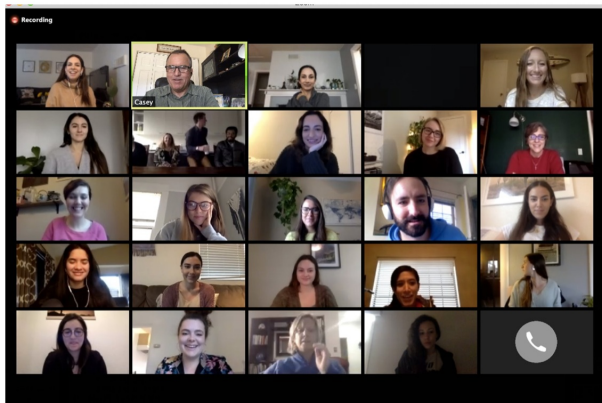


Image from the Alliance's first completely remote weekly staff meeting

Our featured leader for this month is not one person but a group of amazing heroes from around the world – our frontline workers who are bravely fighting the corona virus pandemic to keep us all safe, healthy and alive. We want to share our gratitude to doctors, nurses, technicians, paramedics, law enforcement, and all front line workers who are out there working at grocery stores, gas stations and more. We, at the Alliance, have committed to doing our part to stay at home. In these challenging times in the United States and globally, we urge you all to stay safe, care for yourselves and others, and don't forget the complex needs of survivors right now.

With Great HOPE,

Gael Strack, CEO and Casey Gwinn, President.



STRANGULATION AND THE LINK TO COERCIVE CONTROL

Power and Control

The core of domestic violence is power and control. Ellen Pence was one of the first scholars and advocates to describe domestic violence as an attempt to maintain power and control over intimate partners (*Shepard & Pence, 1999*). Batterers will use intimidation, emotional abuse, isolation, children, male privilege, economic abuse, coercion and threats as well as minimize, deny and blame the victim. The power & control wheel has been the foundation of the Duluth Model (*Pence & Paymar, 1993*). There are many versions of the power & control wheel you can [download from their website](#).

Coercive Control

Over the years, a growing discussion about coercive control has emerged. ([Dutton and Goodman, 2005](#); [Thomas, et al, 2014](#); [Hamberger, et al, 2017](#); and [Bendlin and Sheridan, 2019](#)). Researchers generally articulate three facets of coercive control: 1) intentionality or goal orientation in the abuser, 2) a negative perception of the controlling behavior by the victim, and 3) the ability of the abuser to obtain control through the deployment of a credible threat.

Strangulation is Terrifying

Strangulation is one of the ultimate forms of power and control that can have devastating psychological effects on victims in addition to potentially fatal outcomes, including suicide. The inability to breathe is one of the most terrifying events a person can endure. Survivors of non-fatal strangulation have known for years what many professionals are only recently learning – many domestic violence perpetrators use strangulation and suffocation to silence their victims, gain control, torture and kill them. Strangulation has now been recognized to be the equivalent of waterboarding ([Sorenson, et al, 2014](#)). The unique nature of nonfatal strangulation assault makes it a particularly effective tool of coercive control. With non-fatal strangulation, it is possible to bring someone to the point of believing death is imminent, but then stop, either before or immediately after they lose consciousness. In doing so, the strangler conveys a very powerful and credible threat of imminent death which is an essential element of establishing and maintaining coercive control. Evan Stark has described coercive control as resulting in a “condition of unfreedom: and a feeling of entrapment for survivors.” Strangulation survivors learn to comply with their abusive partner’s subsequent demands as a survival strategy while abusers realize they can get away with it and it soon becomes their weapon of choice. Given the current situation and restrictions due to the coronavirus, this is the perfect storm for batterers to exercise not only power & control but coercive control. See also Evan Stark’s book *Coercive Control: How Men Entrap Women in Personal Life*

Exploitation of the Pandemic

There is no doubt that batterers will take advantage of the pandemic when victims are isolated from friends, family, co-workers and service providers. Isolation is one strategy in the power & control wheel. We know they will try to manipulate survivors into believing there are no resources available right now or that police or paramedics won’t respond to their call. They will tell survivors that the abuser is infected, they’ve infected the survivor, or, if the survivor leaves them, that she will put others at risk. They will forbid the survivor from seeing friends or family because of the risk. They will downplay the risk and force the survivor to leave the house or threaten to throw them out and expose them to the virus. They will also limit sharing critical information about the virus.

