

Summer 2019

Peace Talks

Newsletter

Issues of importance to friends of
the Women's Resource Center of
the New River Valley.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

A Message from Pat Brown 1

Technology Safety 2

Tips and Tricks for Staying Safe
While Using Technology 3

New! Chatline 4

incite
safety

From the Executive Director



It's Time!

The Equal Rights Amendment to the U.S. Constitution was finally passed by the US Senate in 1972, the year I graduated from college. The amendment then was sent to the states for ratification. Surely, 38 states, $\frac{3}{4}$ of the 50, would "agree to provide for the legal equality of the sexes and prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex." It didn't happen. It is still hard for me to believe. My belief that women are of equal value to men caused me to be an outspoken advocate for women's rights. As long as there is inequality, sexual and domestic violence will exist. The Battered Women's Movement was growing in the seventies and before I knew it, it was 1977 and one of the earliest shelters for abused women started here in the New River Valley. I was asked to be a member of the Board of Directors in 1981 and to be the Executive Director in 1986. The Women's Resource Center of the New River Valley, serving adult and child victims of sexual and domestic violence, has provided services, advocacy and education to tens of thousands since. We have a community of support that is unlike any I know. With you, we are compelled to continue the work toward equality and justice. Working with brilliant and passionate people to do this work has been invigorating, educational, and life-enriching.

It is now time for me to leave this amazing journey which has been such a big part of my life for such a long time. I will be retiring at the end of the year. The Women's Resource Center is an excellent organization with outstanding leadership and staff. The work goes on. I will be forever grateful to all of you for having joined me in this journey and for your support over the years. We have changed the world! I wish for you a life of Equality and Justice.

Pat Brown, Executive Director



TECHNOLOGY

Safety

Every person has the right to feel safe and be safe. In today's world, being mindful of how you are using technology is a part of ensuring that safety.

Technology is a wonderful tool. We have access to an abundance of information and resources at our fingertips. Unfortunately, the resources and information that we have access to can be misused by abusers in order to further harm victims. It's important to be aware of this, even though you may never actually experience technology-assisted abuse.

If you are a victim of domestic or sexual violence, knowing what information about yourself is accessible to others through technology is one way you can control your safety. "It's important to get to know different sites and platforms you use: your email, your bank account, your social media. Then, figure out how those platforms are using your data and how you can protect the data that you don't want to get out there," says Rebecca Jarvis, the Women's Resource Center's Community Outreach Specialist.

Aside from reading privacy policies for these sites and platforms and adjusting your settings, the National Network to End Domestic Violence (NNEDV) has developed a Tech Safety App to help educate on how to best protect yourself when using technology. You can access the app through their website, techsafetyapp.org,

or install the free NNEDV Tech Safety app on your phone from your app store.

While attending the NNEDV's Annual Technology Summit in San Francisco, CA, Rebecca Stanley, the Women's Resource Center's Domestic Violence Counselor (Cornerstone) and Legal Advocate learned more about the Tech Safety App. "I have the app on my phone," said Rebecca. "It has all kinds of tech safety planning. If you wanted to know how to make your Facebook more secure, or make your phone more secure, or your house, the app can talk you through all of that."

Six different topics are covered on the app: harassment, impersonation, cellphone safety, device safety, location safety, and online safety. The NNEDV's techsafetyapp.org page reads, "Remember that your safety is most important. If the abusive person learns that you are seeking resources and information, it could be possible that they may escalate their abusive behavior. If that person is monitoring your smartphone or tablet and see that you downloaded this app, consider using this app from a device they don't have access to."

This app is a wonderful starting point, and we often refer it to our clients, especially the ones who have a cellphone. However, we encourage those who may feel they are being abused to reach out to us and access our services by calling 540-639-1123 or by talking to someone they trust.

97% of programs reported that victims who seek their services are being harassed, monitored, and threatened by offenders misusing technology.

Safety Net Technology Safety Survey 2014



words from our *board of directors*

In response to Pat Brown's announcement of her planned retirement after 33 years as Executive Director of the Women's Resource Center, the 5-person Executive Committee of the WRC's Board of Directors is serving as a Transition Committee. Mary Atwell, Lisa Hammett, Dana Spraker, Allison Unroe, and Latanya Walker comprise the committee that has the daunting task of trying to find a suitable replacement for an irreplaceable person.

