



family focus »

Purple Ribbons

ctober is Domestic Violence Awareness Month, and for me, that means purple rib-

JCADA, the Jewish Coalition against Domestic Abuse, has been sponsoring a purple ribbon campaign in October for the past five years. Each year, we try to put them in more places so that anyone who wants one can get one to show their

This year, thanks to the 100 Mensches, our purple ribbons have been distributed to many of our local congregations for the month of October. I know that many of you will be in your congregations during this holy month, so look for a purple ribbon and wear it to show support for the many victims in our community who feel isolated and alone in the shame of their abusive relationships.

Domestic Violence Awareness Month is often overshadowed by the October campaign for breast cancer awareness. Like many other social action movements, breast cancer awareness has gone from a silent, personal struggle to a publicly acknowledged movement.

When my mother was diagnosed with breast cancer more than 20 years ago, it was a secret. We didn't speak about it outside of the family. However, with increasing rates of occurrence, advocates and medical professionals knew that the silence was deadly. As a result, the public learned that early detection saved lives, and a prevention movement began that brought it out of the shadows so that every woman would feel empowered to protect her breast health.

The campaign was effective in several ways: Rates of death due to breast cancer have decreased, many segments of our society have joined the fundraising and awareness bandwagon and, most importantly, as a mental health professional, people with breast cancer are less likely to feel isolated or stigmatized by the

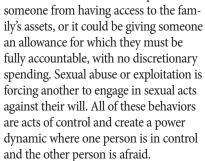
I dream about this type of support for those suffering in violent and abusive relationships.

The statistics reveal the importance of this. According to Susan G. Komen, in 2013, 307,660 people in the United States were diagnosed with breast cancer. According to the National Coalition against Domestic Violence, nearly 20 people per minute are physically abused by an intimate partner in the United States. One in three women and one in four men have been victims of some

form of physical violence by an intimate partner within their lifetime; more than 10 million people annually are abused.

> Our Jewish community is not immune to this. It does happen here, in the same proportions.

> There are many types of abuse: physical abuse, which includes pushing, shoving, trapping another person, slapping, punching or strangulation. Emotional abuse, which can be extremely destructive through the systematic demolition of someone's self-esteem through relentless criticism or degradation. Financial abuse prevents



We can create a safer, more peaceful community. We need a movement, just like the one created for victims of breast cancer. We need purple ribbons on NFL uniforms. We need purple pizza boxes and purple yogurt container tops and purple 5K races and corporate sponsors of purple. We need to help every person feel safe in their relationships, and to know that they are supported by our community. This will take ALL of us.

Please join our movement! Learn more about JCADA and the 100 Mensches. Wear a purple ribbon in October. You can find one at any Jewish communal agency or area synagogue or

If you are a man, become one of the 100 Mensches. This group of men has made a personal and financial commitment to be a part of the solution for domestic violence and abuse. We need your thoughts and your voices if we are to succeed.

For more information on the 100 Mensches, visit 100mensches.org or contact Ellen Yashinsky Chute at (248) 592-2666. *

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