Stay on High Alert

Advocates nationwide are on high-alert and aware of the increased danger victims of domestic violence are now facing. They know batterers are exploiting the vulnerability of victims. Reports from across the country are coming in demonstrating a reduction in misdemeanor arrests, low cash to no cash bonds/releases, limited access to protection orders, cases being dismissed, felonies reduced to misdemeanors or deferred sentencing approaches. Shelters are full and alternative housing is limited.

There is Hope

Yet, we are also seeing tremendous creativity and innovation from Family Justice Centers, Multi-Agency Programs and Domestic Violence Programs. There is so much we can all do to mitigate the isolation victims are feeling now.

TIPS FOR ADVOCATES

Here are some **TIPS for Advocates** that we shared during our last webinar on *Family Justice Centers, Covid-19 and HOPE*.

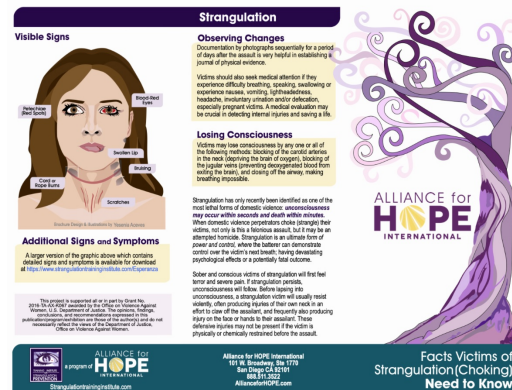
- Let survivors know you are open (actually or virtually) and what services are available in person, telephonically or electronically through Skype, Facetime, Zoom, Doxy, WebEx, or other systems.
- Send strong messages of HOPE – their ability to still believe in themselves, believe in others, and believe in goals/dreams in their lives
- Make good use of social media to raise awareness
- Develop a PSA about your services
- Work with your court to ensure access to justice by allowing electronic filings for protection orders, extending the length of the orders with the support from your local court along with using digital signing such as www.eversign.com
- Educate victims about new ways batterers may further isolate them – see *example social media posts from One Safe Place FJC*
- Consider new ways of providing safety planning – see *Nashville's Family Safety Center Safety Plan* and *Vigor*
- Consider new ways of following up with survivors through welfare/safety checks
- Advocate that domestic violence victims be considered in any state Stay Home Order with *language such as this from North Carolina* *"This prohibition shall not apply to individuals whose homes or residences are unsafe or become unsafe, such as victims of domestic violence. These individuals are permitted and urged to leave their homes or residences and stay at a safe alternate location."*
- Provide fact sheets about COVID-19 to mitigate any misinformation batterers may tell victims in order to manipulate and/or further isolate them
- Consider writing an emergency grant for the immediate needs of survivors and their children such as groceries, gas/cash cards, or transportation services
- Find ways to stay connected with survivors and their children through LiveChat or Group Zoom meetings (when safe)
- Provide space for victims to receive services at your Center while staff are remote and provide for a warm welcome even if the Center is closed – *Use The Ring* as they have at the *Palomar Family Justice Center* in Oklahoma City

STAY STRONG

HOPE #NotCancelled

RESOURCES FOR ADVOCATES

VICTIM BROCHURE ON STRANGULATION



NATIONAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HOTLINE TIPS FOR SURVIVORS



VIGOR SAFETY PLAN



THE VIGOR Battered Women's Protective Strategies

SAFETY PLANNING FROM TENNESSEE



Metro Office of Family Safety

EXAMPLE SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS



ALLIANCE FEATURED RESOURCE: HOPE OVER FEAR BANNER

Survivors of trauma, both adults and children, need hope now more than ever. For children, we define hope as believing in yourself, believing in others, and believing in your dreams.