With the help of a professional non-profit management consultant, we have developed a timeline for the process as well as strategies for achieving a smooth transition into the next phase of the WRC's productive and successful fulfillment of its mission. Plans and procedures have been established for publicizing the position, receiving and reviewing applications, interviewing selected candidates, and working to reach a viable recommendation to the full Board of Directors for a new Executive Director. Our objective is to have a new Executive Director hired by the time of Pat's departure in mid-November. Inquiries about the position or the process should be addressed to a designated e-mail established for this effort: wrcnrvdirectorsearch@gmail.com.

It goes without saying that we are extremely sorry to lose the stellar leadership and wealth of experience that Pat Brown has contributed to the Women's Resource Center for more than three decades. We are grateful for the tremendous legacy that she leaves behind. Under her leadership the WRC has developed into an extremely effective and widely emulated organization with thoroughly professional policies, procedures, and staff - ready to move confidently into the future of its multi-faceted service to the communities of Floyd, Giles, Montgomery, Pulaski, and Radford.

Tips + Tricks

for Staying Safe While Using Technology

Password Protection
Be sure to lock your phone using password protection.

Blocking Numbers

Blocking a phone number is an easy way to eliminate a method of unwanted contact. Research how to do this on your phone. Remember that if you ever decide to unblock someone, you can sometimes receive old messages from them, which can be triggering for victims of domestic and sexual violence.

Cellular Device Safety

Password Safety

We suggest using a password of 16 characters or more for accounts that you wish to keep the most protected. For example, your email password and banking passwords should be your strongest passwords. They should also be different from each other or any of your other passwords. Never have a device remember a password. Two-factor authentication is a good idea for adding an added layer of protection.

Facebook

Consider modifying your settings so that you are asked for approval before something is shared on your timeline. You can learn more about staying safe on Facebook by visiting <https://www.techsafety.org/resources-survivor/facebook>.

Snapchat

Make sure that you are in ghost mode so that everyone is not able to see your location. Also, check your setting about who is allowed to see your snap story so that only those you've approved are seeing it. You can learn more about privacy settings at support.snapchat.com.

All Social Media

- Think about how your posts on social media may inadvertently share your location. For example, posting your current location is less safe than posting later. Be mindful of when and what you are posting.
- Be careful when posting private information.
- Remember that you can block people!
- Delete old social media accounts.

Social Media Safety

Identity Theft + Banking Privacy

- Consider searching yourself on Google and seeing if you find any accounts or information out there that you forgot about or didn't know existed.
- Think about placing fraud alerts on your credit cards.
- Check your credit score! You can obtain a free annual credit report from one of the three major consumer credit reporting bureaus, at annualcreditreport.com.
- Beware of weird emails! DO NOT click any links through a strange email. Before clicking on anything in an important email, we suggest calling who you believe to be the sender directly, not using a phone number provided by the email.

Women's Resource Center
of the New River Valley



Hotline: 540-639-1123 | wrcnr.org

Introducing Our New CHATLINE



Since 1977, we have been answering a 24-hour hotline, but knowing many people prefer to chat, we are now expanding our hotline services to include a chatline.

Reasons To Chat With Us

1. If you have questions about sexual abuse, domestic violence, or unhealthy relationships.
2. If you have questions about WRC services or programs.
3. If you would like information about how to help a loved one or friend who may be experiencing violence.

When You Chat With Us

- You will chat with a trained crisis intervention specialist/advocate.
- Our advocates will give you a chance to talk about what has happened and provide information, referrals, and resources.

Our chatline is much like other instant messaging you may have used, but with more safety and security features.

How does the chatline work?

Our chatline is anonymous and you may share with us what you choose. Please keep in mind that you can click the “quick escape”

button anytime throughout your chat if you need to exit quickly. Once you begin chatting, one of our trained advocates will reply and you’ll be able to continue sending messages to each other until you decide to end your chat session. When you decide to end your chat, all you have to do is hit “end chat,” then the chatline window will disappear, deleting all record of your conversation.

When might we have to report what you tell us?

We are mandated reporters and we have to follow Virginia state reporting laws. If we believe you are under 18 and you tell us any information that makes us think you are being abused or neglected, this information might be shared with other adults to help keep you safe. You are in charge of how much identifying information you share.

What does using the chatline service cost?

Data cost may apply when you use chat services from your cell phone or tablet.

Our chatline is currently available Monday-Thursday, noon-4 p.m. Outside of those hours, please access our services by calling our 24-hour hotline at 540-639-1123. If you are in immediate danger, please call 911.



Women's Resource Center
of the New River Valley

P.O. Box 477 Radford, VA 24143

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If you would prefer to receive WRC newsletters electronically, please send your name and preferred email address to communications@wrcnr.org.

This issue of *Peace Talks* will get you talking about technology safety.

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