

# ZeroV Encourages Holiday Safety Planning for Survivors of Intimate Partner Violence, Friends, and Family

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EINPresswire.com/ -- The holiday season can be full of cheer and community for many people, but it can be full of complications and danger for those with abusive partners. [ZeroV](#), Kentucky's coalition in support of survivors of intimate partner violence, is encouraging people to learn about the impact of the holidays on intimate partner violence so they can better plan for their safety and the safety of survivors.



Intimate partner violence is a pattern of violent and coercive behavior enacted by an abusive partner to maintain power and control over a significant other. This pattern of behavior can include emotional, financial, physical, sexual, and other types of abuse and spans the full calendar year regardless of major dates and events.

While holidays do not cause intimate partner violence, says ZeroV CLO Meg Savage, they can bring changes to daily routines that affect abusive partners' patterns of behavior and make it harder for survivors to plan for their safety.

"What happens on New Year's, Christmas, that's just part of a pattern that happens all year round," says Savage. "But the holidays can bring additional stress from things like planning, travel, financial concerns associated with gifts, increased alcohol consumption, and traditions of extended family gatherings, any of which may destabilize an already fragile situation."

Savage says holiday time off from work and school can also disrupt routines. Time off from work makes it more likely abusive partners will be at home, where their presence may make it less safe for survivors to reach out for support. Time off from school may also require changes to visitation schedules for survivors who are co-parenting, which can present additional safety challenges.

Savage says it can be complicated for survivors to navigate complexities that arise during the holidays, especially when it comes to gatherings. She says she has heard from many survivors that their families tell them not to attend family events because they don't want the abusive partner to cause trouble.

“Or, the survivor knows their abusive partner will cause problems and then they have to play this game of ‘Do I decline all these family invitations to avoid extended family tensions, and if I do, will my partner think my family doesn’t like them and then take it out on me?’” Savage said. “It can really be an impossible situation for survivors.”

Although holiday changes can make safety planning difficult, Savage says some measures survivors, friends, and family can take include ongoing check-ins between a survivor and a trusted person, discussing the safest times and ways for trusted friends and family to communicate with survivors, creating a code word or phrase that will let a trusted person know a survivor needs help without alerting an abusive partner, and holding gatherings in new locations unknown to the abusive partner. When traveling, Savage says survivors can keep money and important documents with them in a safe place in case they need to flee while away from home. She says that protective orders are also portable and enforceable in other states, so it can be helpful for survivors to keep a copy of their protective orders with them when traveling. The [National Domestic Violence Hotline](#) has additional resources for safety planning around the holidays.

For friends and family of someone who is experiencing intimate partner violence, Savage says the best way to support a survivor is to listen to them without judgment and let them know you are there to support them however they need.

“The reason we say it is so critical to listen to survivors and support them in their decisions is because they are the experts in their own safety. They are reading their partner every minute of every day, trying to predict how situations might play out so they can stay safe.” Savage said. “Survivors know their circumstances and their partner better than anyone else, and the best way for friends and family to help them stay safe is to listen to them without judgment and let them know you’re here to support them in their decisions.”

Savage says in addition to support from friends and family members, survivors also need support from their community as a whole.

“IPV is an everyday community-based problem that requires a community-based solution,” Savage says. “Survivors are part of a community – they have friends, family, and co-workers, they have doctors, they have faith-based communities, they live in neighborhoods, and their kids go to school. We need everyone in the community looking out for their neighbors, reaching out in a safe way when they see or hear something concerning, and offering support without judgment.”

Anyone in need of support related to intimate partner violence can contact their local domestic violence program, which you can find at [zerov.org/shelter\\_programs](https://zerov.org/shelter_programs), or call, text, or chat the National Domestic Violence Hotline at [thehotline.org](https://thehotline.org) or 1-800-799-7233.

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ZeroV is Kentucky's statewide voice on ending intimate partner violence in our homes and communities. The coalition represents and supports 15 regional domestic violence programs that serve all 120 counties of the Commonwealth. ZeroV also works to address the systemic causes and far-reaching impacts of intimate partner violence by providing critical thought leadership on the intersecting needs of survivors and partnering with government agencies, nonprofits, and private organizations to make meaningful and lasting change.

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