For adults, we define Hope as the belief that your future can be brighter than your past and that you play a role in making it so. Hope is a future orientation with goal setting, motivation to pursue those goals and the strategic thinking skills to overcome obstacles to achieve goals. The opposite of hope is apathy. Apathy occurs when we cannot control anything about our lives and we begin to feel that “nothing will ever change” or “nothing that I want in life can happen.” (*Gwinn and Hellman, Hope Rising, 2018*). A woman being strangled by the person she loves, realizing that the man on top of her with his hand or hands around her neck holds all the power over her life has been robbed of all hope, of any ability to set goals, have dreams for the future or think strategically about ways to achieve her dreams. Robbed of all hope, survivors often begin to feel there is no way out and suicide becomes a way to stop the pain and end the terrifying reality of living with a strangler. Strangulation adds a life and death terror unparalleled in most other types of domestic and sexual violence assaults which is why we must all strangulation cases more seriously and provide messages of HOPE on our websites, social media and printed materials. Today, survivors are gripped with fear. When they can begin to set goals and find pathways in their lives working with a caring advocate, hope starts to rise and becomes more powerful than their fear.

To assist you, the Alliance has created a Hope over Fear banner to be used in any manner you would like to use it:



To receive your customized banner, email us at info@allianceforhope.com.

Please send us your high resolution logo along with your contact information and we will send it back to you with your logo within 72 hours.

FEATURED ARTICLES

- Wilbur, et al, *Survey Results of Women Who Have Been Strangled While in an Abusive Relationship*, Journal of Emergency Medicine, Vol. 21, No. 3, pp. 297-302 (2001).
- Thomas, et al, *I Didn't Know I could Turn Colors: Health Problems and Health Care Experiences of Women Strangled by an Intimate Partner*. Social Work in Health Care, 51(9), 798-814, 2012.
- Thomas, et al, *"Do You Know What It Feels Like to Drown?: Strangulation as Coercive Control in Intimate Relationships*, Psychology of women Quarterly, 38(1), 124-137, Sage Publications, (2014).
- MacGregor, et al, *A Fresh Breath*, 2016 Research conducted by Womenatthecentre in Canada.

ALLIANCE FEATURED LEADERS: OUR FRONTLINE WORKERS



With tremendous gratitude, affection and admiration, we salute and thank all of our frontline workers who are bravely fighting the corona virus pandemic to keep us safe, healthy and alive.

WE LOVE YOU!

UPCOMING 2020 TRAININGS

As many of you know, the CDC has recommended postponing any events or gatherings. This is recommended for the next 8 weeks. We are also aware that many cities are following the national declaration of an emergency and/or declaring a state of emergency. The Institute is committed to doing our part to stop the spread of the Coronavirus. We have been working with our training sites to postpone trainings for the next 8 weeks. Listed below are our trainings that are still currently scheduled pending any potential new restrictions. During this time of uncertainty, we are committed to keeping you updated on the status of our upcoming trainings. Thank you all for your grace, patience and understanding, we are all in this together.

Postponed Trainings – Please Check Back on our *Website* for New Dates:

Dixon, IL – 1 Day Strangulation Prevention

Buffalo, NY – 1 Day Strangulation Prevention

Pensacola, FL – 1 Day Strangulation Prevention

Cumberland, MD – 1 Day Strangulation Prevention

Grand Forks, ND – 2 Day Strangulation Prevention

Hagerstown, MD – 1 Day Strangulation Prevention

N.J. State Police – 3 Day Strangulation Prevention

New Orleans, LA – 1 Day Strangulation Prevention & 1 Day Evaluation of Gunshot Wounds

Richmond, VA – 4 Day Advanced Course on Strangulation Prevention

Confirmed Trainings:

May 27, 2020 – 1 Day Strangulation Prevention
New Castle, PA

July 15 – 16, 2020 – 2 Day Strangulation Prevention
Waterstown, SD

August 18 – 20, 2020 – 3 Day Masters' Summit
San Diego, CA

October 6 – 9, 2020 – 4 Day Advanced Course on Strangulation Prevention
Clackamas County, OR

October 15 2020 – 1 Day Strangulation Prevention
Mount Vernon, WA

October 27 – 30, 2020 – 4 Day Advanced Course on Strangulation Prevention
San Diego, CA

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